

## BUILD IT AND THEY WILL COME:

## Northern Flicker

## TOOLS

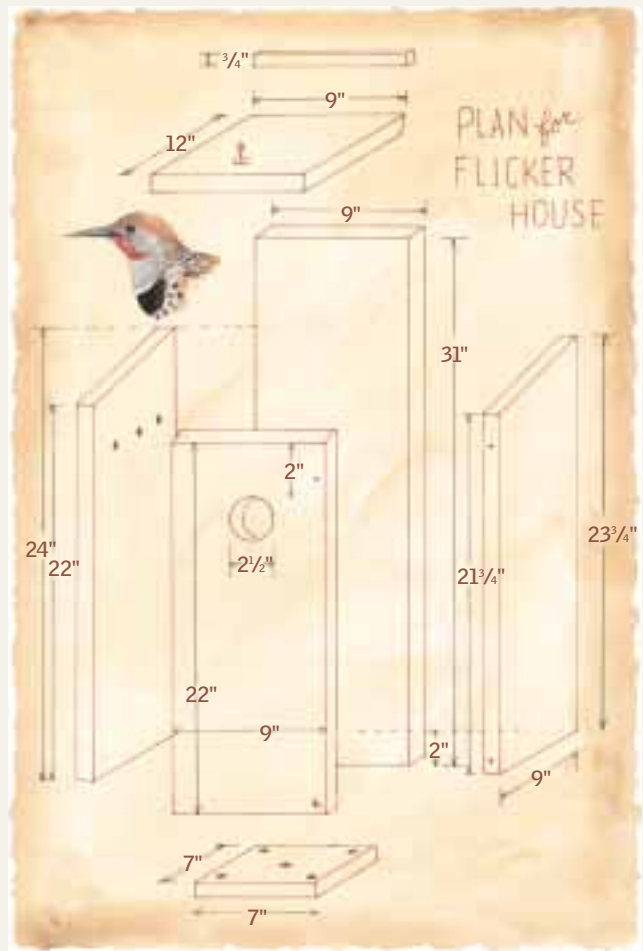
Tape measure; carpenter's square; pencil; power or hand saw; power hand drill with attachments (2½" keyhole saw, ⅜"-diameter drill bit, ⅜<sub>32</sub>" bit [to predrill holes], Phillips-head screwdriver bit); claw hammer; miter box, for 5-degree cut (optional).

## MATERIALS

- 1' x 10' piece of unpainted, rough-cut (on both sides) wood, such as white pine. Remember that while rough-cut (unplaned) lumber is truly 1" thick and 12" wide, planed lumber is either ¾" thick (both sides are smooth) or ⅞" thick (one side is smooth) and 11¼" wide and should not be used to make this box.
- 16 coated or galvanized (to prevent rusting) 2" Sheetrock (drywall) screws or 2" ring-shank (ribbed) wood siding nails.
- Two 2" galvanized finishing nails; four 1½" galvanized finishing nails.
- One right-angle screw; one eyelet screw with galvanized washer.

## ASSEMBLY

- (1) Trim a 3"-wide strip off the length of the board. You'll have a board 9" wide and 10' long.
- (2) Working from the left end of the board, measure then cut a 22"-long piece for the front (22" x 9"). Next cut a 31"-long piece for the back (31" x 9"), then a 12"-long piece for the roof (12" x 9"). The back edge of the roof and the top edge of the front will fit better if they're cut at a 5-degree angle.
- (3) Next measure and cut the sides. On the edge closest to you, mark a point 21¾" from the left end of the board, then a second mark 24" to the right of the first. On the edge away from you, mark a point 23¾" from the board's left end, then a second mark 22" to the right of the first. Draw a diagonal line connecting the first set of marks and cut there. Repeat with the second set of marks. The side pieces will have angled top edges.
- (4) Next measure and cut a ¾"-wide strip (¾" x 9") and set it aside. It will be attached later where the roof meets the back.
- (5) With the remaining lumber, saw a 7" x 7" piece for the bottom of the box.
- (6) Using the keyhole saw, drill a centered 2½"-diameter hole in the front piece. The upper edge of the hole should be 2" from the front's top edge.
- (7) With the ⅜" drill bit, drill three ventilation holes in a line about 3" below the slanted edge of the longer (non-pivoting) side. Drill five ⅜" drainage holes in the bottom piece—one near each corner and one in the center.
- (8) Measure 2" up from the bottom of the back and mark where the bottom edges of the sides will be attached. Using five screws or nails, attach the side with the ventilation holes to the back.
- (9) Attach the front to the same side with five screws or nails.
- (10) Position the floor and fasten it with two screws each to the front, the non-pivoting side, and the back; recess the floor ¼" from the bottom edge of the front, side, and back to create a drip edge.
- (11) Using the carpenter's square, mark the locations (exactly opposite each other) for the pivot nails near the tops of the front and back. Attach the remaining side with the 2" finishing nails (this side is shorter at the top to enable it to swing out freely); add the angle screw at the bottom of the front to secure this side.



- (12) Attach the roof and secure it to the top edge of the front with the eyelet screw and washer. Last, using the four 1½" finishing nails, attach the ¾"-wide strip of wood to the back of the box above the roof. It should be placed so it just touches the roof—this strip and the eyelet screw are what hold the roof in place—but be sure that it doesn't interfere with removing the roof.

## MOUNTING THE BOX

Be careful when mounting this heavy nest box 6 to 20 feet up on a live or sound dead tree, wooden post, or metal pipe. Attach it to the tree or post with two 3" lag screws centered at the top and bottom of the back piece. (Use a couple of U bolts for a metal pipe.) Face the box away from the prevailing weather in a semi-open, partly sunny area. Make sure the flickers are able to see the box easily. Hang the box by March 1 (earlier in the deep South). Consider wrapping a 30"-wide sheet of aluminum below the box on the trunk or pole to discourage climbing predators. It is crucial that you pack the box tightly from bottom to top with wood chips or shavings (not cedar, which irritates the nestlings) so that the flickers can "excavate" a cavity. Regular monitoring is crucial to discourage starlings.

René Laubach has been director of the Massachusetts Audubon Society's Berkshire Wildlife Sanctuaries since 1985. He and his wife, Christyna, wrote *The Backyard Birdhouse Book* (Storey Books, 1999), from which these instructions were adapted.

