

## **Wood Duck / *Aix sponsa***

The Wood Duck is a medium sized perching duck. A perching duck is a duck that has small claws or talons on their web feet to help the duck climb in trees. The male has rainbow colored plumage, with the distinctive iridescent green-purple head with two white marks on the side. After breeding, most males will lose their colorful plumage to a dull color called “eclipse plumage”. The female is a duller color with a white teardrop mark around the eye.

Courtship and pair formation starts in fall and will last through spring when breeding begins. Female Wood Ducks will return to the same nesting site every year and lay between 9 to 15 eggs twice a year. However there is what is called “nest dumping”, this is when a younger female that does not have a nest will lay her eggs in an established nesting site of a older female. “nest dumping” usually declines the success rate of hatchlings.

Monitoring of nests should be done weekly for cleanliness and to get rid of unwanted birds like starlings and swallows. During nesting seasons, monitoring needs to be done monthly until the hatchlings have left the nest, usually 30 days after being laid, then resume weekly checks.

Wood Duck nest need to have clean sawdust or wood chips before each brood during nesting season. You can get wood chips for a City Wood Duck house by contacting the Parks & Recreation Department.

[Apply to become a volunteer to monitor the Wood Duck House](#)

[Download the Wood Duck Monitoring Sheets](#)