

MARYLAND WOOD DUCK INITIATIVE

“A Total Wetlands Experience “

November 14, 2007 Activity Report #23

*Updates the August 22 report
See www.mwdi.net for more details*

1. External Affairs & Education

BG Partners, LLC has made a generous donation to fund hats for key volunteers and public officials assisting us on public lands projects. The opportunity for private program sponsors to also order MWDI's embroidery items was sent out with Nov 19th as the cutoff date.

Photo Contest

As we receive entries we post new ones on the website. Since we have 4 framed Autumn Glory Wood Duck prints from Jim Taylor, we may declare interim winners for two of them if we get some additional entries in the near term. It does not have to be a museum quality composition – just a nice picture about wetlands or its inhabitants! Kids and adult categories.

Box Assembly & Youth Events

Youth box building sessions were conducted at MD DNR's National Hunting & Fishing day Sept 22nd (Bridgeton) and at the Chestertown Wildlife Exhibition & Sale Oct 20th involving 45 kids, 41 boxes were assembled. Two scout's leaders from different troops, Tyler Littleton and Mark Salvaggio, will be coordinating the assembly of 39 additional boxes, our final inventory of kits this season. The Somerset County Vo Tech school also fabricated 35 boxes which are being made available for MWDI use. Special thanks to Conal Turner for his efforts.

Box kits & boxes

MWDI does not have any inventory of kits or boxes for sale. An order for lumber and kits will be made in late spring next year.

Predator Guards

158 predator guards were ordered from Chappell Central in Minnesota for \$11.02 each delivered. See the website for more details if you wish to order guards from Chappell. They have altered their design to accommodate MWDI's specs that include bend out flaps. Guards can be ordered with or without pre-drilled assembly and mounting holes as desired. Cost will depend on quantity, current metal prices and shipping costs. The Hagerstown Correctional Facility will be manufacturing predator guards for our public projects (Many thanks to John McKay, Metal Shop Manager, for his assistance.) These are excellent solutions to a fundamental need. MWDI does not maintain an inventory of guards for sale.

2. Research

The summary 2006 and 2007 Nesting Survey results were sent last month and repeated here for convenience. The full report, area by area, is still being compiled. Updated data on 2007 hatch results from Black Hills and Mt Nebo have now been received and we'll integrate this information into the full report.

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Nesting Survey Results

Public Lands Wood Duck Hatch

	'04	'05	'06	'07 <small>prelim</small>
Ducklings	1,910	2,500	4,021	5,221
Boxes	874	984	1,039	1,241 *
Efficiency	2.2	2.5	3.5	4.2
<small>Ducklings / box</small>				

* No 2007 data yet for 156 of these boxes, 2006 results assumed. 50 boxes with no data excluded.

Best Practices are efficient & more productive



Activity Highlights

Best Practices hatch more ducklings !

6,000+ incremental ducklings since '04

3,300+ more ducklings annually since '04

41 Public Sites in '07 vs. 27 in '04

50+ planned for '08

Est Public Lands Wood Duckling Production

	'04	'05	'06	'07 <small>prelim</small>
	1,910	2,500	4,021	5,221

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Freon canister results

In 2007, MWDI had 21 freon nest boxes on 5 sites (McKee Beshers, Eastern Neck, Millington, Chesapeake Farms and Red River Farms. No data was available from Myrtle Grove where some other freons are located).

Use was 62% and 11 of these 13 nests hatched, an 85% success rate. 112 ducklings were produced from 136 eggs, an 82% hatch rate. 2 nests were abandoned for unknown reasons. These use and hatch rates are very good. The 3 McKee canisters had zero use. Overall use of new boxes is low here and WD seem to prefer wood initially over metal if given the option in similar habitat. The canisters were also used by a Carolina Wren, Bluebird and Screech Owl...all Maryland "firsts" we believe!! As indicated previously, Parkside HS (Wicomico Co) is fabricating 32 more canister nests so we can expand our field trials in other shaded habitat areas.

Wood Duck Society information sharing – pole height versus hen nesting preferences
Roger Strand of the WDS in Minnesota (www.woodducksociety.com) has routinely publicized MWDI efforts to their members. He sent along a reference worth passing along as this question comes up frequently. The 1998 North American Wood Duck Symposium portrayed an Alabama 3 year study (1977-79) by Bowers & Atkins on WD Box Height Preferences. Three heights – 6.5 ft, 12.5 ft, 18.5 ft. The lowest box was favored 2:1. It had the highest occupancy rate and produced the most eggs. MWDI is a big fan of side doors openings and no ladders for inspection efficiency and safety.

3. Operations & Field Activities

Field inspections were conducted in late August at 3 PG County sites managed by Park Rangers of the Maryland National Capital Parks & Planning Park Commission (M-NCPPC). A 4th site in Bladensburg may be added in 2008. Final inspections were completed at Black Hills- Little Seneca Lake (Mont) and Mt Nebo (Garrett). Predator guard installations avoided 4 snake predations experienced last year and ducklings hatched went from 34 to 83. (Kudos to Dale Crigger and Huey Helbert for their efforts).

The Robert E. Lee Park – Lake Roland in Baltimore Co. will become a new public site thanks to the efforts of Hank Russ. He has adopted these abandoned boxes for several years and contacted MWDI. We will provide new boxes, guards and poles as necessary to bring the program into a complete "best practices" mode with Hank's continued management. There are 7 functioning old boxes now with the potential for 15-30 depending on optimal spacing.

Tuckahoe State Park (Queen Anne's Co) will also become a 2008 public site with 10 new but abandoned boxes being adopted by Kevin Colbeck, MWDI Advisory Director.

Once predator guards are available, 2008 work programs will begin later this fall. Those that have indicated a willingness to help, please stay tuned.

Your continued interest is most appreciated.

Cliff Brown