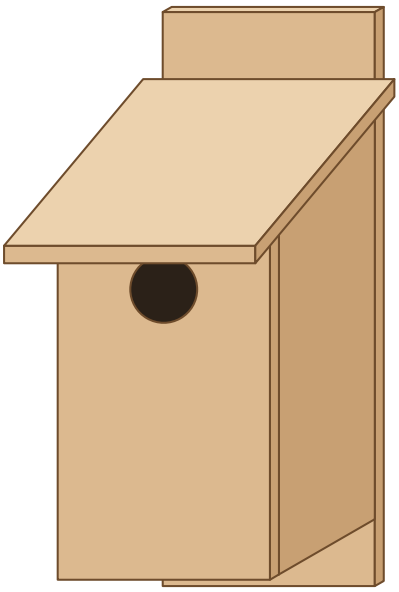
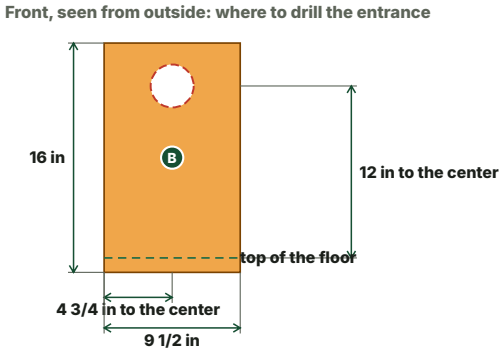
Bird House Plans

A kestrel box · Bird: American Kestrel

Nest box for the American Kestrel: **3 in entrance hole**
Floor inside: **8 × 8 in**
Entrance above the floor: **12 in**
Mount it: **10 to 30 ft off the ground**





This is one size of a free plan from FigureYard. For your own size, open https://figureyard.com/plans/bird-house-plans/ and enter your measurements; the shopping list, cuts and drawings change with them. Check local building codes before you build.

Shopping list

Item	Qty
1×12 board, untreated, 8 ft long	2 boards
Galvanized exterior screws, 1 5/8 in (18 needed plus 4 spares)	22 screws
Galvanized exterior screws, 2 in, for the side that opens	2 screws
Two-hole pipe straps that fit your mounting pole (with short screws to fasten them to the back)	2 straps
Spade bit or hole saw, 3 in (for the entrance hole)	1 bit
Metal pole, long enough to set the box 10 ft to 30 ft up	1 pole
Stovepipe predator baffle, about 8 in across and 24 in long or more (mounted on the pole below the box)	1 baffle

Tools

- Tape measure, pencil and a square
- Circular saw, miter saw or a handsaw
- Drill/driver, a pilot bit, 5/8 in and 3/8 in drill bits, and the 3 in spade bit or hole saw
- Two clamps and a scrap board to drill into
- Safety glasses and hearing protection

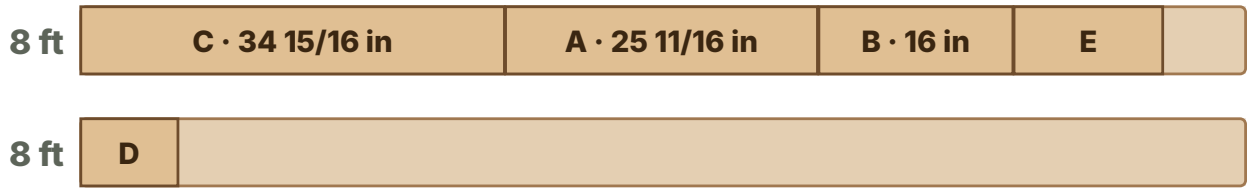
Cut list

Part	What it is	Lumber	Size	Cut
A	Back (reaches 3 in past the box at the top and bottom for mounting)	1×12 board, untreated	25 11/16 × 9 1/2 in	1
B	Front (with the 3 in entrance hole)	1×12 board, untreated	16 × 9 1/2 in	1
C	Sides, cut as a pair (cut corner to corner into both sides)	1×12 board, untreated	34 15/16 × 8 in	1
D	Floor (4 drainage holes)	1×12 board, untreated	8 × 8 in	1
E	Roof	1×12 board, untreated	12 1/4 in	1

Where to cut each board

Each bar is one board you buy, drawn to scale. Measure from the left end, cut, then measure the next piece from the fresh cut; the saw blade takes about 3/32 in each time. Hatched ends are offcuts.

1×12 board, untreated



Step by step

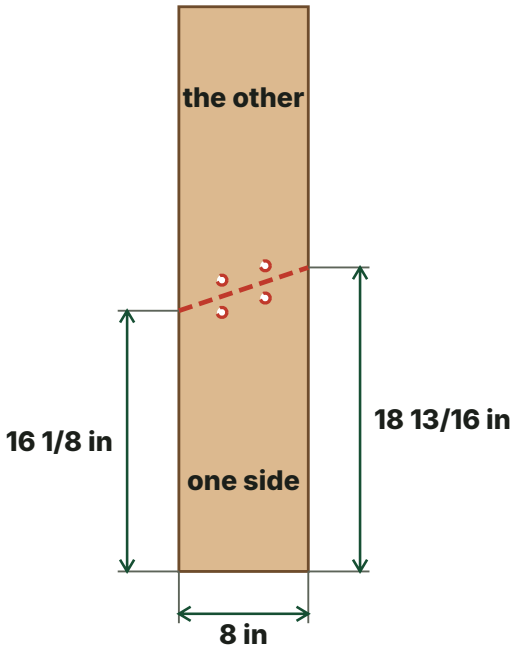
1. Cut the pieces

The walls and the floor come from a 1×12 board. Square one end, then measure and cut each piece to length in the order of the cutting diagram.

Then cut these pieces along their length to width: (A) 9 1/2 in, (B) 9 1/2 in, (C) 8 in, (D) 8 in. A circular saw against a clamped straightedge does it, or ask the store to rip the board.

Draw a line from one corner of the side piece (C) to the opposite corner, 16 1/8 in up one edge and 18 13/16 in up the other, and cut along it: the two pieces are the sides.

Both sides from one piece, cut corner to corner



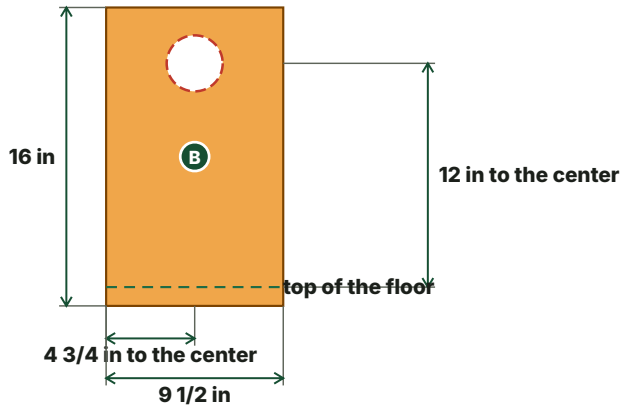
2. Drill the holes

Mark the center of the entrance on the front (B): 4 3/4 in from either edge and 13 in up from the bottom edge, which puts it 12 in above the floor inside. Drill it with a 3 in spade bit or hole saw, with a scrap board clamped behind so the wood does not splinter.

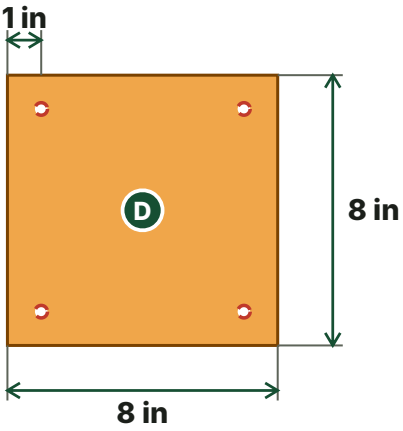
On the inside of the front, below the entrance, saw a few shallow grooves across the grain or roughen the wood, so the young can climb out. Leave the outside without a perch.

Drill 2 vent holes of 5/8 in near the top of each side, and 4 drainage holes of 3/8 in near the corners of the floor (D).

Front, seen from outside: where to drill the entrance



Floor from above: 4 drainage holes

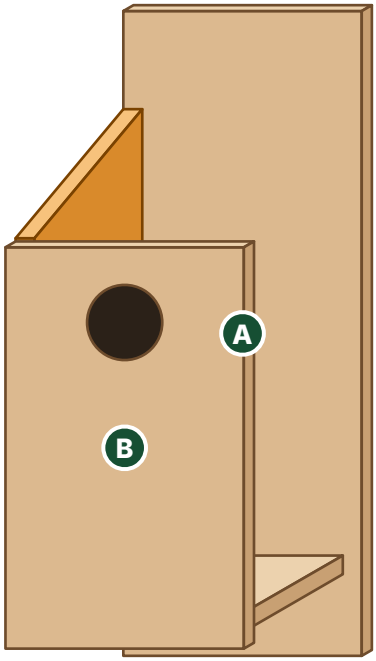


3. Put the box together

Screw one side (C) to the back (A) with three screws, with its bottom edge 3 in up from the bottom of the back and its tall edge at the back.

Set the floor (D) against the side and the back, 1/4 in up from the bottom edge, and screw through the back and the side into it.

Screw the front (B) to the side and the floor, its bottom edge level with the bottom of the side.



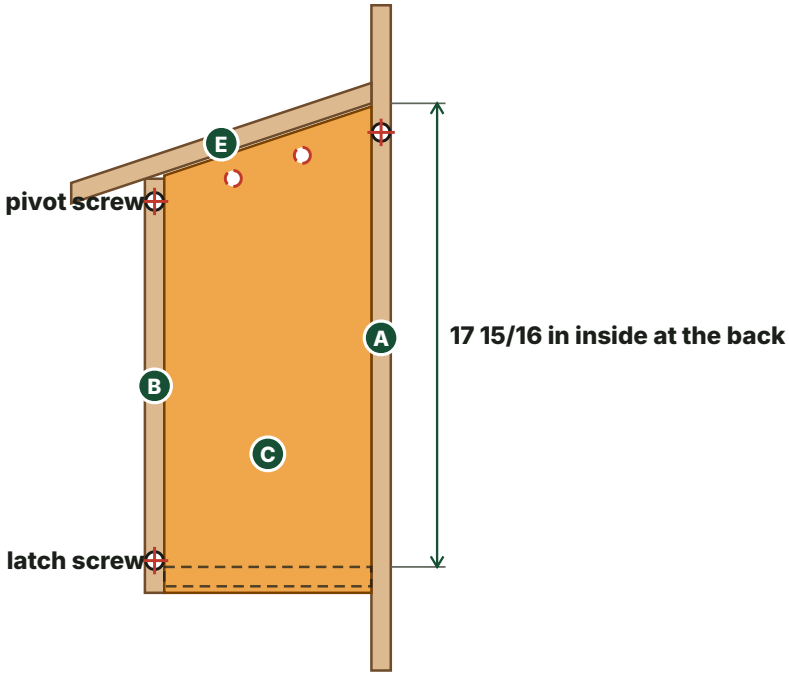
Screw: drill a pilot hole first, then drive the screw

4. Hang the side that opens

Fit the second side between the front and the back. Drive one screw through the front and one through the back into its edges, both 1 in below its top, and leave them a little loose: it swings on them like a door.

Hold it shut with one screw through the front into its bottom edge. Take that screw out when you check or clean the box.

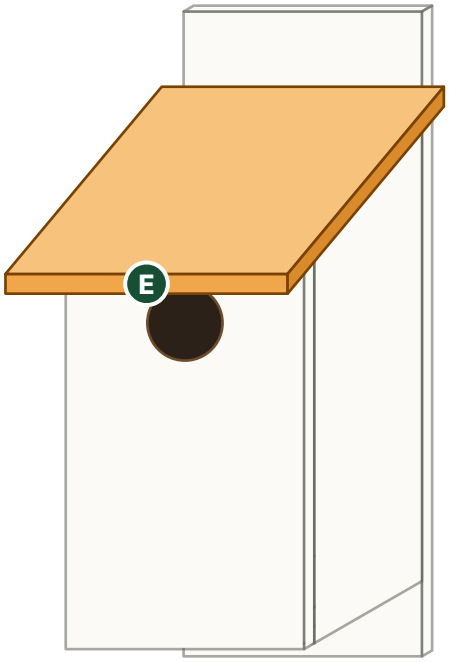
From the side that opens: it swings on two screws at the top, one screw at the bottom holds it shut



Screw: drill a pilot hole first, then drive the screw

5. Fit the roof

Lay the roof (E) on the box so it hangs 3 in past the front, over the entrance, and 7/8 in past each side. Screw it to the front, the fixed side and the back.

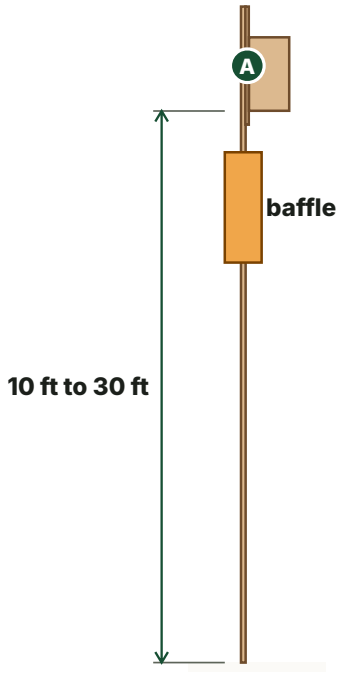


6. Put it up

Fasten the back to a metal pole with two pipe straps, one on each part of the back that reaches past the box, so the box sits 10 ft to 30 ft off the ground.

Fit the stovepipe baffle on the pole below the box, so snakes, raccoons and cats cannot climb past it. A box on a tree or a fence post is easier for them to reach.

On a metal pole, with the baffle below the box



Good to know

- Use untreated, unpainted wood such as cedar, pine or cypress, and never paint or stain the inside of the box or the entrance hole.
- Clean out the old nest after each brood has left, so the box is ready for the next one.