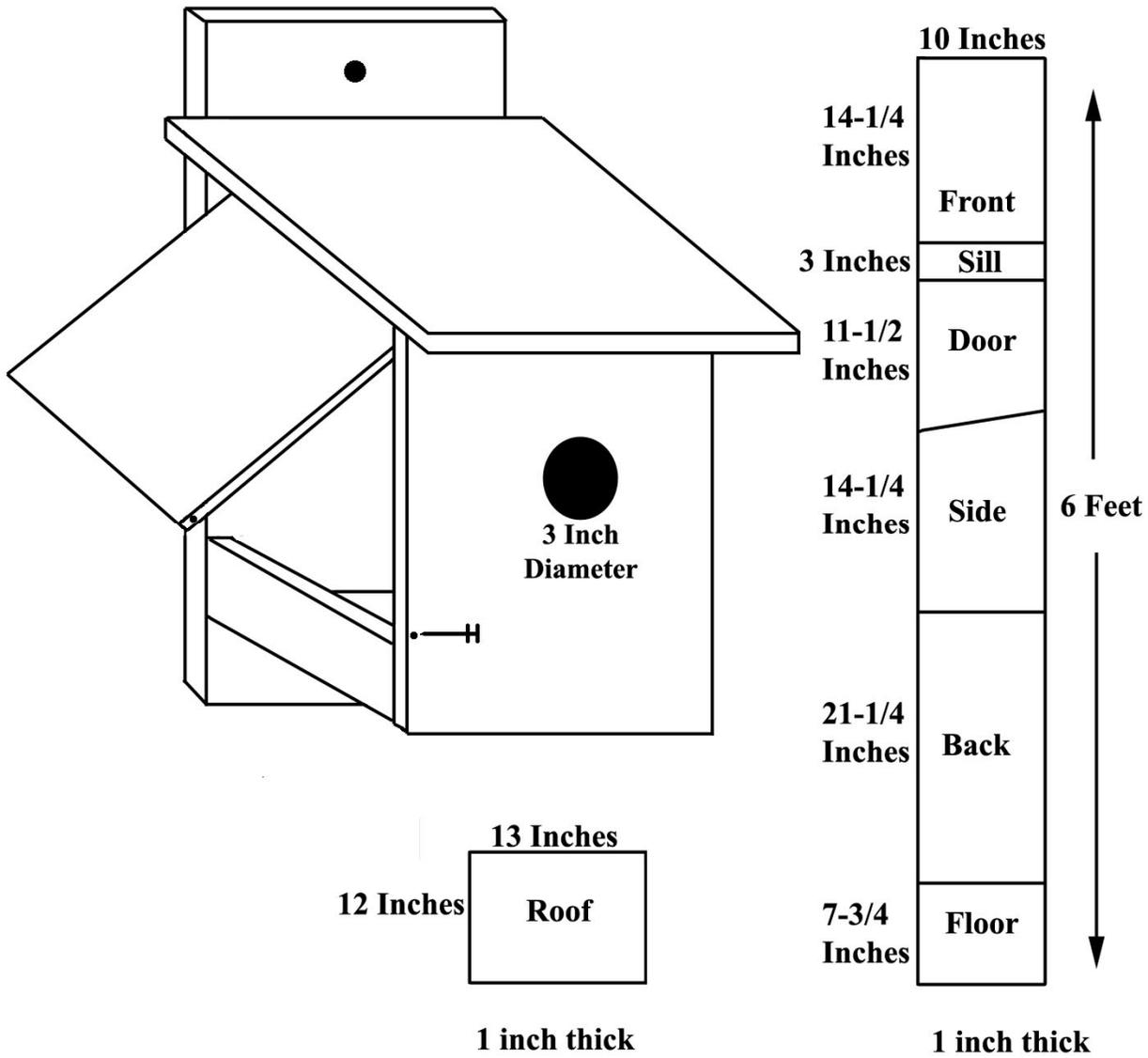




Department of Planning and Natural Resources
 Division of Fish and Wildlife
 U.S.V.I. Animal Fact Sheet #21



Kestrel Nest Box



Materials

Rough, untreated lumber
 Wood Screws 1-1/2" long
 Wood Chips
 Large nail

Tools

Screw Driver
 Saw
 Drill with 3-inch hole-saw

While many people enjoy having kestrels in the vicinity of their house, occasionally kestrel parents become aggressive towards humans. This is a protective response that generally occurs when older chicks get ready to fly. This aggressive behavior may result in human-kestrel conflicts. Should this occur, please call the Division of Fish and Wildlife. Because kestrels reuse their nest sites, the DFW can work with the homeowner to reduce these conflicts in the future. We have a very limited number of nest boxes that we can install on an as-needed basis for people with serious problems.

For those interested in constructing their own kestrel nest box we provide this plan. Remember it is illegal to harass these birds. So if you plan to create nesting sites be aware that there are other responsibilities associated with this endeavor.

Here are some suggestions:

1. Use a durable wood that weathers well. **DO NOT USE TREATED LUMBER.** Rough-cut cypress, redwood or cedar are naturally rot and termite resistant and need no further treatment. If the wood is smooth, scratch the inside of the box (scoring) below the opening to allow the young to climb to the nest hole to leave the nest.
2. Never paint or stain the inside of the box.
3. Drill two 3/8 inch holes at the top of the sides for ventilation.
4. Drill five 1/4 inch holes in the flood for water drainage.
5. Since kestrels do not carry nesting material into the box, place an inch or two of wood shavings or coarse sawdust on the bottom to prevent eggs from rolling about. Do not use cedar or chemically treated shavings or sawdust because it is harmful to the young.
6. Place the box on a pole, building or tree at least 15 feet above ground level. The area around and in front of the box should be free of branches and other vegetation to allow a free flight path into the box. The opening should be facing away from prevailing wind.
7. Monitor the box to keep pearly-eyed thrashers from taking up residence.
8. Be patient. It may take a year or more for your kestrels to use the nest box.
9. Periodic cleaning of nest material and repairs to the box may be necessary after the nesting season.
10. Do not put perches on nesting boxes. They are unnecessary and attract unwanted birds.

If you get a kestrel to nest in your box please let us know about your success.

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