

# nhbs BUYER'S GUIDE

Highlighting the very best conservation equipment

## BIRD BOXES

### INTRODUCTION

All bird species play an important role in enriching and transforming habitats, from aiding plant pollination and spreading seeds to maintaining a predator-prey balance. UK bird populations are declining in both number and diversity, and this is closely associated with the decline in suitable habitat. It is therefore important that we play our part in providing safe spaces for birds to inhabit.

The addition of bird boxes can encourage bird colonisation, nesting and breeding. Once you have a bird species in mind, there are a few things to consider before purchasing a bird box, including the design and the material of the bird box, as well as the location of the box and the mounting and installation method.



To view our full range of bird boxes and accessories, visit [www.nhbs.com](http://www.nhbs.com)

### BIRD BOX DESIGN

Bird species differ in behavioural and physiological characteristics and because of this, one of the simplest ways to categorise bird boxes is by species.

There are some more general bird boxes available and these support a wide number of bird species. The key difference between their suitability is the entrance hole diameter.

**25/26mm  
round**



**NHBS  
Wooden  
Bird Nest  
Box**

For the smallest of species, including Blue Tits, Coal Tits and Marsh Tits.

**28mm  
round**



**Apex  
Bird Box**

Smallest of bird species, plus slightly larger species such as Great Tits and Tree Sparrows.

**32mm round  
(also 32mm oval)**



**Vivara Pro  
Seville  
WoodStone  
Nest Box**

Variety of species including Tree and House Sparrows, Nuthatches, flycatchers, as well as smaller bird species.

## 45/50mm round

## Open-fronted



Bird species that nest in open cavities such as Robins, Wrens, wagtails and flycatchers.

Vivara Pro  
Barcelona  
WoodStone  
Open Nest Box

Designed for Starlings and Great Spotted Woodpeckers.

Some species require **specialist** boxes with a specific design:

PRO UK  
Rendered  
Build-In Swift  
Box



Vivara Pro  
WoodStone  
Swift Nest Box

### Swift boxes

These have a large internal cavity and a horizontally elongated entrance hole (often found at the bottom or downward facing side of the box). Round holes exclude Swifts, whereas Swift boxes can be used by most small bird species.

Vivara Pro  
WoodStone  
Swallow Bowl



Vivara Pro  
WoodStone House  
Martin Nest

### Swallow and House Martin nest cups

Swallows and House Martins nest in open nest boxes in enclosed areas (under the eaves of a building for example).

Vivara Pro WoodStone  
House Sparrow Nest Box



single chamber

double chamber

### Sparrow terraces

Sparrows nest in colonies and benefit from boxes that are close together or preferably terraced boxes with multiple chambers connected to each other.

Barn Owl  
Nest Box



Tawny Owl  
Nest Box



### Owl boxes

Owl boxes are larger with a bigger entrance hole and often have sturdy front platforms for owlets. Some owl boxes can be mounted on branches in a horizontal position to simulate a natural nest spot like a decaying branch.

We supply other specialist bird boxes including **Kingfisher** and **Sand Martin tunnels**, large **bird nest baskets**, **Kestrel boxes**, and **Treecreeper boxes**. Our item pages include further information on the species and suitability of these boxes.

## BIRD BOX MATERIALS

There are several materials that bird boxes are made from. These include wooden (often timber); a wood and concrete blend, sometimes known as woodstone or woodcrete; eco-plastic; and concrete. Each material has different qualities that impact their longevity, durability and often price. Below is a brief description of each alongside one of our best sellers.

### Wooden bird boxes

- Lightweight
- Externally mounted (suitable for both trees and buildings)
- Not as robust and shorter longevity than other material boxes



NHBS Wooden Bird Nest Box

### Woodstone and woodcrete bird boxes

- Very durable and long lasting
- Well insulated
- Option to build into buildings or be externally mounted
- Heavier than wooden and eco-plastic boxes



1B Schwegler Nest Box

### Eco-plastic bird boxes

- Sustainably sourced recycled plastic
- Lighter than woodstone/woodcrete and better durability than wooden boxes
- Although recycled plastic, it is still plastic



Eco Small Bird Box

### Concrete bird boxes

- Extremely durable
- Very heavy
- Can only be built into buildings



Swift Block (Large)

## BIRD BOX LOCATION

There are a couple of factors that should be considered before fixing your bird box. All boxes need to be placed in a safe location and its exposure to the weather and predators needs to be considered.

It is a good idea to put up your box in an area that gets some shade during the day. If this is not possible, the box should be situated in a non-south-facing position. The box can be slightly tilted forward to make sure the rain rolls off the top of the roof and not into the box. Importantly, there also needs to be a clear flight path for the birds to easily access the entrance hole.

The height that you should place the bird box is species dependent. In most cases, the box should be placed at least 2m above ground – this is also a good way to deter predators such as cats. For smaller birds, a height of 2–5m should be suitable, whereas larger birds and birds of prey require a minimum height of 4–5m.

## MOUNTING AND INSTALLING BIRD BOXES

There are two different ways to fix a bird box. They can be **externally mounted** to a surface, such as a tree, fence or building, or built into the brickwork of a building – these are known as **integrated** bird boxes.

Before you externally mount the bird box, you need to consider its weight and the surface you'll be fixing the box to. For example, lighter boxes may be better for trees or fences, whereas heavier and/or more durable boxes may better suit being fixed to buildings.

Vivara Pro  
WoodStone  
Starling  
Nest Box

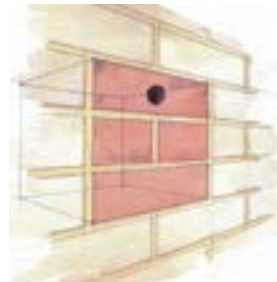


FSC Wooden Swift Box

Bird boxes that can be integrated into buildings are popular with new housing developments because they can be built flush with the wall, making them aesthetically pleasing and discrete. To add to this, some of these boxes are plain for rendering or can be custom faced with a chosen brick type. These boxes provide a safe and spacious area for birds to nest, and it is important that the entrance hole is left exposed to allow the birds easy access to the box.



Manthorpe Swift Brick



Starling Box - Smooth Brick

### FURTHER INFORMATION

We supply a wide range of bird boxes and we hope this Buyer's Guide is informative and provides a useful breakdown of the different types available to help you decide which bird box best suits your needs.

For further information, please get in contact with us directly and take a look at our blogs including [The NHBS ID Guide to UK Garden Birds](#), [Best Bird Boxes for Different Species](#), and [The NHBS Guide: Where to Hang and How to Maintain Your Nest Box](#).

### ACCESSORIES AND SUGGESTED READING



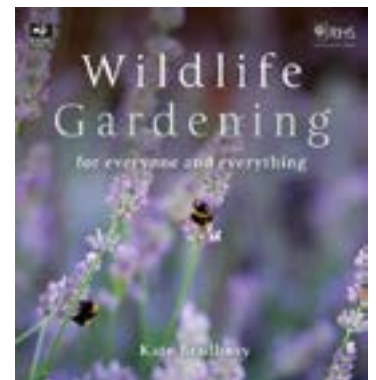
Heavy Duty  
Aluminium Nails



Bird Box Entrance  
Hole Plate



#241181



#244291

Explore the complete range of bird boxes on our website. If you have any questions about our range or would like some advice on the right product for you, then please contact us via email at [customer.services@nhbs.com](mailto:customer.services@nhbs.com) or phone on 01803 865913

