



White-breasted Nuthatch

White-breasted Nuthatch

Plan 1 (page 31)

The White-breasted Nuthatch is well known at winter bird feeders as it hangs upside down to eat suet and probe for insect larvae under the bark of trees. It nests in mature hardwood forests in habitats similar to those used by chickadees.

As soon as each brood of young leaves the nest box, clean it out so more birds can use it. Nuthatches need an entrance hole $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches in diameter. This allows use by house wrens and Black-capped Chickadees, but not House Sparrows. Houses should be 12 to 20 feet above the ground.

Woodland Deer Mouse and White-footed Mouse

Plan 1 (page 31)

The Woodland Deer Mouse and White-footed Mouse are frequent occupants of nest boxes placed for House Wrens, chickadees and bluebirds. They are distinctively marked by brown or grayish backs, white bellies, long tails and very prominent eyes. While they may occasionally be a nuisance if they take up residence in a cabin, they are both rather appealing and interesting. They are found throughout Pennsylvania.

They can be fascinating occupants of nest boxes in their own right. Some people intentionally place nest boxes for these two species, on fence posts along fence lines, near their cabins or at nature centers. A wren house, (Plan 1), is appropriate for use by these two mice. Nest boxes should be on posts, 3 or 4 feet above the ground.

As the mice raise their families they can provide a constant source of enjoyment and fascination for children who may occasionally open the side of the box and peek at the bug-eyed occupants within. Mice will winter in these boxes, so the entry hole should face east or southeast to avoid prevailing northwest winds.

The only problem with mouse use in nest boxes is that if birds return in the spring and enter a box occupied by mice, the mice might kill and eat the birds in order to defend their box. Nest boxes for songbirds should, therefore, be left open in the winter to prevent their use by wintering deer mice and white-footed mice. Boxes intended for these mice should be left closed in winter.

