

# Duck Enough To Fly

Jim Wright  
Jerry Barrack  
Doug Goodell

Taking life's first big steps!

## ABOUT THE BOOK

To see day-old wood ducklings leave the safety of their nesting box and venture forth into the world is a once-in-a-lifetime experience, rarely captured with a camera. "Duck Enough To Fly" unfolded in just a few minutes on a sunny May morning at the Celery Farm Natural Area in Allendale, New Jersey.

## Front Cover & Front Jacket Flap

Those few minutes tell a story about taking life's first big steps. Everybody has to make that leap of faith - whether it's leaving the nest, going to school, graduating, or landing your first job. Some may handle it more gracefully than others, but few go very far without getting their feet wet.

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Jim Wright, Jerry Barrack, and Doug Goodell also combined their talents on "Jungle of the Maya," about saving a tropical forest in Central America, and "In the Presence of Nature," a book about the Celery Farm Natural Area. All three live not far away, as the wood duck flies.

\$12.95

## ABOUT WOOD DUCKS

Wood ducks are among the most gorgeous ducks in North America. Their babies are amazing. The day after they are born, the down-covered ducklings leave the nest, swim, and find their own meals.

Using a special temporary tooth on their bills, they climb the inside wall of their nesting hole, and they can jump and sail as far as 50 feet to the ground. Nesting sites over water, such as the one in this book, offer gentler landings. In two months' time, the ducklings are flying for good.

More than a century ago, wood ducks were headed for extinction. Wood ducks were killed for their beautiful feathers and their meat, considered quite tasty. What's more, a growing nation was destroying more and more of their habitat - filling ponds and wetlands and cutting down woodlands nearby. In 1918, the United States and Canada banned wood duck hunting for several years, and the population started to rebound.

In the 1930s, the development of nesting boxes similar to the one seen in *Duck Enough To Fly* helped wood ducks make an even bigger comeback. The boxes, which include a wire-screen ladder for the ducklings to climb to daylight, are placed over water in ponds and wetlands, helping to shelter the nests against such natural predators as raccoons and squirrels. Wood ducks are thriving once again, and many states have duck hunting seasons.

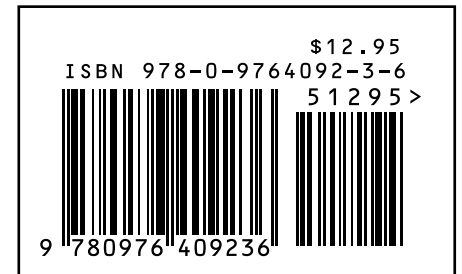
The wood duck's revival is a testament to hunting limits, efforts to save woodlands and wetlands, a simple invention known as the wood duck nesting box, and the bravery of baby wood ducks.

## Back Cover & Back Jacket Flap



"Duck Enough To Fly" is a story about taking life's first big steps.

Everybody has to make that leap of faith - whether it's leaving the nest, going to school, graduating, or landing your first job. Some may handle it more gracefully than others, but few go very far without getting their feet wet.



**To our nine ducklings:**

**Benjamin, Jordan, Oliver, Jaden, Annabel, Max, Philip, Lauren, and Alex**

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# Duck Enough To Fly

by

**Jim Wright  
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In the Presence of Nature Books, Allendale, New Jersey

Once upon a secret lake  
not far from a big city,  
there were birds a-plenty,  
and places for them to nest.



One of the brightest birds  
was the father wood duck.  
His feathers were so splendid  
they could have been painted.





Mom was wondrous as well.  
She had noble eyes and a way  
of teaching tiny babies  
to do very big things.



Each spring, Mom laid her eggs  
in a nesting box on the lake.  
The hole was just the size  
for a Mom to fit inside.



After a month, the ducklings hatched and their big day arrived. Mom peered out, then called back to her babies: Are you duck enough to fly?





Mom hopped atop the nesting box.  
Just below, a fuzzy head appeared.  
The duckling squinted his eyes,  
to see sunshine for the first time.



Mom glided down to the lake  
and called for him to follow.  
But the water seemed so far below,  
and he had never tried to swim or fly.



Soon, one of his sisters joined him.  
She looked around and wondered:  
What he was waiting for?  
Was he a duck – or chicken?



While duckling boy watched,  
unsure of what to do,  
sister gave her wings a flap  
and took a great leap of faith.



He glanced down at the lake again.  
But he was so scared of heights  
that his tiny webbed feet slipped.  
What a way to greet the world.





That was it. He climbed to his feet  
and bravely called: Geronimo!  
Then he half-fell and half-flew  
toward the wet and waiting water.



Mom beamed at her two new swimmers,  
then called up to the rest.  
She knew she had more ducklings,  
and it was time they left home.



One, then another, then another,  
they took their first giant baby step.  
They stumbled, fumbled, tumbled.  
They sighed, they cried – and they flew.



In the blink of a wood duck's eye,  
they splashed down. Mom did a head count:  
Nine ducklings had faced the test,  
and passed with flying colors.



Mom proudly took her ducklings  
for a paddle together. And  
though they'd never explored  
this strange new world before...

They were duck enough to try.





The End