

## Wood Duck Report 2024

*by Dave Youker*

The work on the Harwoods Mill dam continued, meaning the water levels remained approximately four feet below normal. Checking the boxes meant walking the shoreline of the reservoir.

The initial check of the Wood Duck boxes occurred on April 1, 2024, and two boxes already had eggs. By the end of the month, all boxes had active nests with a combined total of 174 eggs. What looked like to be a banner year changed quickly as three nests were abandoned. Two more were abandoned with one occurring in June and one in early August. No cause could be ascertained for the abandonment. Total eggs lost with these five nests was 108.

Despite all seven boxes initially having nesting activity, only five produced fledglings. Of the five productive boxes, three had a second nesting. Total Wood Ducks fledged this year was 110.

Thanks to Newport News Parks and Recreation for their continued support of this project.