AQUADUCK

Every duck hunter's dream is a shooting box that can go anywhere

by Jack Seville

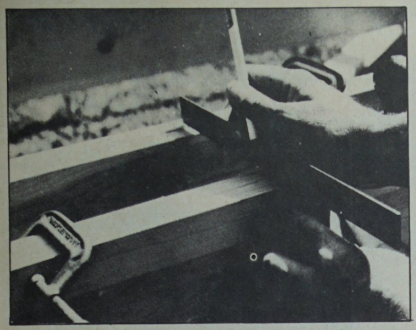
AquaDuck is the name of our duck boat, a design that solves the problems a duck hunter sometimes has with his duck boat. Copied from craft used by veteran hunters on Virginia's Eastern Shore, AquaDuck has several things that recommend it.

First, AquaDuck can be built inexpensively—for less than $100 if the builder is clever. Secondly, AquaDuck isn't awkward. Designed to hold one man plus one dog plus gear, she can be moved about by one man and carried on the top of a car.

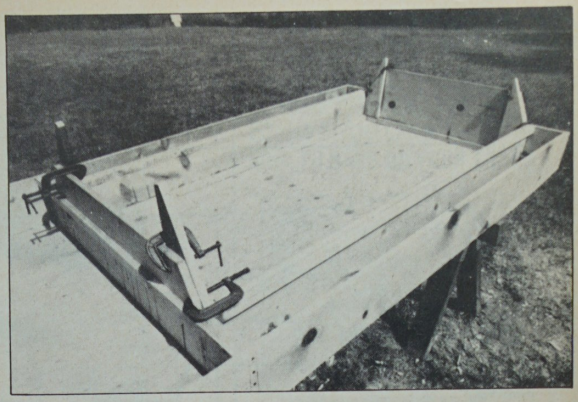
And thirdly, AquaDuck makes an easy project to put together. Essentially an oblong box with a rocker bottom, construction materials are mostly two sheets of ¼-in. plywood a quantity of 1-in. lumber. The hull is compartmentalized into three watertight chambers, and there's not a difficult curve in the craft.

As a boat, AquaDuck demonstrates a nice design. She can be rowed or poled with an oar, or powered by a 2- or 3-hp outboard, or towed to her station by another boat. AquaDuck's wide stance and flat bottom give her good stability—you can stand up on one of the side decks or the forward deck and not tip over. Yet she ranks high in maneuverability.

And as a duck blind, AquaDuck offers some thoughtful features. One of these is the grass rail that surrounds the cockpit and provides a place to stuff grass and reeds to make good camouflage. And another is the cockpit itself, which is shallow but with a coaming all around. In use, you lie in the cockpit with feet at the transom and gun pointed aft. The coaming



Bottom edges must be squared to receive the plywood. Double thickness allows for strong joint.



Corner posts are glued and clamped in place to provide broad surface for attaching the cockpit.

slants down toward the stern to give an unobstructed view.

Beginning construction, first cut the sides to length and shape. The bottom should be flat amidships but with rockers fore and aft. Cut the 8-ft. 1x8s to 7 ft. 10 in. to assure that the 8-ft. sheet of plywood overlaps. Swing the cutting line 1 in. off perpendicular to get the transom angle, and swing the last 12-in. of the bottom 1 in. off horizontal to get the aft rocker.

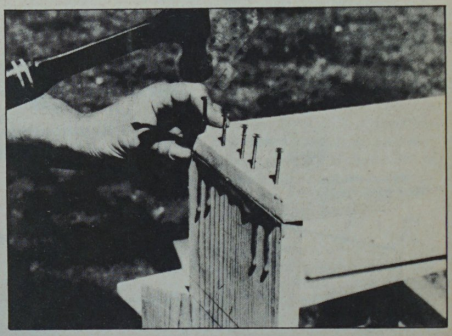
To get the rocker at the bow, follow the dimensions on the plan and use a batten to determine the curve. Use one side as a pattern for the other side. Cut the transom and bulkhead from 1x12 stock, each piece 3 ft. 8½ in. long, which will be the distance between sides. Note that the forward bulkhead is 1 in. deeper than the transom because of the rocker in the bottom.

Now cut the 1x8 compartment sides. They are 64 in., with the forward ends at right angles to the bulkhead and the aft ends cut to match the transom and rocker angle.

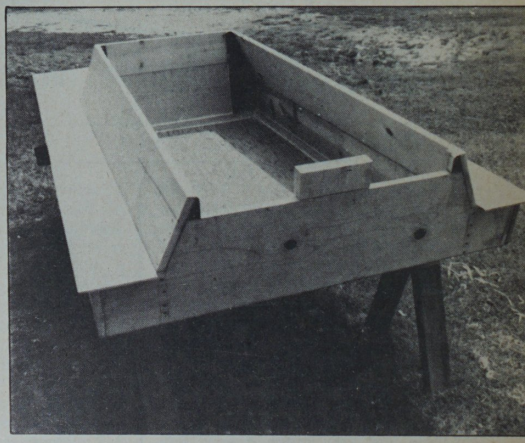
Keep saw cuts straight, square and smooth. To avoid splitting joints, drill pilot holes for nails. Glue joints with Weldwood plastic resin glue and be generous with the glue. Use galvanized boat building nails.

Now join the principal structural members. To be sure the assembly remains square while the glue dries, nail a temporary strip diagonally across it.

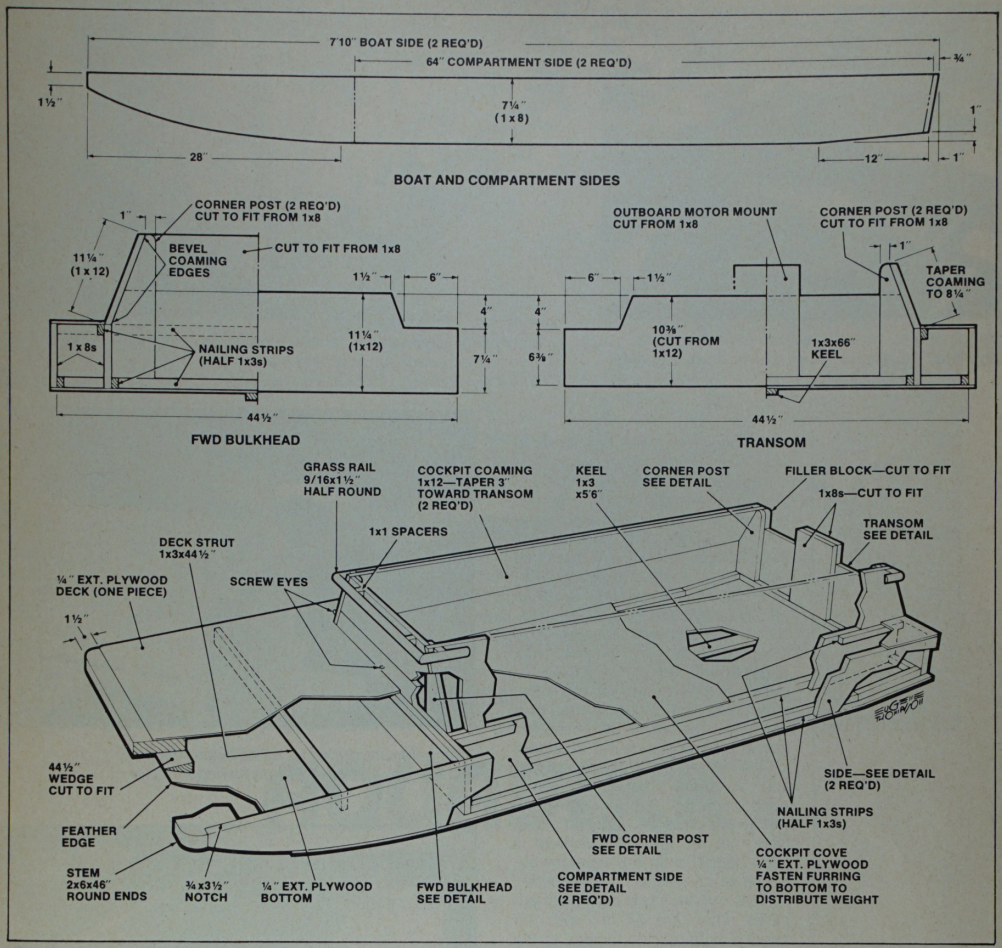
Then add nailing strips along the bottom edge of the side compartments and cockpit. We used 3-in. strips ripped in half. Glue and



Pilot holes are drilled for all nails and the glue is generously applied before nailing into place.



With the cockpit installed, the deck is measured and cut from a single sheet of plywood.



clamp in place. Make sure all bottom edges are square to receive the sheet of bottom plywood, then glue and nail it in place.

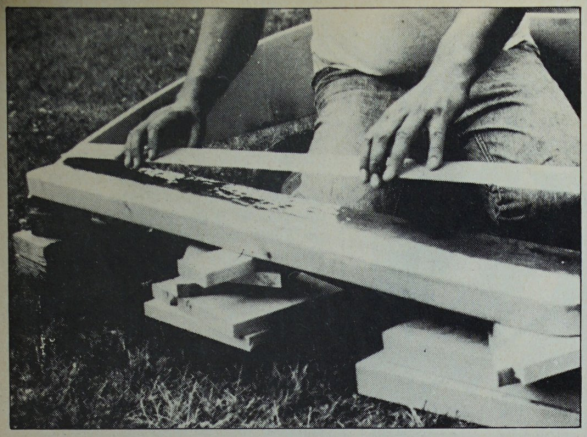
Cut the stem from a 4-ft. 2x6, notched and rounded at each end. With it glued and nailed in place, cut and plane a piece of scrap to fill the wedge-shape void between the stem piece and the bottom.

Before gluing and nailing the bottom, plane and sand its leading edge so that it fairs into the stem. Note that the bottom doesn't extend all the way to the front of the 2x6 stempiece, but falls 2 in. short to coincide with the forward end of the boat side. Let the bottom overlap the sides and transom, and trim off the excess later.

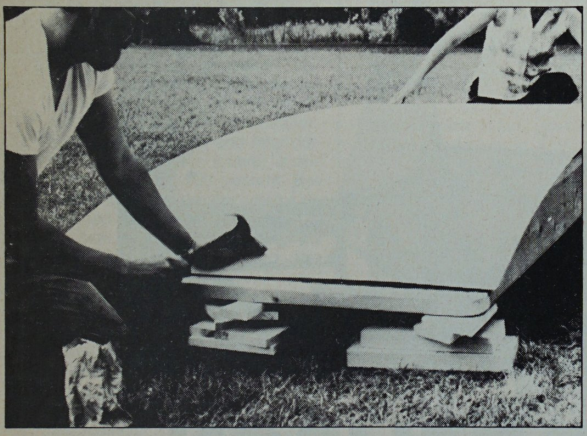
With the boat turned bottom down, clamp and glue nailing strips outboard of the cockpit for fastening the deck. Also cut, glue and nail the four corner posts for the cockpit. Cut the side piece of the cockpit coaming from 12-in. lumber, beveled along the lower edge so it butts firmly against the side frames. Use 1x8 material for the forward bulkhead and add a second thickness at the transom for an outboard motor mount. If you drive a nail inaccurately and it comes out the side, plug the hole with a toothpick dipped in glue.

Before adding the deck, douse the interior with Woodlife and apply flexible marine caulking (such as Phenoseal) at all inside seams. Nail and glue a supporting strut athwartship midway between the stem and forward bulkhead.

Carefully check measurements for the deck. Mark the sheet of deck plywood so that the deck begins 1½ in. from the leading edge of the stempiece and overlaps at sides and



Void at stem is filled with a wedge-shaped piece of scrap wood that is cut to fit and glued in place.



Before fastening plywood bottom, bevel bottom edge to a knife edge to prevent splintering and chipping.

stern. Glue and nail to sides and nailing strips, and after the glue has set trim off the excess. Treat with Woodlife before painting.

Add grass rails on inch-square spacers. We used half-round millwork, but square-or-so scrap strips are just as good. Screw the rails to the top outside edge of the coaming. Add screw eyes just above the deck about every 18 in. Use these to lash grass to the boat.

Use the plywood piece cut out of the deck sheet to make a cockpit sole. Glue and nail cleats to its underside to distribute weight. Drill holes for the dual purpose of drainage and finger grips. Use a 1x3 for the keel, which you glue and nail to the bottom, transom and forward bulkhead.

LARGE SCALE PLANS and building instructions will simplify construction. Send $5, local sales tax and 75¢ (postage and handling) in check or money order to: MECHANIX ILLUSTRATED, P.O. Box C734, 524 Myrtle Ave., Pratt Station, Brooklyn, NY 11205. Specify Plan No. B-11-77. Allow 4-6 weeks for delivery.