



In use as a blind, *Duckling* is easy to maneuver and easy to hide.

"DUCKLING"— AN 8 FT. DUCKBOAT

BY HARRY MEGARGEE

This little pond boat can be carried on top of your car,
get you into the most unlikely potholes, and best
of all, it's no sweat to put her together

MY FIRST BOATBUILDING effort was at age 15 when I made one of the small duck hunting craft generally known along the Jersey shore as a pond box. These boats took a variety of forms but had the common features of shallow draft, light weight and low silhouette.

A must requirement was that they be light enough to be carried or dragged to inaccessible ponds or waterways. At that time, half a century ago, we did not have the modern wonder boatbuilding material, plywood. My box was planked with $\frac{1}{2}$ " cedar siding. She was little and light but relatively heavy when compared with the *Duckling*.

As these plans show, *Duckling* is an extremely small boat. She is 8' long, 28" wide, 10" deep. At the crown of the deck amidship she is 13" deep. For added seaworthiness the design calls for 4" detachable washboards surrounding the cockpit. Even with washboards this is not in any sense a big-water craft. She should never be used for transportation over large bodies of water where sizable seas may be encountered; however, along the shores of such waters she may serve as a blind in conjunction with a larger boat. The hunter should never stand up in *Duckling* when afloat and should

move in her as carefully as he would in a canoe.

When used as a blind the boat is drawn out at the water's edge with her bow pointed outward. Her deck is then covered with thatch, and grasses are inserted in the open gunwales and stacked against her sides. The hunter reclines, with his legs under the deck and his shoulders resting on an inclined board at the stern. When ducks are over the decoys he rises to a sitting position to shoot. If you have never hunted ducks from a reclining position, you will be surprised at how comfortable it is even in bitter-cold weather. Throw in a couple armsful of hay, and you might as well be in a feather bed.

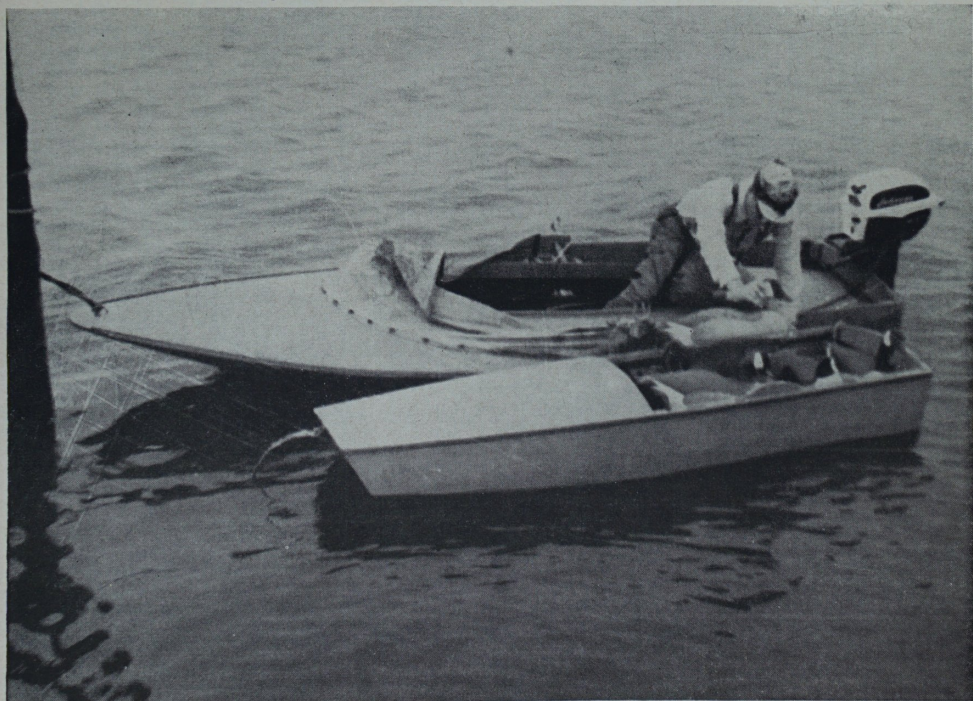
Eliminating big waters, *Duckling* still has terrific possibilities. In some 48 states alone there are 53,000 miles of shoreline to the head of tide water, a large part consisting of shallow bays, coves, thoroughfares and little rivers. Beside tidewater there are 47,000 square miles of inland waterways, including ponds of more than 40 acres. Add to all this the uncounted thousands of little ponds, sloughs and flooded marshes that would be accessible to the *Duckling*, and her operating area is boundless.

This little boat is truly a do-it-

yourself's dream. Scow-type with straight sides and flat bottom, the boat's construction is simple enough for any tyro. Small as she is, she has adequate buoyancy to support a big man; 200 pounds submerges only 3" of her 10" freeboard. Many a man will recognize *Duckling* as just what the doctor ordered for that backwoods pond or swamp where some sort of boat is a must but which is next to impossible for the ordinary heavy craft. Weighing only about 50 pounds, she can be carried or pulled on her runners with little effort. Hunting companions can transport two of the boats inside a station wagon or on a car-top rig so that each will have his individual blind. As auxiliaries to a powerboat two or more *Ducklings* may be towed to a gunning point and placed side by side with a hunter in each boat. Lashed together in tide water, they will form a floating blind when the marshes are flooded.

Last year when the *Duckling's* prototype received her hunting baptism there was an early season for geese in New Jersey. A few days before opening day, with its usual dated regularity, the great brant migration had arrived. It was estimated that there were 250,000 brant in the Great Bay-Grassy Bay area. To

On larger waters, *Duckling* is towed to hunting scene by sneakbox.



make room for all our gear in his 12' Barnegat Sneakbox (see SPORTS AFIELD BOATBUILDING ANNUAL 1960) my son, Harry Jr., loaded his Canada and brant goose decoys in the Duckling.

It was blowing hard when we took off from Brigantine, New Jersey, with *Duckling* in tow for the run to Grassy Bay. The tide was flooding, and large bodies of brant were moving wherever you looked. We set up along a thoroughfare running into Grassy Bay with the two boats lashed together. In two hours we had our limit of 12 brant. The *Duckling's* initiation was highly successful. She did everything expected of her: towed nicely, was easy to hide and comfortable to hunt from.

Now let us start to build the boat. Exterior grade Douglas fir plywood, Grade A on outer surface and C on interior surface of the boat, is suitable. For durability, I chose U.S. Plywood Royal Marine. The difference in cost is not substantial.

Because of her generally rectangular section there is no need to make an elaborate setup form. The vertical plywood sides separated by molds and transoms constitute their own form.

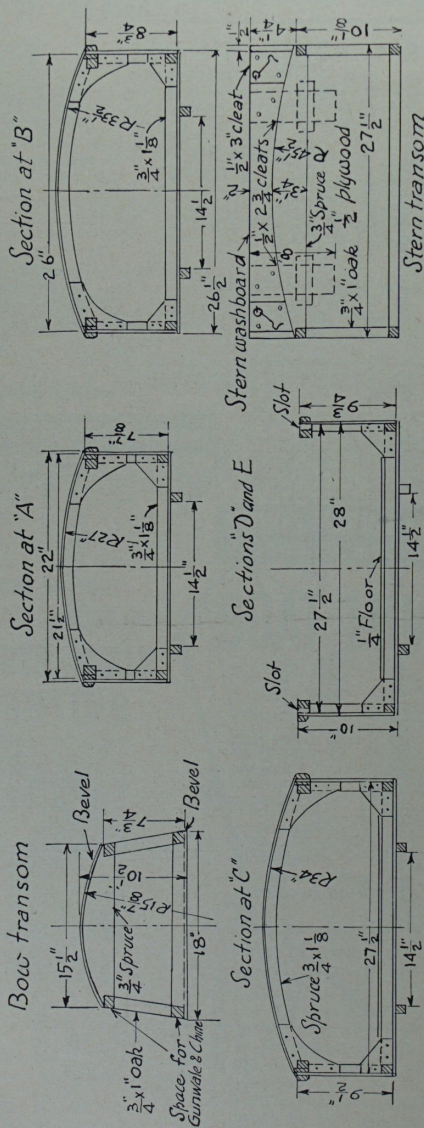
One 4' x 8' sheet of $\frac{1}{4}$ " plywood will make the sides and bottom. Cut two strips lengthwise of the sheet exactly $9\frac{3}{4}$ " wide. Allowing for two $\frac{1}{8}$ " saw cuts this will leave a $28\frac{1}{4}$ " wide piece for the bottom, sufficient for the maximum width of 28" plus $\frac{1}{8}$ " to be planed off each side.

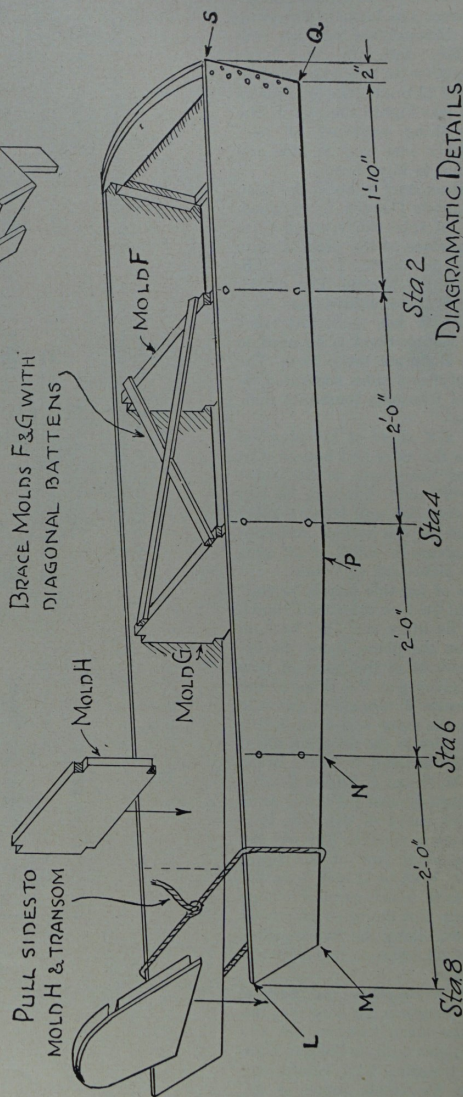
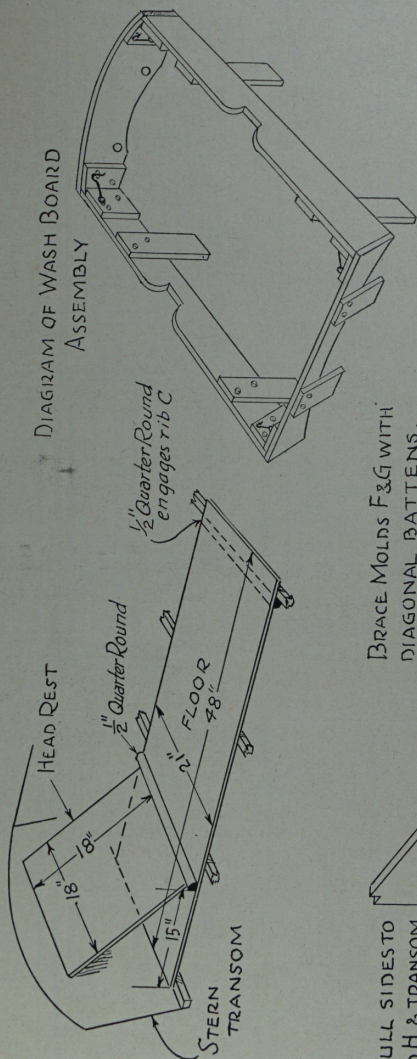
Let one of the side panels be your pattern. At the bow measure 7" down from the deckline and $3\frac{1}{2}$ " back to point M on the plans. Draw the diagonal from M to the point of bow L which gives you the slope of the bow. Measure 6' along the gunwale line from the stern and draw a line at right angles to the deckline. On it lay off $8\frac{1}{2}$ " to point N. Drive brads at points M, N and P. With a flexible batten placed against the brads draw the upward curve of the side. It is not far from a straight line. At the bottom or chine line at the stern, measure 2" back to Q and draw the diagonal to S, which gives the slope of the stern. Cut the other side from this pattern, clamp the two together and plane the edges so that they are exactly alike.

From $\frac{1}{2}$ " plywood cut out the bow and stern transoms. Be sure that the sides of the stern transom are absolutely square with its bottom. Note that both transoms have reinforcing frames on the inside made of $\frac{3}{4}$ " spruce top and bottom with $\frac{3}{4}$ " oak at the sides. The top reinforcement of the stern transom is not installed until after the gunwales are in place.

CONSTRUCTION SECTIONS,
8 FT POND BOX "DUCKLING."

H. P. MEGARGEE-DESIGNER.





DIAGRAMMATIC DETAILS
POND BOX DUCKLING.

Leave notches in these frames to take the ends of gunwales and chines, but do not notch the plywood transoms. From cheap lumber that is 9¾" wide, cut two molds (F and G) 27½" long that will be placed at Stations 2 and 4. Cut a third mold (H) 8½" wide and 25" long to be placed at Station 6. Here again be certain that the ends of the molds are square, for if not they will twist your boat out of shape. Cut notches in all three molds to take gunwales and chines.

On both side planks at Stations 2, 4 and 6 draw lines vertical to the decline. Flush with these lines at Stations 2 and 4, set in molds F and G, temporarily fastened at each corner with two screws, as indicated on perspective sketch. With a large L-square, square the molds from side to side and lock them in place with diagonal battens so that there can be no shifting of the sides fore and aft. The stern transom is now permanently glued and screwed in place with 1" No. 7 or 8 brass screws on 2" centers.

Temporarily fasten mold H to one side at Station 6. Place a rope around the sides near the bow and draw them in against H and screw-fasten it on the opposite side. Molds F and G remain in place until after gunwales and deck have been installed. Remove mold H when deck ribs have been fastened in place.

The side and bottom reinforcement on the bow transom should project a sufficient amount so that they can be beveled flush with the side and bottom planks. Bring the sides in flush with the bow transom to determine how much bevel. When the bow transom has been planed to fit, it too should be glued and nailed permanently in place.

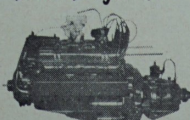
Place the boat bottom side up on two horses. Fit the 10' x ¾" x 1" chine blocks in place; glue and nail them to the sides with 1" corrugated nails on 2" centers. If you have trouble bending the chine blocks into position, wrap the forward half of the blocks in soaking-wet burlap and let stand overnight.

At Stations A, B, C, D and E, glue and nail ¾" x 1" spruce rib risers that extend from the chine blocks to within 1" of the deckline. Ribs of ¾" x 1" spruce extend across the bottom. As indicated on the various sections, ¼" plywood gussets are glued and nailed to ribs and risers.

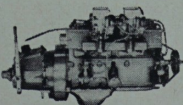
Before installing the ¼" bottom panel, mark the centerline of ribs and risers on the outside of side panels. This will enable you to scribe lines on the bottom and later on the deck to guide you when driving nails into ribs. When the bottom of bow and stern transoms have been

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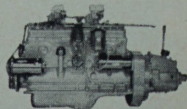
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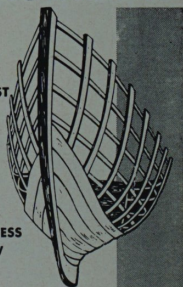
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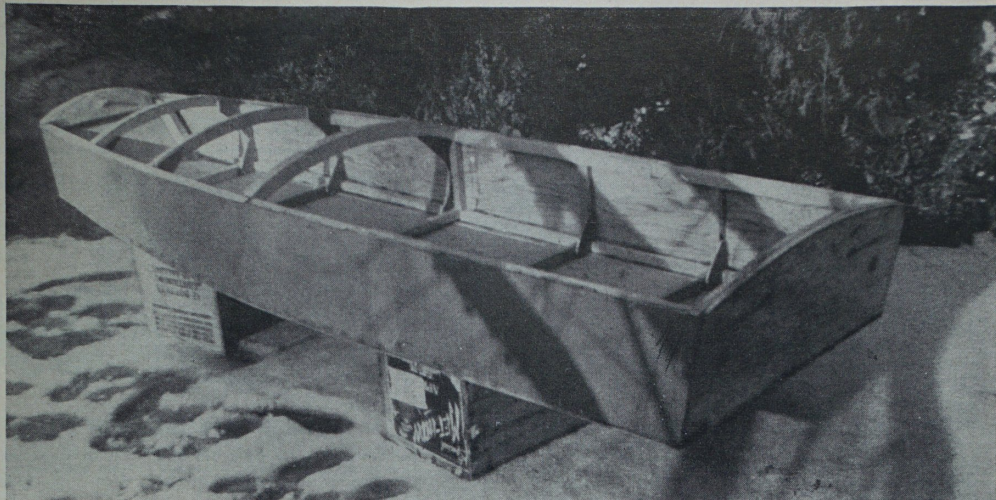
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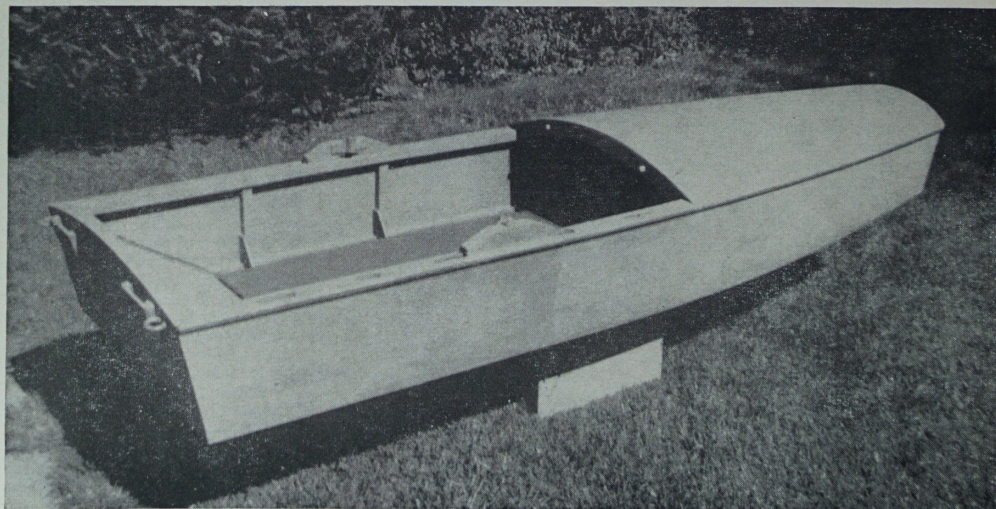
Completed hull and frames in position before applying the deck.

beveled so that they will be flush with the bottom panel, place one end of this panel flush with stern transom and fasten temporarily with a screw at each corner. Draw the forward end of the panel down flush with bow transom and fasten each corner with a screw. Now scribe the line of the sides on the bottom panel, remove it and cut away the surplus, leaving about $\frac{1}{8}$ " to be planed down.

Generously coat the chine blocks and edge of the side panels as well as the overlapping edge of the bottom panel with resorcinol glue, also spread glue on each cross rib. Set the panel in place and restore the four screws. Nail the bottom panel all around with 1" corrugated nails on 2" centers and also nail it to the ribs with 1" corrugated nails on 4" centers.

Now turn the boat over. Flush with the deckline, glue to the sides pine blocks that are $\frac{1}{2}$ " thick by 1" deep, spaced as shown for slotted gunwales. Forward from Station C extending along each side to the bow transom, glue a spruce or pine strip $\frac{1}{2}$ " x $1\frac{1}{4}$ " deep with $\frac{1}{4}$ " above the level of the sides. This $\frac{1}{4}$ " is to be beveled to conform to the curve of the deck. Inside this $\frac{1}{2}$ " strip and

Finished craft after decking. Note head and shoulder rest at stern.



glued to it, install the $\frac{3}{4}$ " x 1" gunwales. From the outside nail through the side panels, the $\frac{1}{2}$ " strip and into the gunwale with $1\frac{1}{4}$ " corrugated nails on 3" centers.

From $\frac{3}{4}$ " spruce cut deck ribs 1" deep to go at Stations A, B and C. Radii for these ribs are shown on plan. At C install double ribs. Fasten ribs to risers with gussets as indicated. Temporarily fasten deck in place. Scribe the line of sides, and bow transom, and cut away surplus allowing $\frac{1}{8}$ " on both sides to be planed off. Spread glue on both sides of contacting surfaces including ribs. Replace deck and nail all around at 2" intervals with 1" corrugated nails. Nail to ribs at 4" intervals.

Two $\frac{3}{4}$ " x 1" spruce runners are fastened to the bottom $7\frac{1}{4}$ " either side of centerline. Glue them with soft-setting marine glue and screw-fasten to each rib with a single 2" No. 8 brass screw. When the oarlock blocks are fastened, the floor panel cut and the wash boards made, the boat is finished except for a cou-

ple of coats of paint.

The floor is $\frac{1}{4}$ " plywood, 21" wide, extending 4' from the stern transom to overlap the bottom rib at C. I prefer not to screw the floor to the ribs. Nail a $\frac{1}{2}$ " quarter round strip to the underside of the floor so that it will engage the rib at C and keep the floor from sliding forward. If you wish you may omit this $\frac{1}{2}$ " quarter round and screw the floor to the ribs at the four corners.

For greater ease when reclining, cut a headrest panel from $\frac{1}{4}$ " plywood. This is detachable and engages with $\frac{1}{2}$ " quarter round strip across the floor which keeps it in place, see perspective sketch.

For maximum ease the panel may be padded with foam rubber or kapok and covered with waterproof material. The forward and side washboards and all cleats attached to all the washboards are made of $\frac{1}{2}$ " spruce or pine. Note that the forward board has holes drilled to fit over dowels that have been glued in the deck rib. There are double ribs at C but care should be taken

to drill holes for the dowels through the first rib only. The stern washboard is $\frac{1}{2}$ " plywood which is made when you cut out the stern transom, for a single cut makes the curve on both pieces.

In assembling the washboards on the boat start with the forward board, next slip the side board cleats into their slots and finally the stern board cleats into the receptacles made for them on the outside of the stern transom. When the four hooks and eyes at the corners are fastened, the washboards are immovable.

Although dimensions are given on the plans for the location of battens and such on the washboards, it is suggested that you be guided by the actual position of slots and dowels on the boat you have built. Also be sure to allow a little play so that battens will not bind when wet.

Large-scale blueprints (2" to 1') for this boat, made from the original drawings, are available at \$5 a set from Harry Megargee, c/o SPORTS AFIELD, 959 Eighth Avenue, New York 19, N. Y.

Equipped with removable washboards and oars, she is ready to go.

