

Citizen Scientists for Kestrels

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The American Kestrel is North America's smallest and most colorful falcon. Most of us are accustomed to seeing kestrels hunting from power lines or fence posts, or "hover hunting" in the air. Unfortunately, researchers believe the kestrel's population status is changing from "common" to "of concern". Data from the Breeding Bird Survey since 1966 suggest that populations of breeding kestrels have declined 47% across North America, and anywhere from 36% to 55% in Idaho. The time to study and conserve the American Kestrel is before it reaches threatened or endangered status, and now you can help.

The Peregrine Fund's new American Kestrel Partnership is a research and conservation initiative supported by families, students, scouts, birders, researchers, teachers, and anyone else interested in kestrels. You can join the Kestrel Partnership as a citizen scientist and easily contribute to kestrel research and conservation by building or buying wooden nestboxes (kestrels are cavity nesters, like bluebirds); hanging them on posts, barns, or trees; and looking into the boxes once every 1-2 weeks from April through July to record the numbers of eggs and nestlings. After collecting the data, simply enter it on the American Kestrel Partnership's website, and voila, you just contributed data to the largest kestrel research program in history!

Autumn is the best time to build and hang nestboxes, so that they are ready for kestrels in the spring, so don't wait! To participate and learn more, check out the American Kestrel Partnership's website: <http://kestrel.peregrinefund.org>



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