

15 June 2009

American Kestrel Nest Survey NYC - Issue #10 (2009)

Kestrels are fledging - Part III!

This week we feature the kestrel nest on Amsterdam Avenue on the Upper West Side of Manhattan. Dr. Jane Bachant first found this kestrel nest on 22 March 2009. (See issue #2, 30 March 2009.) And as you may recall from previous issues, the nest had four young in it - three males that fledged between 10 June (Wednesday) and 12 June (Friday); and a fourth youngster, a female, that fledged late Friday (12 June) or early Saturday (13 June). Kestrel spy Anders Peltomaa has some photos of this last youngster to leave the nest:

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/landp/>

Meanwhile, superb info was contributed by Maggie Medina, who lives just below the nest; George the Super One - who monitors the building across the street; Patricia Dubren and Deborah Allen who photographed here. And, Marc Shore and Tal Cohen-Shore (and their son), with a nod from New York Times Architectural writer and historian Christopher Gray. Thanks to all - and we look forward to 2010.



Above: Two just fledged male American Kestrels near the Amsterdam Avenue Nest site on 11 June 2009. The male on the left is holding the last piece of a European Starling wing in his beak. Photo by rdc

Kestrel Reports from the Field:

From: KA Peltomaa

Subject: Amsterdam Avenue Kestrels

Date: June 11, 2009 (Thursday late afternoon/early evening)

Bob,

I worked a double today, but made it over to Amsterdam around 7pm. By then the it was getting fairly foggy, but I did see one of the young males and the adult male perching on top of the buildings. The young male at one time perched on the barbed wire, which I thought was very brave because it still had to wag its tail up and down to keep balanced. Then it flew over to the building NE Amsterdam, walked on the roof wall, and then disappeared down on the roof (I assumed). The adult male perched on the cell phone antenna nearest the community garden when I walked home at about 7:30pm.

I am pretty sure I saw the colors and shape of one more baby in the nest. It did not come out in full view - such as sticking out its head in the opening, but there were the colors and the shape of a body to the left side of the opening at one time, and then it was gone the next time I looked at the nest. I made a note of it, because I tried to make out if it was another baby in there.

I'm hoping for better weather tomorrow when I have the day off teaching, but the forecast doesn't look so promising.

It's truly amazing that these young fledglings dare to land on barbed wire on their first day out of the nest. And in the photo of the two young males it looks like they are standing on a log burnt by fire, inside/topped with barbed (razor?) wire. Surreal real and beautiful. Thanks again.

Anders

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From: Maggie Medina

Subject: Amsterdam Avenue Kestrels

Date: June 12, 2009 (Friday)

Hi Bob,

My babies look so cute [*Maggie lives in the Apartment directly below the Amsterdam Avenue nest.*] I just heard [*the one remaining chick*] this morning. I saw two of them picking at that blue plastic on the roof across the street in the early evening on Thursday. This morning one was getting wet in the rain across the street, and his mother was on her favorite perch - but I already miss their calls in the nest this morning. [*For many weeks Maggie heard kestrel "begging for food" calls beginning just before dawn coming from that nest above her apartment. I asked her if she ever heard the young kestrels making sounds at night, sounds they would make when an adult arrives with food. She did not...so for the time being, it seems that NYC kestrels, unlike NYC Peregrine Falcons, are not active at night.*]

Hasta la Vista.

Maggie

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Above: Just fledged male American Kestrel at the Amsterdam Avenue nest site. Note down feathers on top of head, and blue on wings (as well as spots, not vertical streaks that a female would have.) In the coming weeks, this young male's breast will turn orange-yellow, and the blue on his wings will become more intense (it is blue-grey right now). Some of our young NYC kestrels migrate south beginning in August, while others will remain to nest beginning in February 2010. Stay tuned... - rdc

From: Anita Randolfi
Subject: Kestrels, Lower East Side (9th St)
Date: June 11, 2009

I've seen the female kestrel sitting in the willow tree in the community garden across from 700 East 9th for the last 2 days, i.e. June 9 and 10. She keeps an eye on her nest, but otherwise has not gone to it or in it during the times I was able to watch ... around 2 to 3:30pm. Over last weekend I did see the male leave the nest once ... he looked very beautiful and fierce. However, I've seen no sign of young kestrels, or any activity in the nest. I'll keep checking.

anita randolfi

From: Michael Britt
Subject: New Jersey Kestrels
Date: Thursday, 11 June 2009

Breeding Kestrels are being seen rather regularly at the old Army Reserve facility at Caven Point and along Rt. 185 in Jersey City.

Mike Britt, Clifton (NJ)



American Kestrel Nest Site
Upper West Side
8 June 2009 © Robert DeCandido PhD

Above: Nest site and habitat of the Amsterdam Avenue kestrels. The small park on the corner allowed the female kestrel to simultaneously watch the nest/young and also dive down on unsuspecting European Starlings and House Sparrows.

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From: KA Peltomaa

Subject: Amsterdam Avenue Kestrel Nest

Date: June 12, 2009 (Friday)

Highlight moments:

1. Three young males feeding on something on the little roof top with the barbed wire.
2. Adult female and one young male sitting on the rectangular wire cage thingy straight ahead as the adult male flew in and landed with them. Baby begged for food, then Female walked over to him and made contact and seemed to ask for something for the baby. Nothing was handed over.

The male seems to have something in his beak, but I have now seen the same sort of stringy thing in his beak for 3 days. I am starting to think he has some kinda fishing line/plastic wire thing stuck on his upper mandible. Have you seen anything in your photos? I have photos of him from at least 3 different times showing the same thing. *[Have not seen anything yet, but have not looked closely.]*

4. Aerial acrobatic flights by the adult female and male right above me, but my photography skills is not up to snuff to catch Kestrels in flight...

I left around 7pm and by then I could still see that there is one baby in the nest.

- Anders

From: KA Peltomaa
Subject: Amsterdam Ave Kestrels
Date: June 13, 2009 (Saturday)

I am hoping to make it over to Amsterdam in the afternoon, probably 4-ish.

Walked over there this morning and could see a good part of the breast of the young one still in the nest. I am quite sure it is a female - it shows the brown streaks, not the male's distinct spots. Maybe females are later fledglings in general? Or maybe this one hatched later, or just had a hard time getting as much food as her three brothers?

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/landp/>

- Anders

From: Maggie Medina
Subject: AMST. AVE. KESTRELS
Date: June 13, 2009 (Saturday)

Hi Bob,

The last chick left her nest Friday or Saturday [*See series of photos by Anders Peltomaa via link in this Newsletter, above and on page 1*]. The others I hear from time to time, but not as much anymore. Are they all gone away for good [*No - they will be in your neighborhood for a few days more.*] Will I spot them around this summer? [*YES*] Miss them.

Maggie

From: Maggie Medina
Subject: Amsterdam Avenue Kestrels
Date: June 15, 2009 (Monday)

I heard them loud n clear flying around today. I thought they were gone but no. Just so you'll know.

Maggie

Kestrel Recoveries in the FIVE Boroughs (Young Kestrels usually found on the ground in precarious situations; addresses below are NOT the nest site(s), but nest sites are certainly nearby); these kestrels then sent to re-hab, and will be released later this summer in New York City - **from Bobby and Cathy Horvath:**

Manhattan (Upper West Side): Broadway and 82nd St. - 6 June 2009
Manhattan (Lower East Side): East 5th Street - 7 June 2009
Queens (Corona): 111th St. and 43rd Ave. - 7 June 2009
Brooklyn (Williamsburg) - 12 June 2009
Bronx (NorthWest) - West Gun Hill Road and Jerome Ave. - fuzzy young female - very early fledge 12 June

More info on different NYC Kestrel nests to follow in the coming days...By the way, for you folks in Sunnyside (Queens) - Brian Haimes found the elusive kestrel nest that everyone has been looking for - details in the next issue. We estimate another 14 nests in Queens, and about 75 to 125 for the entire city.

We will also have details on the 69th Street (Upper West Side) Kestrel nest where the young are beginning to fledge - details from Carol Wood and Rob Cicchetti.

Thank You All!

Robert DeCandido



Above: Just fledged male American Kestrel near the Amsterdam Avenue nest site. What Next? - rdc

18 June 2009

American Kestrel Nest Survey NYC - Issue #11 (2009)

Kestrels are fledging - Part IIIII!

Hello All,

Kestrel activities are at a peak in mid June here in NYC...A fledgling was discovered near Mercer and 8th street (lower East Side) by kestrel spy Todd Clapp (see photo page 6 of this Newsletter) - but where was the nest? At least two young females fledged from the Broadway and 69th street nest (thanks Carol Wood and Rob Cicchetti!) probably about 10 June. Brian Haimes and friend Brendan Lentz tracked down a kestrel nest in Sunnyside, Queens (see photo below). Beth Goffe is keeping close tabs on her 3-5 fledglings in the nest near City College - that will fledge in the next week or so. Jelmer Steenhuis provides a report of a fledgling kestrel on his fire escape in Williamsburg (Brooklyn); and Bobby and Cathy Horvath recently received a kestrel for rehab from 21st street in Manhattan...and from the Brownsville/East New York section of Brooklyn. Meanwhile what happened at the Brooklyn Bridge (Front Street) nest site this year? They nested - but no one provided info...oh well - wait till next year! Finally, Anita Randolfi is anxiously awaiting fledglings from her 9th street nest on the Lower East Side, any day now.

This is the American Kestrel story for mid-June 2009 - told in words and photos sent to us from around NYC.



Above: American Kestrel nest in Sunnyside, Queens (right; in wooden cornice - pictured in right inset) along with female's favorite perch (left). View is from the Manhattan bound 7 train at the 40th street station See text for more info.

Photos/design by Brian Haimes!

Kestrel Reports from the Field:

From: Brian Haimes

Subject: Re: Queen's Kestrels (Sunnyside)

Date: Jun 15, 2009 3:17 PM

So we have pictures for you now [*see page 1!*]. They both seem very active with the female keeping watch and the male hunting. We saw 3 deliveries. Attached are photos taken from the Manhattan bound 7 train at the 40th street station. if you walk to the front of the train platform and look north you will see the area photographed in overview. The others were taken through my spotting scope. We will keep an eye out and report back. Brian!
[*Note that the kestrels are nesting in a wooden cornice in Brian's photo - they also use similar cornices in the Bronx. Brian - thank You ever so much!*]

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From: Carol Wood

Subject: 69th Street Kestrels

Date: June 14, 2009 (Sunday)

Hi Bob,

I was just up on the roof terrace and saw two kestrels, one on each of the water towers on the nest building. Both were female! After a short time one flew to a tower on a building two blocks to the north. The second followed shortly thereafter. I heard cries which seemed to be coming from the nest building, but couldn't spot anybody else. When I looked back to the north, the two females had been joined by a third bird, which I believe was a male. At that distance, I couldn't see any down, but it's clear that some fledging has occurred. [*At least two females, possibly three, fledged from this nest, probably around 10 June 2009. Last year 5 young fledged from this nest.*]

Carol

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From: Rob Cicchetti

Subject: 69th Street Kestrels

Date: June 14, 2009 (Sunday)

Hi Bob,

I heard rumors that construction may occur in the future on the building where the nest is. I don't have this confirmed, but from some of the of the other work around other nearby buildings lately, there has been a lot of facade work, brickwork etc. I am concerned that to the extent such work is done on the building, they may either disturb the nest, ruin the nest or seal up the hole where the nest is in the crack on the metal buttress, effectively making the kestrels lose their nest for next year, if this year's brood is not impacted. Have you run into this situation before? [*Yes - best thing we can do here in NYC is get the kestrels transitioned to accepting nest boxes on buildings/cornices in the city.*] What protection is available under the Migratory Bird Act if any, or similar legislation if this becomes an issue? [*None - during the non-breeding season, nest sites can be "developed" or harvested for resources, etc. However, if we can transition the kestrels to accepting nest boxes, then the number of building cornices will not be a factor - and we can expand the areas within NYC that the kestrels nest...for example, many parts of the Bronx were built after the second world war - when cornices were no longer in fashion/style. So these neighborhoods have few, if any, kestrels...*]

Rob

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From: Anita Randolfi
Subject: Re: E 9th St. kestrels
Date: June 14, 2009 (Sunday)

I wanted to ask you about the kestrels on E 9th St. The kestrels, female & male are around. I've seen at least one of them for the last three days. But there is no sign of activity at the nest at all. And though the adults, when I see them, are either sitting on the antenna or in the willow tree they do not seem to be orienting their bodies toward the nest all the time the way they used to. They spend a lot of the time looking in other directions. A lot of the gardeners are also on the watch, but they have not noticed any nest activity. This afternoon the female sat on the antenna for about three quarters of an hour. When the sun struck her, she looked splendid ... all russet and yellow, and fierce looking. Sometimes she looked toward the nest but much of the time she looked elsewhere. In time she went off without going to the nest. Do you think something is wrong? I've become attached to these creatures and worry about them. *[Not to worry - if you stand there long enough, you will see adults leaving and entering the nest cavity...early (before 9am is best - and remember, by 9am they have already been hunting for 3-4 hours. Twilight (dawn) is about 5am by 21 June. We estimate that your kestrels will be fledging by the end of June - likely about the 25th of June - so be ready for some fun and certainly some kestrel action.]*

anita randolfi
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Above: Five young kestrels (about ten days old) and the adult female in a nest box in eastern Pennsylvania. They will be ready to fly in about another 20 days - fledging in July much later than our NYC Kestrels (ours peak in mid June). If we somehow could transition some of our NYC nesting kestrels into nest boxes....Photo by Paul Karner who has been banding kestrels for many years.



Above: Adult female American Kestrel delivering a decapitated adult English House Sparrow to her nest on East 75th street in Manhattan. Prey was brought to her by the male. Photo by Deborah Allen (17 June 2009) with thanks to Richard Schwartz.

Kestrel Recovery Info (via Bobby and Cathy Horvath):

Manhattan - 97 East 21st street (MALE???) - (approx. 15 June)

Brooklyn - 560 Sutter St. and William St. - Brownsville/East New York (17 June)

From: Beth Goffe

Subject: City College area Kestrels (Manhattan)

Date: June 17, 2009 (Wednesday)

Hi Bob,

Ok, sounds good. I went back there today but didn't see anything. Did you notice that there is a starling nest directly below the kestrels and another around the corner of the building? Foolhardy, no? *[Starlings often use other available spaces near kestrel nests - and the female kestrel keeps a close watch on them when she leaves the nest to take a break and stretch her wings. How? While perched nearby, if she sees a starling get too close to the nest, she will fly over and chase it away. The starlings quickly learn the limits about where they can approach their own nest while passing near the kestrel nest. Starlings learn very fast...after all they are closely related to Mynahs. That being said, kestrels often raid the nests of European Starlings and House Sparrows nesting nearby - to get their youngsters...and female kestrels will chase down and catch adult starlings on the wing...Hey, it is a jungle out there.]* I also spotted a robin's nest in a London plane across the street on the

project property.

I saw another thing unrelated to the nest. There were 5 medium sized dead rats on the sidewalk on 131st Street near 12th Ave. They didn't look damaged so I'm guessing they were poisoned. I hope none of the raptors around decide to grab a snack (I've seen red-tails flying around as well as crows).

It'll be raining next couple of days so I'm not sure I'll visit the nest again for a while...

Beth



Above: Four young kestrels (Can you find the only female of the four?) just fledged from the Amsterdam Avenue nest, 17 June 2009.
Photo by KA (Anders) Peltomaa.

From: Jelmer Steenhuis

Subject: Baby Kestrel and Co. - Williamsburg, Brooklyn

Date: June 17, 2009 (Wednesday)

I saw a baby one of these guys on my fire escape. I think it is learning to fly. Its momma flew by and i think was trying to coax it along. Anyway, I live in williamsburg brooklyn. Hope that info helps.

[Yes Jelmer - do send more!] - - Jelmer

From: Todd Clapp
Subject: Kestrel
Date: June 17, 2009 (Wednesday evening)

Robert-

Good speaking to you. Here is a photo of the bird. *[Todd had a fledgling male kestrel on his fire escape on Mercer Street on the Lower East Side, late Wednesday afternoon. The address is Mercer and 8th Street - there must be a nest within a block of where Todd had that kestrel on his fire escape. The Lower East Side has one of the highest concentrations of nesting kestrels in NYC - because there are numerous opportunities to nest in the holes of the metal cornices - and lots of sparrows and starlings nearby]* - see cell phone photo below!

Todd



Above: Just fledged male American Kestrel on Mercer and 8th street on the Lower East Side - photo by Todd Clapp. This little guy probably can fly fine - we say this because he does not have much down on his head - indicating to us he is at least 30 days old...and in the ready to fly well category - but who knows what the future might bring for/to him. Debs and I loved this photo as soon as we saw it - he is the "kestrel that ate New York" - but cute.

From: KA Peltomaa (Anders)
Subject: Kestrels on Amsterdam (Upper West Side)
Date: June 17, 2009 (Wednesday)

Hi Bob,

I went over to Amsterdam at about 5pm yesterday. Four young kestrels were out and about [*See Anders' photo on Page 5.*!]

After about an hour they got a food delivery (caught in two fuzzy shots).

A little skirmish broke out (one photo)

A little later I had better luck with capturing a kestrel in flight. And I am happy with the photos, not that they are super sharp but for me they are good enough for now.

Did you make it to Broadway and 69th Street this week? How many chicks have they there? (*Probably just two females - see page 2 for info.*)

- Anders

From: Paul H Karner
Subject: Re: Kestrels (Pennsylvania)
Date: June 17, 2009 (Wednesday)

I checked and banded many young K's today after 1pm. I'm banding young K's daily. Some of the boxes were way ahead and almost ready to fledge. The others are 1 to 2 weeks to go before banding this Year's Birds. I have returning K's that I have banded from '05 through to '08's. [*See Paul's photo on page 3.*]

This is the first year that I have not found any wing tagged banded K's from N.J. by John Smallwood. Have you seen any in your area at all? I had a high of 7 different K's from him nesting in my boxes in '07!

I printed out all your newsletters and will now enjoy reading them from the start. It will be interesting to me since all our K's are here in boxes! I did have a few that i found nesting in barns.

Pictures from today at some of the boxes. Check out the size of the prey item!

I have emailed John Smallwood a few times. I do know where some of his boxes are across the river from my study area here in PA. He did have one of my banded females nest below P-Burg a few years ago.

Paul

From: Rafael Guillermo Campos-Ramirez
Date: Wednesday Jun 17, 2009 1:20 pm
Subject: Kestrels are back in Park Slope!!

For the first time this year, 1 American Kestrel came to **Park Slope**. I saw it perched on top of the Saint Francis church, 6th Ave. Brooklyn is good birding: Rafa Campos

From: Anita Randolfi
Subject: Kestrels - 9th Street
Date: June 18, 2009 (Thursday)

The E 9th St. kestrels must be the slowest such on the east coast. I've seen the female every day since the weekend sitting on her antenna or the willow tree, and entering and leaving the nest. She doesn't stay in the nest very long. I've also seen the male at the nest. But, no signs of young ones. The gardeners tell me that they hear these birds calling in the mornings and that they go in and out of the nest a lot, but by the time I get to them (usually about mid afternoon) they're not doing much.

anita randolfi

From: Janet Bachant
Subject: Rainy day kestrels
Date: June 18, 2009 (Thursday)

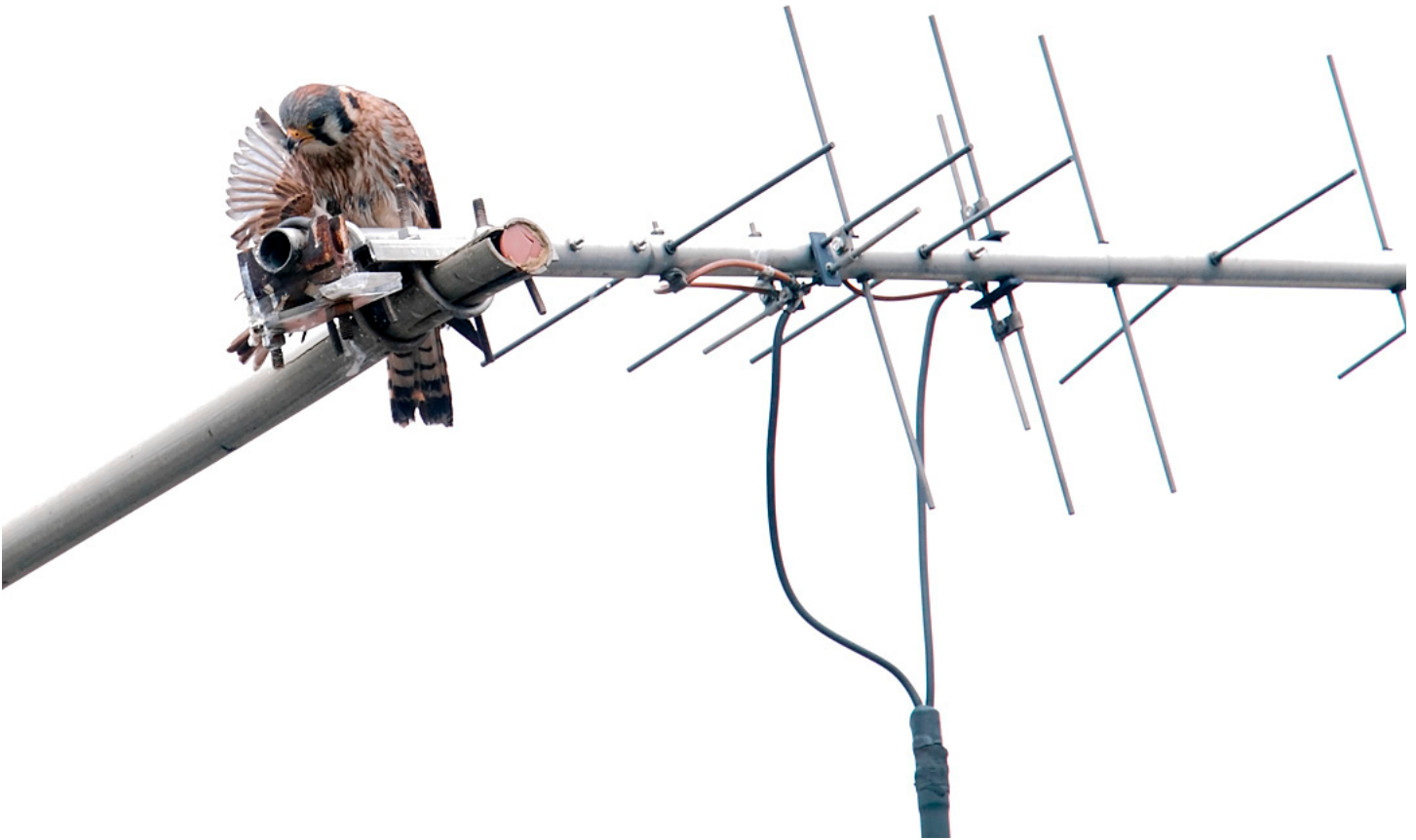
I don't know if it is a coincidence or if rain brings kestrels to my kitchen window, but they have been here again today on multiple occasions. I wonder if they come during rainy weather cause they know that they will find prey here? [***Superb Question!***] The last one I saw clearly was a male that flew off toward Broadway (which makes me think that the ones who come here may be from the 82 ST nest). They swoop in a cause much havoc: a rare sparrow knocked himself out on the window in the melee and I thought the kestrel would come back and get him for sure as his head was hanging over the ledge, but he managed to recover in a couple of minutes and fly off. Some of the finches have decided to wait out the heavy rain in the kitchen.

A question about the "Brothers" picture that I think Deb took -- where you can see their little downy feathers -- How close were you for this shot [*about 20 feet; used a 400mm lens with image stabilization*]? Did you use a tripod? [*No - Image Stabilization on the lens - 400 DO F4 - Canon*]. I am determined to learn how to take good bird pics if it takes me the rest of my life!!

Janet Lee Bachant, Ph.D.



Above: Adult male American Kestrel bringing prey (adult House Sparrow) to the 75th street nest, 17 June 2009. Photo by rdc.



Above: Adult female American Kestrel on the upper East Side of Manhattan plucking/partially eating an English House Sparrow before delivering it to her nest. Photo by rdc with thanks to Richard Schwartz.

The American Kestrel is the most common nesting raptor in New York City - yet we know very little about important parts of its life cycle here: how large are their home territories? Do most of our breeders migrate south in September - or remain here? More info on different NYC Kestrel nests to follow in the coming days.

Meanwhile, folks such as Bobby and Cathy Horvath, as well as Eileen Jones, are working *pro bono* to get injured kestrels and other raptors healthy and flying again. They are the ones most helping NYC raptors...behind the scenes.

**Robert DeCandido PhD
718-828-8262 or rdcny@earthlink.net**

22 May 2009

American Kestrel Nest Survey NYC - Issue #6 (2009)

Most (but not all) NYC Female Kestrels watching young young from a favorite perch!

Hello All,

It is not surprising that we received so many fine reports in just a few days...most NYC kestrel eggs have hatched, and the adults (particularly the female) is fairly conspicuous sitting watch over the nest cavity from a favorite perch nearby.

Just a reminder - on Monday morning, 25 May, we will be doing a *FREE* American Kestrel nest site tour - during the morning and early afternoon, we will visit three kestrel nests on Manhattan Island so that you can get a good idea of the sites they choose to raise a family. Just send me an email: rdcny@earthlink.net (or call 718-828-8262) for more info.

In this issue we feature the East 91st street nest with some landscape photos in color (from 250 feet or so above) and infrared (ground level), as well as many comments from our kestrel spies. Also, and very important: there is \$50 reward posted for anyone who finds the kestrel nest near Inwood Hill Park in northern Manhattan. See details in this newsletter. Our congratulations to James O'Brien for finding a kestrel nest on the west side of Jackie Robinson Park in upper Manhattan.



(above) Male American Kestrel entering the west 116th street nest - another cornice; late April 2009.

Kestrel Reports from the Field:

From: [David Kaufman](#)

Subject: Re: NYC Kestrel Newsletter #5

Date: May 18, 2009

Hi Bob,

I meant to send you this information a little while ago. A colleague of mine spotted a kestrel on the roof top of a building on 157th right near Riverside. There is a short stretch where Riverside splits into 2 and this is the beginning of that stretch. This report is about 3 weeks old. I apologize for not reporting it sooner. I will ask him tomorrow if he has seen any recent action.

Regards,

--Dave Kaufman

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From: Anita Randolfi
Subject: Kestrels on 9th street
Date: May 19, 2009

Dear bob,

Here's another report on the E 9th St. kestrels. This morning about 11am I walked over and they were nowhere to be seen. No nest activity. But this afternoon from 2:50 to 3:30pm they were in full sight. The female was sitting atop the antenna, again facing the nest. She was there for about 15 minutes and then flew into the nest. About 4-5 minutes later she flew out heading north, but I lost her. A very few minutes later the male appeared at the nest and looked inside. He was there only a minute or two and flew away to the north. That's the last I saw of them. There is a large willow tree in the garden directly across from 700 E.9th. Both birds flew toward the tree and never came out the other side as far as I could tell. They might have been sitting in the tree. I spent awhile looking, and engaged a gardener in looking, too, but there was no sign of them. It's as if the tree eats them.

Anita Randolfi

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From: John Wittenberg
Subject: Kestrels
Date: May 19, 2009

I watched a Kestrel snatch a small bird off the path at around 111th street inside in Riverside Park last night. Seemed to just lower itself on the what I think was a sparrow and then lift off.

John

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From: "billy34_us@"
Subject: Kestrels - Upper West Side
Date: May 19, 2009

I've checked for them often, and miss my "W104-W105 St" kestrels, who I suppose have moved elsewhere this year. I'm very glad to learn of the other nesting kestrels in NYC.

Bill

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From: [yojimbot](#)
Subject: Re: NYC Kestrel Newsletter #5
Date: May 18, 2009

Have you seen my posts of the pair on 153rd and Edgecomb?

<http://yojimbob.blogspot.com/2009/05/kestrel-hunting-starlings.html>

James O'Brien
=====

From: Carol Wood
Subject: 69th Street kestrels
Date: May 19, 2009

Hi Bob,

I was up there for a while this afternoon. The female was perched on the water tank above the nest with some prey. After a while she took off with the prey, which appeared to be a small bird. She tried to land on the corner of the building to the south on the west side of Broadway, the one with the brown metal fence. She seemed to miss the landing at the corner, where we've seen her perch in the past, and she moved farther from the corner. I then saw her on that fence. I suspect she may have dropped her meal.

Carol
=====

From: Annie Barry
Subject: Kestrel report
Date: May 20, 2009

I continue to see a male and female pair in and near Baker Field and Inwood Hill Park, but I have never been able to locate a nest. The male spends a lot of time on top of the building directly across Seaman Ave. from my apartment.

I have not seen kestrels on Governors Island in 2 recent trips. But I'll keep an eye out for them.

Annie Barry
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From: Annie Barry
Subject: Re: Re: Kestrel report (Inwood)
Date: May 21, 2009

The building [the male likes to perch atop] is 579 W. 215th St. I see the part of that building that stretches to Seaman Ave (it's L shaped).

Note: if anyone can help us find the nest near Inwood Hill Park in upper Manhattan - we have received many reports from this area for the last three years - they (you) win \$50 from Bob.
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From: Anita Randolfi
Subject: Re: 9th st. Kestrels
Date: May 21, 2009

dear Bob,

I had a full day and didn't manage to get over to the 9th nest until 7:20pm. I sat in the garden but there was no sign of the kestrels till about 7:40. Then, I saw both birds dash over to the nest to chase some starlings. After chasing the starlings they disappeared into the willow. I really don't think they were very upset by the starlings ... the chase seemed very relaxed, like they just wanted to remind the starlings that they were around and checking. I spent some time looking for them in the willow, and there were certainly birds up there, but I could not really see the kestrels. I left around 7:50. Crossing to the east side of Av C, I looked back at the antenna and

there she was sitting up there ... facing the nest as usual.

Anita Randolfi



(above) Street level view of East 91st street Kestrel nest in Infra-red; compare to photo taken from above on next page.

Animal Behavior:

6 Heads Are Better than 2 - A study of the gregarious **house sparrow** [the favorite prey species of NYC American Kestrels] suggests that individuals in larger groups are swifter at solving new problems than those in smaller groups - findings that add a behavioral dimension to the ecological costs and benefits of group living. Using wild-caught birds that were then acclimatized to experimental aviaries, Liker and Bokony investigated whether group size affected the success rate at which birds figured out how to obtain seeds from a familiar feeder when access was blocked with a transparent lid. The larger groups, which contained six birds, were able to dislodge the lids roughly 10 times as quickly as smaller groups of two birds - a pattern that was consistent across all individuals in the groups. Also, birds from urban environments were faster than birds from rural backgrounds. Increased success at problem-solving in larger groups may reflect a wider diversity of experience and skill among the individuals in the group and may constitute an adaptive advantage in complex habitats.



(above) Looking down at the East 91st street Kestrel nest - this is really urban! Same nest as infra-red photo.

(below) Male Kestrel with prey (bird) about to be delivered to the Front Street (Brooklyn Bridge) nest site



Robert DeCandido for Deborah Allen, Chad Seewagen, James O'Brien and Bobby Horvath (+ Sadie, Chris and Cathy) - and kestrel spies extraordinaire, everywhere.

4 June 2009

American Kestrel Nest Survey NYC - Issue #7 (2009)

Kestrels are fledging!

Hello All,

Apologies for the delay since the last Newsletter - You Folks have had much to report! This issue contains observations from around NYC about new kestrel nests discovered (Beth Goffe/Manhattan, Louise Weinberg/Queens and Rob Bate/Brooklyn) and Kestrels fledging (Bobby and Cathy Horvath).

Do be on the lookout for young kestrels who might have left the nest a bit early and ended up on the ground. Email me if you want instructions about what to do if you find a young kestrel on the ground or in a precarious situation.

We have included a few more photos of the immediate habitat around Kestrel nests sites here in NYC - these are very urban falcons living right on city streets.

Good Luck - and Your words tell the NYC Kestrel's tale - see below.



Female American Kestrel standing guard over the 84th street nest in Manhattan

Kestrel Reports from the Field:

From: Anita Randolfi
Subject: Re: 9th st. Kestrels
Date: May 22, 2009

Saw both kestrels this evening about 6:30pm. First the female appeared on the antenna and about 10 minutes later the male joined her. They stayed together on the antenna for only about 3 minutes but it was long enough to get the attention of some of the gardeners. The male flew off toward the nest but between my being slow of foot, and the trees being big and in the way, I lost him. Again, he may well have been swallowed by the willow tree. I left the garden about 20 minutes later and the female was still enthroned on the antenna.

Anita Randolfi
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From: Ben Cacace
Subject: Re: Good News - East 75th Street Kestrels
Date: May 24, 2009

Bob,

I agree about the nesting of these two kestrels nesting in the spot you located last year. The female is currently seen far more often than the male is. I'd say the male is seen roughly 1 out of 20 kestrel sightings over the past weeks.

There was a stretch, around the end of April beginning of May, where both were seen often and were calling to each other a lot! I thought this meant that young were about to fledge but I was wrong. Shortly after this the pair were mating often so I assumed they were trying again. From your observations it appears the nesting is just happening now. No failed nesting ... Good news!

All the best to you and Deborah.

Ben
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From: KA Peltomaa
Subject: Re: Kestrels at 69th street and Broadway, and 80th and Broadway
Date: May 24, 2009

Hi Bob,

Hope you had a good walk this Sunday morning. We had shopping errands to do, one stop was Fairway on B'way/74, so I took the bin's with me to see if I could find the American Kestrels at B'way@69th street, and/or the pair up by Zabaar's which is where we get our coffee.

I saw the male at 69th street did 2 flyovers btwn the building on the SE corner and the building on the NW corner where it perched about 2/3 of the way up on the building. Lost it on the building on the SE corner. Is that where they're nesting?

At 80th I only got a 2 second view of a Kestrel flying very fast down 80th street towards West End Avenue and disappear out of view.

Anders
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Former nest site area - 96th and Broadway - looking north up Broadway (Manhattan). Sharon Kass studied this pair for several years.

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From: Bob

Subject: Male Kestrel at Union Square Park

Date: May 25, 2009

I searched most of the blocks north of Union Square Park this morning, particularly from Broadway west...no luck. On my way back to the train station at 14th street, there was a male kestrel perched on the flagpole in Union Square Park. I watched him from about 11:45am until 1:00pm when he dove down on some birds on the lawn...and I lost sight of him. The kestrel likely headed southeast...my guess is that there is a pair nesting to the east of the park. I walked around the park for another couple hours - no further sign of kestrels on this cold, windy day.

Right now there is very much construction along Broadway and west below 23rd street to 14th street...not good for nesting kestrels.

=====

From: Robert Horvath

Subject: Brooklyn kestrel

Date: May 27, 2009

We got in the first [fledgling] kestrel today. A female found at Lincoln Road, Brooklyn (very near Prospect Park).

From Jessica Katz - a link to a map of the location:

<http://www.hopstop.com/map?zip=11225&address=300+Lincoln+Road&nearby=s>

That address is in the "Lefferts Gardens" section, about 3 blocks east of Prospect Park; plenty of food around for the Kestrels... it is only a few blocks south of the old Ebbets Field... John C. Clarke

Robert Cavileros M.D. found kestrels nesting on nearby Sterling Street in 2006 or so.

[As of Wednesday evening (27 May), we are sending kestrel spy Rob Bate there to have a look for the nest...Rob lives a couple blocks away.] And on Thursday morning, Rob reported back: "Nest is on Lincoln Road (metal cornice), third dental in from corner. Two adults seen in and out of cavity." And later, "The nest is in the metal cornice and it is over the alley alongside the building, on Lincoln Road. An antique Mercedes is parked in the alley/driveway. The "third dental" is probably inaccurate nomenclature, part of the cornice is support boxes (brackets/modillions) under the eave, and the nest is in the third one of those. The adults left and

didn't return for 20 minutes or more so I left. No other heads visible. Is there an ideal time to catch nest activity - early or late?"

Rob Bate - that is spectacular - Thank You. (Early is generally better.)

From: Maria Ausherman
Subject: kestrel sightings in the Bronx
Date: May 26, 2009

Dear Bob, I told my students about your interest. One student this morning says she sees them by her house at 934 Barrutto sometimes. Maria Ausherman (Thank You Maria!)

From: Bob
Subject: New Kestrel Nest Discovered - Chelsea
Date: May 27, 2009

In the west 25th street area a new kestrel nest was discovered today (27 May) - there are two very well-developed young inside (at least two). I did not see any down on them...my guess is that they will fledge in the next 48 hours...and there may already be 2-3 young that have fledged from that nest.

Once again the nest is in a partially rusted out metal cornice bracket...above the top apartment in a apartment building...about 75 feet up.

On 28 May, Jim O'Brien verified that two males were in the nest - but not for much longer!



Photo Above: View from the terrace of Carol Wood's apartment of the immediate habitat of this kestrel nest. We have seen the female dive down into the "tree islands" on Broadway from a ledge on the building at the far left of the photo to try and capture birds (starlings and sparrows).

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From: Louise Weinberg
Subject: Female American kestrel sighted
Date: May 28, 2009 3:01 PM

Hello Robert:

I saw what I believe is a female American Kestrel on a building on Vernon Blvd. at 46th Road in Long Island City*** at about 7pm on May 27th. She lit on a tall pole and I noticed her unusual shape and coloring. Then about 10 minutes later, she landed below my window much closer up and I could see her markings. Gorgeous!

I am a completely amateur birder with an obsession so I ran to goggle.

Best regards,

Louise Weinberg

Registrar/Archives Manager
Queens Museum of Art, New York City Building, Flushing Meadows Corona Park
Queens, NY 11368-3398

***And according to Patricia Essler, "Vernon Blvd. is the street that runs parallel with the East River. 46th Road intersects along Vernon Blvd directly across from the tip of Roosevelt Island, according to the NY Atlas."

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From: Beth Goffe
Subject: New Manhattan Kestrel Nest
Sent: May 27, 2009

I think I may have seen a kestrel at the corner of Amsterdam Ave (or perhaps it was a pigeon) today. I didn't have my bins so I'm not positive. The bird zoomed around a bit and then hovered in front of the cornice at the top of the 6 or 7 floor building. I'll go back with my bins to be sure. Would a kestrel nest that low?

Beth

=====

From: Robert DeCandido PhD <rdcny@earthlink.net>
To: Beth Goffe
Subject: Your Kestrels

Hi Beth,

OK you are now sworn in as the overseer and protector of the kestrel nest at Amsterdam Ave near City College. Yes that is a perfect height for nesting kestrels - 60 to 100 feet up.

Congratulations!

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From: Anita Randolfi
Subject: Re: E 9th St, kestrels
Date: May 29, 2009

Since last Monday, when they put on such a splendid display for all, I had not seen these kestrels. To my surprise I've become attached and was feeling a little uneasy about them, but I'm happy to report that they were both in the Ave C Garden this afternoon about 2:30. At first the female was on her antenna; then she flew to the

willow and the male joined her there a few minutes later. I had good views of them both and as far as I could make out there was no sex play, but they did seem to be communicating because I could see their bills moving. Alas, I could not hear their voices ... too far away, and the ambient noise level is high, and I'm sure that I've lost some hearing of the very high partials. Though they were keeping an eye on the nest, there still was no sign of activity at the nest. After about 10 minutes they both flew eastward.

Hope to see you and Debbie on the Sunday walk.

anita randolfi

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From: R&B Ward
Subject: 119th Street Kestrels
Date: May 30, 2009

Hello, Robert!

We're ending a 10 day visit here in East Harlem today. One of the kestrels has come to perch on the antennas on the lower building S of this penthouse at least 3 times that we noticed. Never had glasses at hand and light was poor, so we don't know which one. Also one of them on nest-break sat there for at least 15 minutes tearing up and eating something. We've been lucky enough to be walking past the nest site twice when one parent came in with food, too.

By the way, there's a mockingbird on this block--one of the species that were never seen here until the 1950s. This apartment is great for watching the herons fly inland and back out daily: great egrets, great blues, night herons...also cormorants and really large crows. Who would have expected that in the city!

Barb and Dick Ward
Octogenarian birders, but still on the move

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From: Jim O'Brien
Subject: Re: Fw: Re: NYC Kestrel Newsletter #6
Date: May 30, 2009

just some more news. i saw a pair of kestrels mating on 151st and amsterdam last week, they both flew off 2 blocks south, so I think there's a scrape right over there. I also saw 2 young at the 79th st. scrape across from zabars, then the parent copulated!!!! double clutch?

Editor's Note: see info from Bobby Horvath below - a fledgling male kestrel was found on Broadway and 82nd street on 3 June (Wednesday)

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From: Louise Weinberg
Subject: Nesting Kestrels in Queens (LI City)
Date: Jun 3, 2009

Hi Bob:

New pix of the pair and their nest located at 10-16 46th Avenue, Long Island City, Penthouse!

<http://artphotogirl1.wordpress.com/>

Louise

From: ROBERT HORVATH
To: "Robert DeCandido, PhD" <rdcny@earthlink.net>
Subject: fledgling kestrels
Date: Jun 3, 2009 10:44 PM

Hi Bob, Here's an update: Today I got in a male fledgling from 3rd Ave. and 57 St. that was in a glass bus stop enclosure overnight. Monday I got another male from Animal Medical Center that was found at 82 St. and Broadway. Hope all is well. Bobby (and Cathy) Horvath

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American Kestrel (*Falco sparverius*)
Female - Just fledged
25th Street near 10th Avenue
Manhattan (NYC)
22 May 2008

© Robert DeCandido PhD
rdcny@earthlink.net

Photo Above: Just fledged (note white down feathers on head) female (note vertical streaks on chest and brown wings) kestrel on 22 May 2008...this is early as kestrel fledgings go here in NYC...Peak time is mid-June...and as late as early July.

Remember, if you see a kestrel anywhere right now - there is a nest nearby. Do let us know.

Robert DeCandido PhD



Young Kestrel (note down on head)

6 June 2009

American Kestrel Nest Survey NYC - Issue #8 (2009)

Kestrels are fledging - Part II!

Hello All,

Herein are many wonderful reports from kestrels around town, and even from western Pennsylvania (Hollidaysburg). Janet Bachant spent a very rainy Friday (5 June) watching an adult male and female kestrel returning to her apartment building near West 86th street to hunt House Finches (pages 3-4). Meanwhile Jane Lynn is hypothesizing that her kestrels may be fledging a few days earlier this year than last and provides a link to some fine photos (page 5)...Here in NYC we are entering the peak time for kestrels leaving the nest - be on the lookout for UFOs (unidentified falcon objects) in your neighborhood - and do email if you want to know what to do if you find a kestrel on the ground.

This week Bobby and Cathy Horvath provided superb information to track down (perhaps) the most urban of urban kestrel nests in NYC: on East 57th Street in Manhattan. See the panoramic photo on page 4.



Just fledged male American Kestrel from the east 6th St. nest, June 2008 - note down on head and wing.

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Kestrel Reports from the Field:

From: Janet Bachant
To: Robert DeCandido PhD <rdcny@earthlink.net>
Subject: Kestrels, West Side
Date: Jun 4, 2009

Hi Bob,

I've been out Sunday and Thursday afternoons for about an hour each time and no luck at all. No sighting even of one watching the nest. Does that mean that they've gone? I plan to go out again tomorrow morning to see if I can catch any morning action. Will let you know. Janet

From: Bob
To: Janet Bachant
Subject: Kestrels, West Side
Date: Jun 4, 2009

Hi Janet,

They are likely still in that nest...what is happening now is that the female no longer needs to keep close watch on the young ones (they won't be attacked and killed by a starling invading the nest). So she is likely out hunting too...You'll just have to sit there for an hour or two watching the nest to determine what is going on. Note that about a day or two before the young fledge, they like to look out the nest opening - once you see them there - they are just about ready to go...Look also for stuff being blown out of the nest as the young ones flap their wings inside the nest. That is how you can judge the age of the young - wing flapping = fledging pretty soon!

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From: Bill Benish
Subject: Re: NYC Kestrel Newsletter #7
Date: Jun 4, 2009

Hi Bob,

Thank you for sending NYC Kestrel Newsletter #7. I'm still keeping an eye out for kestrels around W105th Street. On May 24th, I observed a kestrel perched on an antenna on or behind the left side of the building on W105th Street where they previously nested. It was there when I walked by in the morning, and I saw it there again at 4:30 pm.

I have not located a nest nearby, but I'll continue looking!

Bill Benish

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From: Lisa Darms
Subject: Re: NYC Kestrel Newsletter #7
Date: Jun 4, 2009

Just wanted to let you know that "our" Fort Greene (Brooklyn) Kestrels seemed to have moved on this year. They arrived a couple months ago and were here for a few weeks, but I haven't seen them in a month or so - my

theory is that the building they had always nested in is one that had been vacant, and was just remodeled and recently rented out. The reason I'm convinced they are gone rather than just elusive is that I regularly see starlings and other birds on their perch.

Lisa

Yes - we see this in NYC kestrels: some specific nest sites are occupied for 10 years or so..while others only for 1-2 years. On the other hand, within an area (territory), a given pair may have several nest sites they use through the years. How long a particular member of a NYC pair lives is also unknown (3-5 years?)...So we are certainly seeing mate replacement - but prime territories remain occupied every year, with the actual nest site changing every couple of years or so (usually but there are exceptions)...One of the ways we know that mates have changed is that one (or both) of the adults begins using a different favorite perch (and/or the nest site changes, etc.). Why different nests are used within the same territory is unknown - perhaps it is weather related for a particular year (this has been a cooler and wetter spring than average); it may have something to do with build-up of material in the nest - such as feathers from sparrows and other prey species that may harbor parasites (mites)...Lots of theories but we don't know right now. It would be great to get a temperature/humidity measuring device into a nest cavity to see what the range of temps is inside one of these cornices through the spring. We have noticed (as photographers) that the metal "brackets" that support the metal cornice are shielded from the direct sunlight by the cornice itself - perhaps this keeps the cavity (bracket) cool enough for the young birds and mom - but we don't know for sure just yet...Lisa, Thank You for the Brooklyn reports this year and last - do keep searching your neighborhood and especially Fort Greene - kestrels seem to hunt the smaller parks much more often than larger ones (eg., Prospect (Brooklyn), Van Cortlandt (Bronx) and Central Park (Manhattan)...In only one park in NYC (Pelham Bay Park in the Bronx) do we have kestrels nesting - but not every year. In Pelham Bay Park they (one pair only) use the nest boxes I placed there in 1998. rdc

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From: Rob Cicchetti
Subject: Re: NYC Kestrel Newsletter #7
Date: Jun 4, 2009 8:15 PM

Hi Bob.

In the few minutes of light when I have been home, I have seen the adult kestrels on 68th/Broadway deliver several fresh kills on a few mornings this week and also on the weekend-very good indicator of growing young I would say. I will be able to spend a bit of time to watch a bit more on the coming weekend as I will be in the city and revert back with any detail.

Did you locate your kestrel nest around Union Sq? (NOT YET!)

=====
From: Janet Bachant
Subject: Finches and Kestrels - upper West Side
Date: June 5, 2009

Hi Bob,

I was just getting ready to go out to check the kestrels [Amsterdam Avenue], thinking to myself that I haven't seen them at my window lately when I heard a thud and saw the whole thing. Poor baby....Had my camera all set up too but as soon as I moved over to it, he was gone (think it was the male). **8:20 AM** was the kill. This was a very professional hit on a female finch by a male kestrel that knew exactly what he was doing -- the poor baby remark was for the finch! The kestrel is just fine! Sorry for any misunderstanding (we've been watching

the finches mating, singing and bringing their young to the window so ...you feel bad for them.) But of course I want "my" kestrels to feed their young too....J

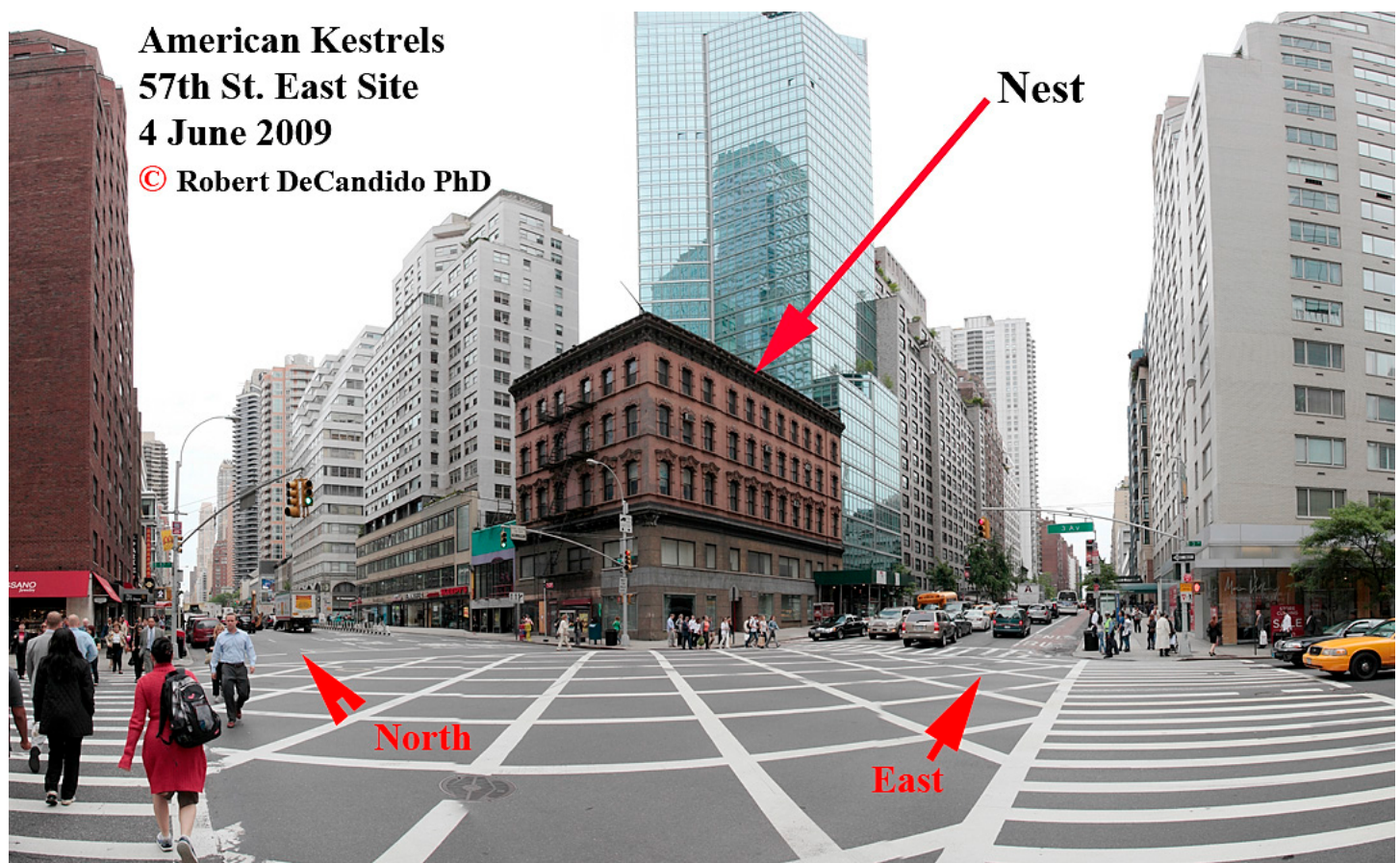
[At **10:20 AM**] Another pass, this time by a drenched female kestrel, but the finches flew into the kitchen so no luck for the kestrel. **J.**

[**1:41 PM**] = I don't know if this is the usual and I'm not here to see it but there were another 3 strikes by the falcons in the last 10 minutes. It looked like the male this time, but I don't think any of them were successful. I can't believe I was thinking that they weren't around much. I guess it is me that hasn't been around much!

Janet

[**2:30 PM**] Another strike at 2:30 PM. Scared a little male finch into the kitchen but then the finch was so panicked he flew into the window and knocked himself out. The kestrel flew away but returned a few seconds later but couldn't get the finch cause he was inside the enclosure, lying on his back. The finch recovered after about 10 minutes and eventually flew away. **Janet**

[**4:06 PM**] Another two passes and one "visit" to the window gate that scared a female finch inside (I was sitting at the kitchen table no more than 3 feet away. We gave each other the once over -- then she left.) One female finch is hanging out on top of the enclosure --don't know if she's long for this world. I am getting ready to go to the country now. **Janet**



Habitat of East 57th street kestrels in Manhattan - you cannot get more urban than this! Note flagpole extending out from building - a favorite perch of this pair. See last page for image of the two adults sitting on that perch (see bottom photo page 6).

From: Alexander Kalogerakis
Subject: 80th Street Kestrels
Date: June 5, 2009

Hi Bob,

Looked up while walking on 80th between West End and Broadway yesterday, and saw a rather wobbly, fast-beating but slow moving kestrel crossing the airspace- a fledgling to my eyes, and nice to see.

Alexi

[Thanks Alexi! Likely the 80th street and Broadway kestrels...one was found on the ground and is in re-hab. Others, such as the one you saw, seem to be doing well. rdc]

=====
From: Jane Lynn
Subject: Kestrels in PA
Date: June 6, 2009

Hi Bob,

I just wanted you to know that I saw the first two baby Kestrels come out and sit on the outside of the building where I could get some pictures. I posted it on my blog last night.

<http://windowonnature.blogspot.com/2009/06/extra-extra-read-all-about-it.html>

Interesting enough I was seeing the Male and Female copulating and displaying nesting behavior earlier this year than last. (The beginning of April versus last year towards the end of the month.) I thought that would indicate the babies would be out sooner and according to last year's blog entry the first baby fledged on June 25th. so we will see. This year I noticed the parents have been quiet compared to last when I was hearing a lot of crying from the female during feeding time and calling from the male when he brought the food. Just in the past week have I heard them being vocal. I don't know what that means, but it is different behavior from last year. You may know what that means, but it is all a mystery to me.

I know one thing, they are a joy to watch and document and the babies are just too cute. I'll keep you posted.

Thank you for the newsletters!

Jane Lynn
Hollidaysburg, PA
=====

You Folks have said the kestrel story so well - Thank You!

robert de candido phd



Jim O'Brien's nest site - young fledged here in late May; small parks near the nest are "population pumps" for prey species such as House Sparrows and European Starlings. The female can catch the latter, even in flight. Both adults like to raid the nests of these two prey species - and others as well (Pigeons, eg).



Remember that Flagpole from the photos of the East 57th street kestrels? Here is the falcon pair together about 40 feet from the nest. Female has prey (the remaining lower half of a small bird) in her beak - she is trying to locate a just fledged youngster to deliver food...

10 June 2009

American Kestrel Nest Survey NYC - Issue #9 (2009)

Kestrels are fledging - Part III!

Hello All,

Much information herein about NYC Kestrels. The Amsterdam Avenue nest site has been particularly active on Mon-Wed (June 8-10). Our great thanks to the Kestrel watchers there including Janet Bachant, George the Super One, Anders Peltomaa, Marc Shore and Tal Cohen-Shore. All told, there are at least four young kestrels that were in the Amsterdam Avenue nest...and we believe two are still in the nest as of Wednesday night, 10 June.

The images tell the story here - thanks for these, and the fine information from all parts of the city too.



Above: Adult Female Kestrel taking a break from incubating eggs at the East 75th Street nest, 9 June 2009.
Note the ragged feathers of her tail from sitting in the nest. Photo by rdc

Kestrel Reports from the Field:

Janet Bachant's email from 7 June 2009 begins the saga of the Kestrels on Amsterdam Avenue: "The baby kestrels have been waiting for their parents to come and feed them all afternoon. Finally, at about 6:50 Mom flies by which excited them quite a bit. They called to her and she brings in a feast! The young appear to be just about to fledge."

<http://picasaweb.google.com/jlbachant/KestrelsJune2009?feat=email#>

=====

From: KA Peltomaa

Subject: Three baby kestrel pic from Amsterdam Avenue Nest

Date: June 7, 2009

Attached is a photo showing that there are THREE baby kestrels in the nest [see below - two are easily seen while a bit of the third is barely visible in the small hole on the left in Anders' photo below. *[We would later discover that there were four kestrels in this nest.]* Great excitement. If I get any more and better shots I'll send them along.

Anders



**Skip to Pages 5-7 for detailed info on what happened next to one
of the young Amsterdam Avenue Kestrels!**

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From: Frank Schloegel
Subject: Brooklyn Kestrels
Date: June 7, 2009

We have a pair of Kestrels down here in Brooklyn. I can't seem to find the nest. They like a certain fire escape and a fence on top of a building directly above. Any suggestions on how to find a fledgling?

Thanks,

Frank

=====
From: Karen Swaine
Subject: Upper West Side Kestrels
Date: June 7, 2009

I'm thinking there must have been nesting falcons at 110th and Broadway as we used to see them perching on the water tower of a building there (NW corner). There are lots of elaborate cornices around rooftops in NYC for nests -- which is I assume where the kestrels built their nests...? [*Yes! See photo of typical nest cavity, page 2 and again on Page 7.*]

Karen

=====
From: Frank Schloegel
Subject: Brooklyn Kestrels
Date: June 8, 2009

Robert,

I live in Williamsburg. The birds are spending most of their days on Borinquen Place at Keap Street. I live on Grand Street, and we are separated by a large ready to develop parcel, owned, allegedly, by the Guiliani (or his nephew), so we are all hoping to keep our view of the kestrels.

They used to live on a building on my block, but that building got torn down to make way for a newer building. I nearly called for a movement to protect the urban habitat of old crummy buildings.

Have a good one, and I'll try to find the fledglings and/or the nest.

Frank

=====
From: Beth Goffe
Subject: Kestrels Upper Upper West Side
Date: June 8, 2009

Just letting you know I stopped at the Amsterdam Ave nest (near City College) after work. Both parents came and went a couple of times but I didn't see any young. They are so fast! I was just putting my camera away and one went in, the other went out and I wasn't fast enough. [*See photo Page 7!*]

Beth

From: KA Peltomaa
Subject: Upper West Side Kestrels
Date: June 8, 2009

Bob,

In the attached picture - how many baby Kestrels are there? Is that a tail in the middle, or a wing tip? [*Looks like two to me - I'll err on the conservative side for now and we'll do our best to count the actual fledglings - who as you saw last night - are ranging widely even now. Ultimately we determined that four kestrels were in this nest.*]

Nothing happened after you left as long as I was there. The female returned and perched on the rectangular cage perch where the male had been earlier - where he dived down to pick up the roach [*Yes the male kestrel was observed diving down onto a roof top to catch a roach (aka water bug). Debs has photo...*]

Anders

=====
From: Rob Cicchetti
Subject: The Cicchetti Kestrels (Broadway!)
Date: June 9, 2009

Bob,

Just to update you, I haven't seen any young yet, though can hear their cries on occasion coming from the nest from my apartment. The adults were fairly active this past weekend, bringing several kills into the nest throughout the day (5-6) and taking some of the fresh meat for themselves at times atop their favorite perches nearby. I also watched the adults dive after a couple of starlings on occasion-didn't witness any kills though; the gutsy starlings have their own nests on the same ledge as the Kestrels, oddly enough!

=====
From: Kenneth Hicks
Subject: Kestrel Nest on East 91st Street
Date: June 10, 2009

Bob,

I have some very unscientific observations concerning the kestrels at 91st Street which were made without the benefit of binoculars.

First, I walk by that spot where the nest is virtually every morning at about 7:30 am. I frequently saw one or the other of the adult kestrels in and around the water tower of the building across the street, but no movement at the next cavity. (By the way, it seems to me that the female likes the east side of the tower on a railing that surrounds the roof and the male prefers the west side).

Second, I am also able to see the east half of the water tower from my terrace. Although I looked often in the afternoon and early evening, I never saw the kestrels from there until Saturday of this past weekend, when I saw two birds that appeared to be kestrels sitting on the east side of the tower. On Sunday, I saw three! While I was watching, one of the birds took off and soared high over 91st street and then flew east (unmistakably a kestrel). (There is a park that is part of the Ruppert Towers apartments which has lots of house sparrows, although I don't know that this is where the bird was heading.) Either the same bird or another bird returned within a few minutes and fed something to one of the young. (It did not appear that the adult brought a whole bird back to be dismembered, but something was given by the adult to one of the other birds). The adult then took off again

and soared to the top of an antenna on top of the Ruppert Towers (which is very high!) At this point, the two remaining birds seemed to me to clearly both be fledglings since they moved in small spurts or walked along the edge of the railing. I have not seen the group since the weekend in the morning. I haven't really been looking at night because of the rain and other things that took my time.

I hope this is useful.

Ken

From: KA Peltomaa

Subject: Kestrel fledged at Amsterdam nest, maybe injured at landing

Date: June 10, 2009

Hi Bob,

One of the chicks at Amsterdam fledged at about 10:20am on Wednesday morning, and it landed on a window ledge across the street above the hair salon (*see Anders' photo below*). It landed next to an AC unit on those spikes people put up to stop pigeons. Looks like it might be injured. I'm gonna go back with camera and bins and see if I can find George to get up on the building and see how it is doing.

Anders



Above: Just fledged male (why?) American Kestrel on Amsterdam Avenue - photo by Anders Peltomaa on 10 June 2009. Note downy feathers ("fuzz") on his head.

From: Janet Bachant

Subject: Fledged Kestrel, Amsterdam Avenue

Date: June 10, 2009 2:18 PM

Hey Bob,

I just went by the nest and saw two babies still in the nest (pretty sure -- I didn't have my field glasses but a neighbor thought so too). What happened to the one Anders found?

Loved your shot on them Deb -- you get to see the whole play on the feeding.

Thanks for keeping me in the loop. Janet

From: KA Peltomaa

Subject: Amsterdam Avenue Kestrel Update

Date: June 10, 2009

When I returned with camera to check up on the baby, it had moved away from the spikes and appeared fine. About an hour later it flew across Amsterdam again. I didn't see where it landed but still later it flew across the avenue again so it must have landed on the roof. The mother showed up and mother and they perched together on the pole closest to the roof we were on yesterday. I got a few nice shots of the baby on the ledge and will pass them on to you later today.

Later this afternoon I will go over there again and hope to find George so I can get some photos of them from the roof.

It was great to see the chick fly out on wobbly wings after days of watching the nest and activity in the hole. And a great relief to later see that it was ok despite landing right on the ledge with the anti-pigeon spikes.

- Anders



Young male Kestrel at the Amsterdam nest at approx 6:00pm on 10 June - "looking good"
photo by Anders Peltomaa.

From: KA Peltomaa
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And here is another photo (p.6) of him at 6pm (the other shot was about 11am). He is sitting on a fire escape on the 3rd floor on a building on the West side of Amsterdam (to the left of the hair salon). George spotted him, while I was looking at the mother who was perching on the barbed wire pole at the end of the block.

This is, to me the best photo from today of my adopted kestrel family. This the whole photo as it came of the camera, just resized to send to you [bottom of Page 6].

Anders

Jane Bachant has several nice photos of the proceedings at the Amsterdam Avenue nest site taken on Wednesday evening, 10 June: <http://picasaweb.google.com/jlbachant/FirstFlightsJune102009?feat=email#>

More info on different NYC Kestrel nests to follow in the coming days,

Robert DeCandido



Above: Adult female American Kestrel leaving the nest after delivering food to the Amsterdam Avenue youngsters on 9 June 2009. Photo by Patricia Dubren.