

18 February 2010

American Kestrel Nest Survey NYC - Issue #1 (2010)

Kestrels are returning to NYC nest sites

Nice to be back and researching NYC American Kestrels with everyone again. We begin the new year with reports of kestrels hanging around former nest sites (Queens); entering nest cavities (Manhattan) - and we just received a report of kestrels vocalizing on Varick Street in Lower Manhattan (thanks Haley Main) during the week of Feb 7th. Last year kestrels began courtship displays and vocalizing (Killy-killy-killy) in the first half of March. So if you have a moment, do look for kestrels in your neighborhood - they might be nesting earlier this year than last. (NYC Great Horned Owls are nesting ahead of last year's schedule - so it may be a trend across species/groups this year.)

We also tracked down a kestrel article from 1919 - we now know that NYC kestrels have been nesting in building cornices here for at least 94 years.

Do send any observations, photos etc. on NYC kestrels to: Robert DeCandido rdcnyc@earthlink.net



Above: Male American Kestrel in flight (photographer unknown)

Kestrel Reports from our Spies in the Field:

From: Matthew Nichols

Subject: Re: Kestrel Newsletters

Date: January 24, 2010

Totally unexpectedly, today I witnessed a Kestrel swoop down and snag a meal. It was right at the intersection of **14th Avenue and 42nd St in Brooklyn** where the Kestrel made breakfast out of a small bird feeding on some bread. I drove around the block and saw another **Kestrel on the top of the Hotel at the intersection of 47th and 13th....**

Just wanted to let you know there might be a nest somewhere in the area? I'll let you know if I find one...and hopefully get some pictures.

ECO Matthew Nichols
NYSDEC Region 2 Office

[OK Brooklyn Kestrel spies - what Brooklyn neighborhood did Officer Nichols find these kestrels? Are these two locations near one another? - Bob would like to know!]

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From: Mike DiPrima
To: "Robert DeCandido, PhD" <rdcny@earthlink.net>
Sent: *Feb 15, 2010*
Subject: Kestrels in Jackson Heights, Queens

Papa Kestrel is back! He has been here for a week (approx. 8 February back on territory)



Above: male American Kestrel back at his old antenna perch in **Jackson Heights, Queens**
(photograph courtesy of Mike DiPrima; 15 February 2010)

From: Janet Bachant
To: "Robert DeCandido, PhD" <rdcny@earthlink.net>
Subject: **They're back!**
Date: February 15, 2010

Hi Bob,

Good news! I saw a lot of action down the block when I went to do my errands at 11:30 and determined I would come back along Amsterdam so I could check on the site. About an hour later I caught the male (I think it was a male) flying around then into the nest cavity. He stayed in for a couple of minutes (didn't seem to be carrying food) then streaked over across the street to his usual perch. Looks good!

Janet Lee Bachant, Ph.D.



Above: Nest site of the Amsterdam Avenue kestrels in a typical cornice of a late 19th century apartment building. This nest is carefully looked after by many people, especially: Maggie Medina-Plaza who lives right below the nest; Marc Shore and Tal Cohen-Shore (and their son) who own the building; George the Super One - who monitors the building across the street; and perhaps this year bob will get his architectural information correct, if New York Times Architectural writer and historian Christopher Gray takes an interest...



Above: four recently fledged kestrels (how many males vs. females are there?) at the Amsterdam Avenue nest - photographed in **2009** by Anders Peltomaa. That would be three and one.
- you tell us which is the young female and why.

From: Anders (KA) Peltomaa
To: "Robert DeCandido, PhD" <rdcny@earthlink.net>
Subject: Re: Kestrels, Amsterdam Ave
Date: February 15, 2010

Great news,

I saw the male perching on one of the poles holding the chain link fence across the street from the nest [on Amsterdam Avenue] last Monday. I hang around for a while, but he did not move. I am thrilled that they are back and am looking forward to another kestrel season!

cheers,

Anders

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Bird-Lore 21(4): 225-227 (JULY-AUGUST, 1919)

Nip, the Young Sparrow Hawk

By KATE P. and E. W. VIETOR. Brooklyn. N. Y.

DURING the first days of April, 1916, a Sparrow Hawk appeared in our neighborhood, a closely built-up section of Brooklyn, N.Y. His killy-killy was often the first sound we heard in the morning, and a high church-steeple was his favorite perch.

On the 13th of the month there were two Sparrow Hawks about, and on the **16th [April] one was seen entering a broken cornice on a house** in the next street. This situation was rejected, however, and we never discovered the real nesting site, but we knew it must be nearby, and several times during May (though the 13th was the only date we noted) we saw a parent bird carry off a fledgling from a colony of English Sparrows' nests in a vine on a house at the rear of our yard.

On **July 16** a lady brought us a young Sparrow Hawk which she had found on her doorstep in a nearby street. Excepting for his tail, which was only 3 inches long, he looked fully grown. He was wild and sullen and defiant; drawing himself back as if to strike, he fiercely nipped our hand though his mandibles were too soft to be formidable.

It was Sunday, and there was no raw meat to be had, so we tried to feed him with the yolk of a hard-boiled egg, but though it was easy to put it on his tongue, for his bill was constantly distended, he would not swallow, so we put him under a peach-basket and left him in a darkened room. Peeping through the cracks a little later, we saw him lying on his side, with legs drawn up, and supposed him to be dying, but the next time we looked he was sitting up.

Toward evening we took him out, and, holding him firmly, dropped water from a spoon into his open bill. To our delight he swallowed it eagerly. In this way we managed to wash down a little of the egg-yolk. A berry-crate was substituted for the peach-basket, and he was left alone for the night. More than half expecting to find him dead, we hurried down next morning - but he was alive and lively. We procured some beef, cut it in bits, and holding him as before, offered him a bit. He ate it greedily, bit by bit, and as he ate he became docile. We put him back in his improvised cage, but he had tasted freedom, and, fortified with the good beef, soon found his way out and established himself on top of the crate where he sat, quiet and contented, the most of the day. Toward evening he sprang about a foot to a shelf in the extension which had been given up to him, where he sat on a box the second night.

He was now so tame that he would sit on our hand. and although he showed a great aversion to being held, or to having his head touched. He did not object to being fondled, and showed much pleasure in having his back stroked, raising it under the hand like a cat.

On the third day he adopted a perch. the highest the extension afforded, but often turned his head on one side as though looking for a higher one. Although he would sit for hours at a time on the perch, he would leave it readily if a finger were offered instead, and invited attention by cocking his head on one side and opening his bill: raise a finger and he would nip it gently, and once he climbed on a shoulder and nipped an ear. Altogether one could not wish for a clearer or more interesting pet than was Nip during this time. Indeed so gentle and friendly did he seem, that we had visions of a semi-domesticated Sparrow Hawk who would make our neighborhood his home and keep it free of English Sparrows.

Then he was so pretty, with his crown of rufous, tipped with gray, giving a changeable effect; his soft buffy

throat and cheeks of the same hue, outlined by black lines; his buffy underparts, streaked with brown on the breast; and his barred back and tail; but the 'eyes' on the inner web of the primaries which in the folded wing formed bars, were the most wonderful thing about his coloring.

After the first day, when he fed many times, he never ate over an ounce of beef a day. We fed him about 8 o'clock in the morning and 5 in the afternoon. He always made a good breakfast, but sometimes refused supper altogether. He showed a decided preference for very fresh meat. He ate daintily and never gourmandized. He seemed to like water but not to know how to drink; so we sometimes dipped his meat in water. He would not bathe.

On the fourth day he made his first flight, a distance of about 6 feet, and repeated it several times. Toward evening, being taken to the yard, he flew to the fence, and then across the next yard, but readily submitted to capture. Two days later, the door having been left open, he flew to a line in the kitchen, and from that to the top of an open door, the highest in the room. Taken back to his quarters and the door shut, he flew against it so persistently that he ruffled his tail. Later, when he had achieved liberty, this ruffled tail served as a mark of identification. Fearing that he might injure himself severely, we opened the door, when he immediately repeated his flight, first to the line, and then to the top of the high door, and for the remainder of his stay with us, this was his perch. During the day, he kept to the outside, but as evening approached, he settled near the wall. We never caught him napping; steal down stairs ever so quietly after dusk had fallen, we always found him awake and alert.



Above: American Kestrel male soaring with an immature Red-tailed Hawk on the upper West Side (Manhattan) in mid-February 2010. Photo by Lincoln Karim.

During this lime, his tail grew a full inch and he began to show signs of restlessness. It was plain that he wanted more space, so, on the morning of July 25, nine days after he came into our possession, we took him to the roof, hoping that we could feed him there until he was able to care for himself. From the vantage-ground of a chimney, Nip looked at the great world beneath and the great sky above, where even then his parents were sailing, and a wonderful change came over him. For a moment he stood poised with outspread wings, in true Hawk fashion, and we who had been so necessary to his existence and had flattered ourselves that he had repaid us in affection, realized that we were no longer either necessary or desirable to him. The wild nature reasserted itself, and a barrier, intangible but very real, was drawn between us and him. Sadly we left him and went down to the humdrum of civilized life.

An hour later, from the street, we saw him launch forth into the world. Slowly, but straight, he flew over a tree and out of sight, and we thought never to see him again, but, lo, next morning, he was perched on a neighboring chimney, and a series of insistent insect-like notes was traced to him and found to be his hunger-cry, for soon one of the old birds brought breakfast. And for three weeks after his liberation, the following program was daily carried out. Between 9 and 10 o'clock we would hear a clamor from the English Sparrows, and, on looking out, would see Nip on some chimney or coping and hear his hunger cry.

After a time, sometimes soon, an old bird would dash into view, quickly give Nip the quarry, and then from some chimney or the steeple, keep guard while he regaled himself. Usually he was fed again about 5 in the afternoon. but sometimes, either for the sake of discipline or from ill-luck in hunting, he went to bed supperless. We could not often see what the prey was, but once we distinctly saw that it was a full-grown Sparrow. **The last time we saw him fed was on August 13**, when, from the screaming of the poor victim, we knew he had been entrusted with a live bird. Next day Nip sat and called a long time but no parent appeared. and we concluded that he had been thrown on his own resources, We never saw him perch on a chimney again, **but until well into December, we occasionally got a glimpse of a Sparrow Hawk** flying over the roofs and we noticed a decrease in the number of Sparrow pests.

Do send Kestrel reports our way! Thanx = Robert DeCandido and Deborah Allen



4 March 2010

American Kestrel Nest Survey NYC - Issue #2 (2010)

First Kestrel reports of the season - 2010!

We are going to turn the tables with this issue and begin with historical information first: from 1922 comes a wonderful description of the courtship activities of a pair of kestrels in Albany, New York on the state education building. Here in NYC in late Feb- early March 2010, we are already receiving reports of kestrels back at certain nest sites - so the historical article is a good overview of what to look (and listen) for. Is this early for kestrels to be courting (one copulation witnessed on 28 February)? Ask us in a few years as we compile data. Meanwhile, some amazing stories from as far away as Coney Island, Brooklyn and even Oregon (Greater NYC).



**Female American Kestrel near the Amsterdam Avenue nest, Manhattan.
Photographed 20 February by KA (Karl Anders) Peltomaa.**

Notes on the Mating Habits of the Sparrow Hawk [1922]. --For several years, Sparrow Hawks (*Falco s. sparverius*) have been more or less constantly in evidence in the vicinity of the State Education Building at Albany, New York. In the spring of 1922, a pair established their hunting headquarters on the tops of some marble columns which are a few feet below and a hundred feet away from my office windows. On these columns and on the edge of the roof some thirty feet above, the activities here recorded were carried on. The notes were jotted down on a calendar pad when the observations were made and are given practically as then written.

April 6. A pair of Sparrow Hawks rested for several minutes on the top of the columns, within two feet of several pigeons.

April 7. Mated once on the edge of the roof.

April 14. On top of the columns and mating. Preliminary to mating, the birds faced one another and slowly bobbed their heads and tails, the female keeping up a continuous slow call. Mated five times at intervals of five minutes and in each instance the male dropped his tail to the left of the up-turned tail of the female.

April 15. Mated three times in fifteen minutes, the female calling continuously while the male calls loudly only when approaching the female. The call of the female is a low pee-'ep, pee-'ep, pee-'ep. After mating, the female sometimes continues to call and flutter her wings while the male rests nearby with drooping wings and head drawn down on the shoulders.

April 17. Raining. Female called most of the afternoon. After mating, the male sometimes mounts high in the air and performs some remarkable evolutions -- spirals, short dashes and a rapid drop ending on the back of the female.

April 18. Raining. Female continues to call. Mated once at 10:34 A.M.

April 19. Female took a young squab from nest in stucco work near top of column and flew to roof. Pigeon attacked the Hawk and followed for a few yards until the Hawk turned and struck out two or three of the pigeon's feathers.

April 21. Mated once at 4:20 P.M.

During the last week in April, the Hawks moved to the opposite end of the Education Building and hunted Sparrows that were nesting behind the wire screen covering the window in a nearby church. The frightened Sparrows flew wildly up and down within the limits of the window frame, followed closely in every movement by the Hawks on the outside.

May 4. Mated at 7:30 P.M.

Judging from these few observations, the female takes the initiative in mating. Her calls are continuous for many minutes at a time and are often accompanied by fluttered wings and definite approach towards the male. The male was observed to call only when actually dropping down to the female. ---- Sherman C. Bishop, *New York State Museum*.

From: The Auk 42: 268-269 (April 1925).

From: Anne Lazarus
Subject: American Kestrel
Date: February 17, 2010 (Wednesday afternoon)

Today at about 3:30PM on Houston Street near the Film Forum between 6th and 7th Ave, Elaine Abse and Anne Lazarus saw an American Kestrel on the lamp post. It was flying low back and forth to the lamp post.

From: Kenneth Hicks
Subject: Re: NYC Kestrel Newsletter #1 - 2010
Date: February 18, 2010

Bob,

I have not seen the 91st Street [Manhattan] Kestrels yet this year. Has anyone made a report of a sighting?

Ken Hicks



Male American Kestrel perched on a railing in Manhattan in February 2010 (© Anders Peltomaa)

From: John van Dort
Subject: NYC kestrels
Date: February 18, 2010

Hi Bob, --- I'm momentarily back in the city, after field work in Mexico and Central America last fall and winter. I haven't seen any kestrels in Inwood yet, but did see one on 14th St last week (Wednesday 2/10), between 6th and 7th Ave. It landed on the roof of the Salvation Army building there. Don't know if it was male or female, I didn't have binoculars with me.

Was just reading the 2009 Farmer & Smith article in the Journal of Raptor Research describing declines in the Northeast for AMKE. In it, I read on page 270 the following: "**A gradient from east to west is apparent in trend estimates for northeastern North America, with stronger declines occurring at coastal hawkwatch sites (Fig. 1). This pattern may indicate that negative influences on populations are strongest in areas from which kestrels migrate near dense human populations along the Atlantic Coast.**"

Could it be that these kestrels have simply moved into the city and no longer migrate? [Yes we believe most breeding kestrels in NYC don't migrate - but many young ones of the year do.] A change of lifestyle is not necessarily the same as a change of status. The trend of raptors moving into cities seems to continue. I'm wondering what your thoughts are on this - [OK: This is the first study of urban kestrels in North America - we are just learning how many pairs are here in NYC - and likely every other city in the eastern USA at least. As an aside, in Berlin, they have over 300 pairs nesting annually, mostly in nest boxes...John - really good question - let's see what the data tell us in the coming months and years. But our kestrels are a long-standing (since 19th Century)breeding population - so they are old-timers as residents here in NYC]

John

Heeft U deze vogel gezien?



De Amerikaanse Torenvalk (*Falco sparverius*)

De Amerikaanse Torenvalk is de kleinste valk in New York City. Hij komt voor in alle stadsdelen, van de upper west side en Harlem tot verder noordelijk in The Bronx, en van midtown Manhattan verder zuidelijk tot Brooklyn. In de stad broedt de vogel in huizen van gebouwen. In Staten Island en Queens broedt de soort ook in nestkasten bij oude vuiltoeren. Torenvalken eten insecten, o.a. libellen, en andere kleine prooidieren zoals muizen en huisvuur.

Recent wetenschappelijk onderzoek heeft aangetoond dat deze valk helaas afneemt in het noordoostelijk deel van de Verenigde Staten. We weten niet hoe de soort het doet in New York City. Hij zou wel eens uit het straatbeeld kunnen verdwijnen de komende jaren. We zijn van plan zoveel mogelijk stedelijke Torenvalken te beschermen, in de hoop dat we deze valk voor New York City kunnen behouden.

Wij hebben daarbij uw hulp nodig!

Wanneer u een Torenvalk ziet, of -nog beter- wanneer u een nestlocatie weet, neem dan alstublieft contact met ons op. Voor meer informatie kunt u een van ons e-mails of bellen.

Robert DeCandido: rdcny@earthlink.net

718-828-8262

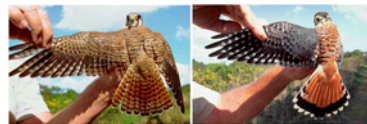
Jim O'Brien: YoJimB@aol.com

Deborah Allen: D.Allen@earthlink.net

All Photos © Deborah Allen



你看過這一隻鳥嗎？



美國茶隼 (*Falco sparverius*)

茶隼（麻雀鷹）是紐約市中最小的生存獵鷹。牠的別名是 El Cernícalo Americano。它能在所有的五個區中被發現。從哈林區向北到布魯克林區，和從中城曼哈頓向南伸展到布魯克林。牠在城市街道上的公寓建築物的壁帶中築巢。在史坦島和皇后區，牠也在垃圾堆埋場附近被設置的盒子中築巢。茶隼以昆蟲，像是蜻蜓和其他的包括老鼠和家畜等小的獵物為食。

可惜的是，最近的科學研究指出，這一類的獵鷹在美國的東北方喪失中。在紐約市，我們對茶隼沒有太多的了解。牠在即將來臨的數年內可能消失如一個城市居民。我們計劃盡可能的來了解有關都市茶隼的知識，希望這一類獵鷹能在紐約市生存下去。

我們需要您的幫忙！

如果您看到美國茶隼，或者，您知道茶隼巢的位置，請和我們連絡。如果您想要更多的資料，請寄電子郵件或打電話給我們。謝謝！

Robert DeCandido: rdcny@earthlink.net

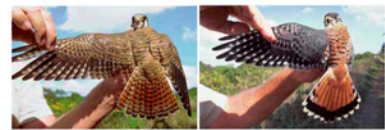
718-828-8262

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Deborah Allen: D.Allen@earthlink.net



¿Ha Visto Esta Ave?



El Cernícalo Americano (*Falco sparverius*)

El Cernícalo Americano es el halcón más pequeño que vive en la ciudad de Nueva York. Llamado en inglés el American Kestrel, se encuentra por toda la ciudad. En Manhattan, el Bronx y Brooklyn el cernícalo prefiere anidar en las cornisas de los edificios que dan a la calle. En Staten Island y Queens también anida en cajas especiales colocadas cerca de vertederos abandonados. El Cernícalo Americano se alimenta de insectos tales como las libélulas (mosas del diablo) y otros pequeños animales de presa como los ratones y los gorriones.

Desafortunadamente, la investigación científica reciente indica que la población de este halcón ha menguado en el nordeste de los estados unidos. En la ciudad de Nueva York ignoramos la situación exacta del cernícalo. Es posible que desaparezca del todo de la ciudad en los años venideros. Nosotros tenemos la intención de estudiar el mayor número posible de cernícalos urbanos con la esperanza de que podamos contribuir a salvar este halcón en la ciudad de Nueva York.

¡Necesitamos su ayuda!

Si usted ve un Cernícalo Americano, o, mejor aún, si usted sabe de la existencia de un nido, por favor póngase en contacto con nosotros. Si quiere más información, llame o escriba por correo electrónico a uno de nosotros. ¡Gracias!

Robert DeCandido: rdcny@earthlink.net

718-828-8262

Jim O'Brien: YoJimB@aol.com

Deborah Allen: D.Allen@earthlink.net

Fotografía © Deborah Allen



NYC American Kestrel flyers, from left to right: Dutch, Chinese and Spanish. We have them in 11 languages including Hebrew, Russian, Korean...If nothing else, NYC is diversity - and what better way of getting reports about local kestrels from folks in ethnic neighborhoods throughout the city? Many people who are not part of the birding community have sent us great info - from Chinatown to Little Italy- and all those wonderful neighborhoods in Queens too. Anyone have a web site that wants to post these for free download - do let me know - Thanx. - rdcny@earthlink.net

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From: Rob Cicchetti
Subject: Re: NYC Kestrel Newsletter #1 - 2010
Date: February 18, 2010

Hi Bob,

Kestrels are indeed back, around 68th and Broadway (really never left actually) . From my window, I saw one adult dive-bombing a Red Tailed Hawk on Saturday which was perched in Kestrel territory on nearby water tower b/t 69th and 70th. It made about 15 dives at it before the *Buteo* departed for greener pastures. I've regularly seen (3-4x week) kestrels around the area.

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From: Robert E.Adamski
Subject: Brooklyn Kestrels from Issue #1
Date: February 18, 2010

14th Avenue and 42nd St and 47th and 13th Avenue in Brooklyn are in **Borough Park**. (*These were the Brooklyn Kestrels reported in the previous issue by NYS Officer Matthew Nichols.*)

Robert E. Adamski, P.E., BCEE, F.SAME, F.ASCE
Gannett Fleming, V.P., Municipal Infrastructure Programs

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From: Sandra Koponen
Subject: kestrels around 15th street (Manhattan)
Date: February 22, 2010 (Monday)

From my window that looks north to 15th St. I saw a kestrel flying yesterday.

I will try to have the camera out and ready so that I can get a shot next time!

Sandra

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From: KA Peltomaa
Subject: Female Kestrel today Saturday at Amsterdam
Date: February 20, 2010 (Saturday)

Hi Bob,

Neither today or yesterday were there any Kestrels to be seen by Zabar's or at CPW. However today, over by the Amsterdam Avenue nest I spotted the female at 11:45am and observed her for a half-hour or so.

She was first perching on the East side of Amsterdam, then flew over and perched on the nest building, and then back again to the other side. Got a few photos - two attached here and some more posted to my flickr account.

While the female was perching I got the impression she was waiting for the male (whom I did not see), because she kept turning around and around on her perching poles. Seemingly scanning the neighborhood for her partner. No activity by the nest hole to be seen.

- Anders

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From: Matthew Wills
Subject: Brooklyn Kestrels
Date: February 24, 2010

I've yet to see a kestrel this year, even though Brooklyn has offered up red-tails, peregrines, merlins, Cooper's, and a goshawk.

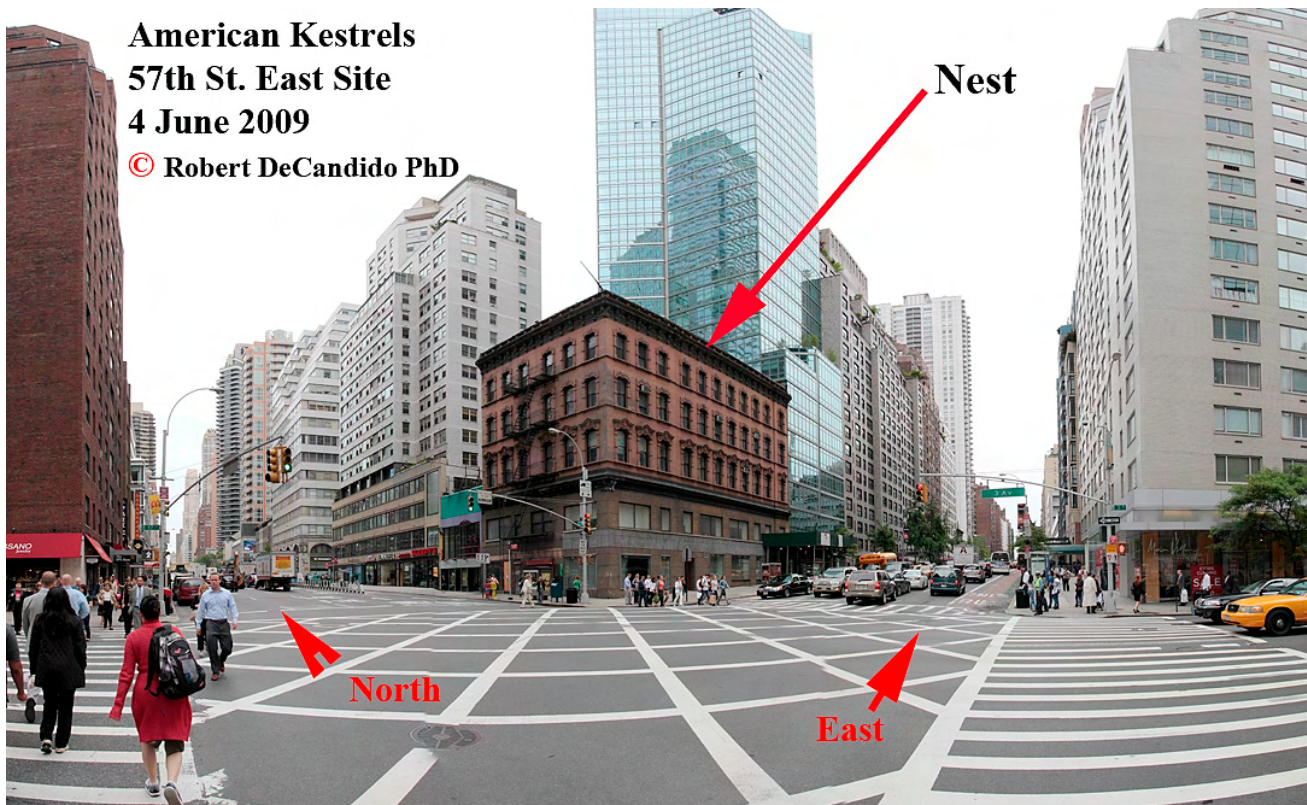
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From: KA Peltomaa
Subject: Male Kestrel at Amsterdam Ave today
Date: February 26, 2010 (Friday Snowstorm)

... I took an afternoon walk by the nest sites on Amsterdam and CPW/85 today, Friday. Nothing at CPWest, but at the Amsterdam Ave I found the male perching in the aftermath of the snowstorm. Light, to moderate snow was falling at times heavy wind gusts, but he was keeping is post, guarding their territory.

- Anders

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From: Robert DeCandido
Subject: **Bronx Kestrels**
Date: **February 28**, 2010 (Sunday morning)

In the Bronx, I watched a female kestrel on an aerial (rooftop antenna) - she has been perched here every morning through the winter (Parkchester Bronx). I then saw the male fly in, copulate with her and re-locate a few inches away. So we have a new early date for kestrel copulations but I am sure they copulate even earlier (warmer days of January) - same as NYC Red-tailed Hawks.



Nest site and surrounding habitat of a pair of Manhattan kestrels. The building has been renovated in the intervening year, and kestrels can no longer nest here. Nest Box?

From: Maggie
Subject: Amsterdam Kestrels
Date: March 3, 2010

Hi Bob,

....I believe I hear my Kestrels again!!! They may be back above my window [on Amsterdam Avenue]. Could they have chicks this early? It sounds like the high pitch cry of them or is it the Mom calling the Dad?

.... I knew I recognized those calls. I'll be keeping you posted since they are around early. Do u know why this could be [*Our experience has been that second-time nesters begin several days earlier than the on their first attempt - but you are also more attuned to your kestrels too.*] ? Just interested to know to share knowledge-lol. Any idea where last year's babies went? [*Good Question - we need some radio telemetry and satellite tel. transmitters to track them.*] I miss them (Lola, Paco, Chucho n Pancho). Those were my names for them, at least for the four I knew. Gotta think of new names-lol. Oh n my daughter just had a baby boy n I'll have more babies (chicks) coming. I'm a happy grand mama!! [*Congratulations from the 200+ people on the NYC Kestrel list.*]

Blessings Maggie

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Kestrels - National



Banding a male kestrel in Oregon - see Don McCartney's email on the following page.

From: Don & Carol McCartney
Subject: Re: NYC Kestrel Newsletter #1 - 2010
Date: February 19, 2010

Hello Dr. DeCandido,

I am thrilled that you will be publishing your newsletter for another year. For me it provides a window into a completely different and fascinating ecosystem for Kestrels. I have a 100-box Kestrel trail that was started with one box in 1998 [in rural Oregon], and through the 2009 season, a total of 1,351 falcons have fledged from these boxes.

The high desert of central Oregon provides us with some additional opportunities. One is banding for migration studies (that is my wife holding two newly-banded young falcons). In turn, the banding presents the opportunity for the education of interested people of all ages. They literally get a hands-on introduction to these to these magnificent raptors (photo).

Again, thank you for your newsletter, as it is much appreciated!

Don McCartney



OK all you kestrel spies: which one is the male and which is the female? And how can you absolutely tell the male is a young one just about to make his first flight?

From: Steve Simmons
Subject: Re: Kestrels/California
Date: February 19, 2010

Hi Robert,

....[Kestrels boxes] could be inside the fire escape with the hole in between the metal bars.

On one of my big kestrel projects that I started in 2003, I had 9 nest initiations the first year and 80 last season. Because I band all of my kestrels, I know how many adults return from year to year, do they use the same nest box and how many nestlings return to nest in the boxes. Good luck with your work and if there is anything I can do to help with your kestrels, don't hesitate to contact me.

Steve

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A male American Kestrel in Coney Island (Brooklyn) - photo summer 2009 by Olga Pester. She writes: "The kestrels built a nest in my neighbor's AC vent a few years ago. They usually come by in the summer." *How many kestrel nest boxes can you find in Olga's photo? And how many people in Coney Island could this kestrel (flyer) visit? Think B-I-G....Regards Debs and rdc...*

8 March 2010

American Kestrel Nest Survey NYC - Issue #3 (2010)

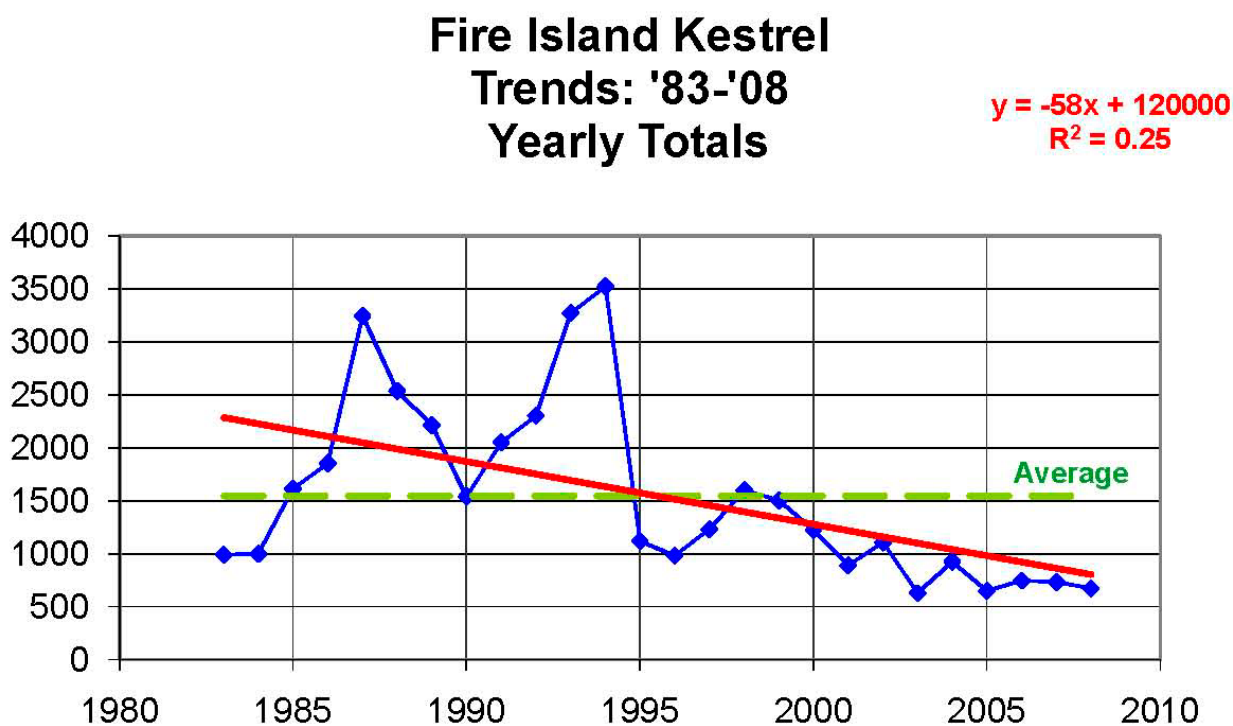
Kestrels near nest sites and vocalizing

With mild weather taking hold again, kestrels are calling in their territories here in New York City - one good indicator that there is a pair near you. In some places, people have had good luck with a similar approach - using an Ipad or other Mobile Device, play the territorial call of a kestrel - if one of these small falcons is within a block or so, he/she should come over to investigate.

From Bedford-Stuyvesant in Brooklyn (a place with many late 19th century houses that have cornices kestrels like to nest in), Patrick Wilson sends this YouTube video of a kestrel on his fire escape in early March - and see his story with photo on Page 2 of this Newsletter:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-kn8fW0vhE0>

Below, see the data on the 25-year trend of migrant American Kestrels in our area. We believe most of our adult kestrels are resident here in NYC - but most young of the year likely disperse/migrate. A 2007 band recovery showed that at least one NYC kestrel made it all the way to Florida.



Above: Data courtesy of **Drew Panko and Trudy Battaly** - a 25-year trend in the number of migrating kestrels counted at the Fire Island Hawk Watch, Long Island (Robert Moses State Park, Suffolk Co.).

Left ("Y") axis shows the actual number of kestrel migrants counted (per year) - blue line.

The overall 25 year trend is indicated by the red line.

From: Patrick Wilson
Subject: American Kestrel sighting - Brooklyn
Date: March 4, 2010 (Thursday morning)

Hello!

I woke up this morning around 9AM to see this guy on our fire escape, enjoying a nice meal of a house sparrow! He was out there for about 45 minutes before getting fed with us gawking at him, and flew away with the rest of his meal.

We live at 510 Greene Ave, **Brooklyn**. [*Bedford-Stuyvesant neighborhood; about 1.5 blocks from Tompkins Park.*] What an amazing way to wake up in the morning! Thanks a lot for your concern about these beautiful birds!

Patrick Wilson

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Male American Kestrel photographed by Patrick Wilson on his Fire Escape. Patrick writes:"He ate about half of it and then flew away to the west. He ate at it for about 20 minutes, then took a 10 or 15 minute break in which he puffed up his feathers and cocked his head a lot, before then eating for another 10 minutes. Then he flew away with a good half of it still in his talons." [*Probably bringing the remainder to the female whom he will then copulate with...Right now too early for young/eggs/family - soon and in your neighborhood though! Look for kestrels perching on rooftop antennas nearby - in a four sq. block radius*]

From: John M. Clarke
Subject: Brooklyn Kestrels
Date: March 4, 2010

I haven't seen any Kestrel's in my [Brooklyn] neighborhood yet this year; I did have a Cooper's Hawk on the ground (in the snow) last Saturday leisurely feasting on a large pigeon for close to two hours - until he was interrupted by a neighbor's cat...

Jack

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From: Alice Deutsch PhD
Subject: Manhattan Kestrels
Date: March 4, 2010

Hi Bob and Deborah,

Thanks for your newsletter. Coincidentally saw a AMKE at about 7:15 am today (Thursday 4 March) in Union Square Park (14th street, Manhattan).

Cheers,

Alice

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From: Carl Howard
Subject: Union Square Kestrels
Date: March 4, 2010

On Tuesday, March 2, 2010, I heard the repeated calls of an American Kestrel while I was on the SW corner of Union Square. I believe the Kestrel was on a building just west of the SW corner of the Square.

Carl

[The closest nesting pair we know to Union Sq Park is in the west 20s near 8th Avenue. So the ones that visit (and actually hunt in) Union Square Park are from a nest no one has discovered (yet). We have seen the kestrels leave Union Sq. Park in the breeding season heading to the SE.]

Thanks for the kind words on the Newsletter - it gives us great joy to do - working on a puzzle that no one has deciphered yet. We don't know if it is truly solvable, but we might get enough info to make some educated guesses about what is happening here...The amazing thing is that this kestrel saga is likely being repeated in every city east of the Mississippi (at least) - so urban areas are an important, real habitat for this species that no one has studied in an urban area in North America until now.]

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From: Beth Goffe
Subject: Manhattan Kestrels
Date: March 4, 2010

Hope you guys are doing well. ..I just checked the W.133rd St. nest but didn't see anyone other than lots of pigeons and starlings.

Beth

From: Kenneth Hicks
Subject: Kestrels - Upper East Side Manhattan
Date: Mar 4, 2010 11:51 AM

Bob,

I still haven't seen the kestrels on the building on 91st street where I saw them last year. However, I have heard and seen one (I don't know if it is the same one) who appears on the top of the water tower of the building on Lexington and the building at southeast corner of the same cross streets. The kestrel has been very vocal. I have seen the kestrel in the past two weeks. I hear him or her calling and look up and there it is. I believe I have been hearing the call earlier during the winter and didn't make the connection. But I couldn't swear to it.

Ken



Nest site of the Upper East Side Kestrels that Ken Hicks is referring to above in his email. As of early march he has not seen them at the nest site, but has seen them a few blocks to the northwest (93rd street). Photographed by David Mills from his apartment in summer 2008 - Hello to both David and his lovely wife Geraldine back home in the UK. David is now spending much time studying bats (Chiroptera).

From: Elaine Maas
Subject: Kestrel (Jamaica, Queens)
Date: March 4, 2010

Bob - It was nice meeting you last Sunday - thanks for a great introductory walk! (www.BirdingBob.com)

Took the 1:25pm Port Jeff branch train out of Penn Station [Sunday 28 February]. About 10 minutes prior to arriving in Jamaica [Queens], sighted a lone male kestrel on telephone wires running parallel to tracks, north side. Great way to cap the day! Take care -

Elaine

From: Michael Gillespie
Subject: Dead Kestrel, Brooklyn
Date: March 4th

Found a dead kestrel at the intersection of Gold Street right off Nassau Street (= **Downtown Brooklyn**).



Dead male American Kestrel found near 66th Street and West End Ave on 30 September 2009 by Ms. Susan Volchok. Besides being a big kestrel fan (and martial arts expert and writer), Susan is also a great advocate for the rights of abused people, particularly women, in NYC.

From: Mike DiPrima
Subject: Queens Kestrels
Date: March 5 (Friday morning)

the kestrel was vocalizing loudly this morning (Queens). it flew into a group of pigeons that were flying - boy did they move!

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From: KA Peltomaa
Subject: American Kestrels at Amsterdam - Friday
Date: March 5 (morning)

Bob,

Today at 9am I was watching the Kestrels at the Amsterdam nest. At 9:00am I spotted the male perching on one of the cell phone antenna poles at the SW corner their nest building. I looked around for the female but could not see her.

After about 5 minutes the male flew off to the SE, but he turned around after about one block and came back. This time he landed on the facade of the building on the West side of Amsterdam. Once I had crossed the street and found him, he was sitting on a window ledge in company of the female. The male was sitting facing the street and the female walked behind him from one side to the other and back again. She seemed to look at him and make contact. Then the female flew across the street and landed on one of the poles at the SW corner of nest building, where I had first seen the male.

The male followed her and landed on another pole at the same corner of the building. The female dipped and raised her tail a handful of times (Is this behavior and invitation?). Anyhow, the male moved on top of the female's back and there was copulation for a few seconds, then the male returned to his on perch.

Shortly after this the female flew off to the NE, and after another minute or so the male followed her.

If the light is decent this afternoon I will take my camera with me and walk over to the site again.

- Anders

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From: Yossi Leshem (Israel)
To: Robert DeCandido PhD
Date: March 5, 2010

Dear Robert

Very impressive kestrel newsletter!! I will be in NYC for a presentation in JNF head office on 12th April, evening. **We will have this spring an online camera in Lesser Kestrel, Barn Owl and swift nests.**

Enjoy your weekend

Yossi

[The writer is perhaps the foremost ecologist/conservationist (particularly raptors/migration) working in the Middle East. His bird research also focuses on bringing all students together in the Holy Lands - birds know no borders....and his idea of nest cams is wonderful.]

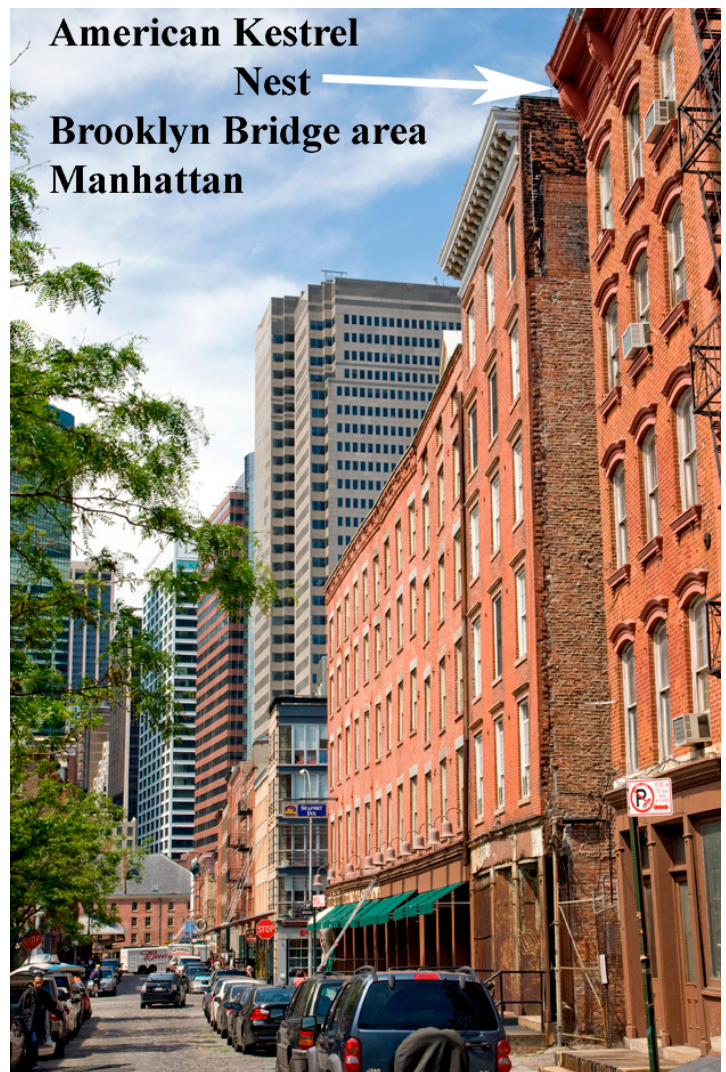
From: KA Peltomaa
Subject: Re: American Kestrels at Amsterdam
Date: 18 February 2010

Hi Bob,

I wanted to ask you - do they bring material to their cornice cavities to line them before the female lay eggs? [No] Have you ever had the opportunity to look inside a cornice nest? [No - we need webcams at a few kestrel nests in the future - could see if they are hunting at night that way too!] And if they do - do they "clean out" the nest cavity before a new season or just add material to what they already have built? [No removal/additions - but they will nest atop accumulated material, usually grasses, brought into cavities by House Sparrows.]

BTW, I don't know if I told you before, but the first time I saw them copulate was on February 18th, which is the first time this winter I've seen them together. [Thanks A. - You own the new early record!]

- Anders



Above left: five kestrels fledged from this metal cornice nest in 2008, but the nest failed in 2009 - likely due to the wet spring we had - three young female kestrels are visible...note grass in nest - brought there by House Sparrows or possibly Starlings. Above right: nearby habitat of the nest in lower Manhattan.

From: E. J. McAdams
Subject: Re: NYC kestrel Newsletter #2 - 2010
Date: Mar 6, 2010 2:02 PM

Hi Bob,

I have seen the male and female kestrels that live in this neighborhood on one of their favorite perches: a building in Manhattan on [west] 116th Street. Although I won't be able to test this until next year, I guess, I am pretty sure that I have seen them through the winter. Is that unusual? *[This pair also spent the winter of 2008-09 in that neighborhood. Prior to nesting in your neighborhood, they nested on 111th street - see photo below and Page 9 for nest site.]* The male was even perching above an HVAC exhaust on a cold day, looked pretty warm. I don't know where the nest is. If you have an idea, I am willing to check it out. This is a great project you are doing!

I have seen these birds so many times in the early morning but never had the time to find out where they nest.

One other place I see kestrels (and red tails and occasionally a peregrine) is from my work window overlooking Penn South in Chelsea, ~24th St. to 29th St. between 8th and 9th. Given your network you probably know where that pair is too. [Yes] Thanks again,

E.J.

[The Writer is the former Executive Director of the New York City Audubon Society. He now works in the NYC office of The Nature Conservancy - a wonderful organization.]

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American Kestrel Nest - Manhattan
111th Street and St. Nicholas Avenue
2 May 2008



Above: former nest site of the 116th street kestrels, 2004-2008, looking north. In autumn 2008, all the openings in the black cornice were sealed by the building...anyway, this is a typical nest site in NYC where we find 99% of all kestrel nests: in the cornice of a late 19th century building, approx. 60 feet up.

From: Randolph Schutz
Subject: just heard (and saw) one of our local kestrels (Manhattan)
Date: March 6th (Saturday morning 8am)

soaring over Bogardus Place [near Ft. Tryon/Inwood Hill Park], then heading east to perch on Fort George Hill.

r

From: Carol Wood
Subject: Broadway Kestrels (Manhattan)
Date: March 7 at 6:59 PM

Hi Bob,

Sorry I couldn't make it to the walk this Sunday morning, but I was out late last night. I went up to the roof terrace this evening & saw the female Kestrel perched on the brown building to the south where we've often seen her. After a while she flew north & tucked in out of sight on the north corner of the building a block to the north. While I was upstairs I met a couple who live in the building, and pointed out the nest to them. He goes birding with Sarah Elliot, and I told him to email you for the Kestrel newsletter.

Regards,

Carol



Above left: three young kestrel heads peaking out of the nest at 111th street, spring 2008. **Above right:** view looking south toward Central Park - Mt. Sinai hospital (5th Ave) is the large building in distance.

Kestrels - National and International

Southern African National Kestrel Count day - update on counts

January 30, 2009

Hello All

I thought you would be interested to hear how the counting of Amur Falcons, Red-footed Falcons and Lesser Kestrels have progressed since the southern African National Kestrel Count Day on 24 January 2009.

Currently reports have come in from 24 sites across the region and a total of 115,660 falcons have been counted. This number includes 72,369 Amur Falcons, 40,790 Lesser Kestrels and 2,501 Red-footed Falcons. More roost counts are still expected.

For those of you who have seen the spectacular sight of thousands of small falcons circling in the sky, perched on wires, pylons and telephone poles and leaving the roost in huge bursts will know why I call this a "birding wonder of the world"! This, year, however, we have received reports from Newcastle, Kwazulu Natal, that the roost there is much bigger than last year, estimated at over 28,000 Amur Falcons. Birdlife released an international press report last year when a roost of over 28,000 Lesser Kestrels (and 16,000 African Swallow-tailed Kites) was found in Senegal. At least for falcons, the Newcastle roost is up there as one of the biggest falcon roosts in the world.

You can read more about the Migrating Kestrel Project and the status of the counts on www.kestreling.com.

Kind regards
Anthony

Co-ordinator: Migrating Kestrel Project
Birds of Prey Working Group - Endangered Wildlife Trust



Above: male Common (Eurasian) Kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*) in Spain - photographer unknown.

15 March 2010

American Kestrel Nest Survey NYC - Issue #4 (2010)

Kestrels near nest sites and vocalizing II

The Upper West Side kestrels seem to be spending half their time near nest sites, and the other half in Riverside Park, facing west into the sun and looking for House Sparrows to eat. This Manhattan population of kestrels from about 60th street through 116th street has the highest nesting density compared to other kestrels throughout NYC.

Our NYC Kestrel flyer is available in 14 languages: <http://www.battaly.com/nehw/AmericanKestrel/>

From further afield, Dr. Yossi Leshem in Tel Aviv sends this YouTube Video about Kestrels and Barn Owls in Israel:

<http://www.youtube.com/user/TAUVOD#p/a/u/0/ZJDVohcnfHQ>



Above: Adult male American Kestrel in flight. Overhead, male kestrels can be identified by a series of translucent (whitish) dots near the trailing edge of the wing. Those dots can be seen here - but you have to look closely to find them.

From: KA Peltomaa
Subject: Re: NYC Kestrel Newsletter #3
Date: March 8, 2010 (Sunday afternoon)

Hello Bob,

My walk with Laika on Sunday afternoon (8 March) was very successful - I spotted the pair of Kestrels at Zabars and a lone male perching on the building at CPW/85th street. And Laika spotted two cats!

First, I found a male Kestrel perching on the pole on a building NW corner of Riverside and 79th Street at 4:50pm on Sunday March 7th (photo attached). After about 10 minutes a female Kestrel flew overhead and the male chased off after her (direction East). I assumed it was that the kestrel pair nesting by Zabars, so I walked up there to see if that's where they had flown.

At 5:10pm I found them again, now they sitting on a roof on Broadway. It looked to me as if they were copulating, but the male had moved off the female by the time I had them in focus they were sitting very close together. After a few seconds the female flew off and disappeared. The male stayed perching on the roof structure as long as I was watching.

I then walked over to Amsterdam and 84th, but no Kestrels to be seen there, so I headed over to CPW and 85th and there (at about 5:45pm) I spotted a male Kestrel perching on of the pipes on top of the building between 85th and 86th Streets. A very good day indeed, and yes - I have Kestrel fever. - **Anders**



Above: Adult female American Kestrel flying from nest entrance (2009) at Amsterdam Avenue. At this time of the year (mid March), females will enter and explore several possible nest holes on the same building. However, we have also seen females exploring nest cavities on buildings a block or two away from their usual nest site.

From: Daryl Lee
Date: March 9, 2010
Subject: American Kestrel - West Village, Manhattan [*help...*]

today sightings: **American Kestrel on the roof eating. on 6th Ave. and West Houston** and a pair of Red Tail Hawks flying around Washington Square. {*Daryl later sent photos - taken with her I-phone - and it appears that the kestrel in question was/is a female.*}

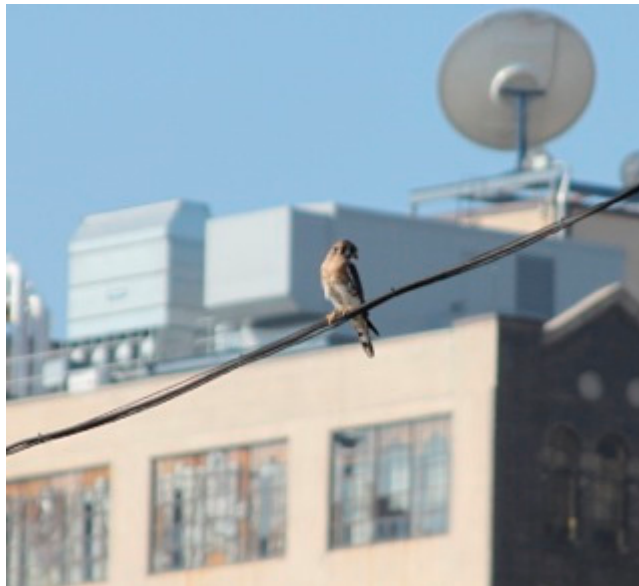
and

From: Daryl Giampieri
Subject: 4 great iPhotos
Date: Mar 10, 2010 10:06 AM

Hi bob,

These pics are the ones I've taken last year 2009, on my roof I thought they were Peregrines. I am going to send you a pic of the recent ones. Let me know if I got it all wrong. and if I did I apologize. [*Great Work Daryl, see her photo below that shows a male American Kestrel in 2009 - likely near its nest...HELP!!!.*]

daryl



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From: Jack Rothman
Subject: City Island Kestrel - Bronx
Date: March 9 (Tuesday afternoon, late)

While checking out some Monk Parakeet nests on City Island Avenue and Rochelle Street I observed a kestrel flying over the avenue. He flew west toward the water.

Jack

www.CityIslandBirds.com

From: Kenneth Hicks
Subject: Re: NYC Kestrel Newsletter #3
Date: March 10, 2010

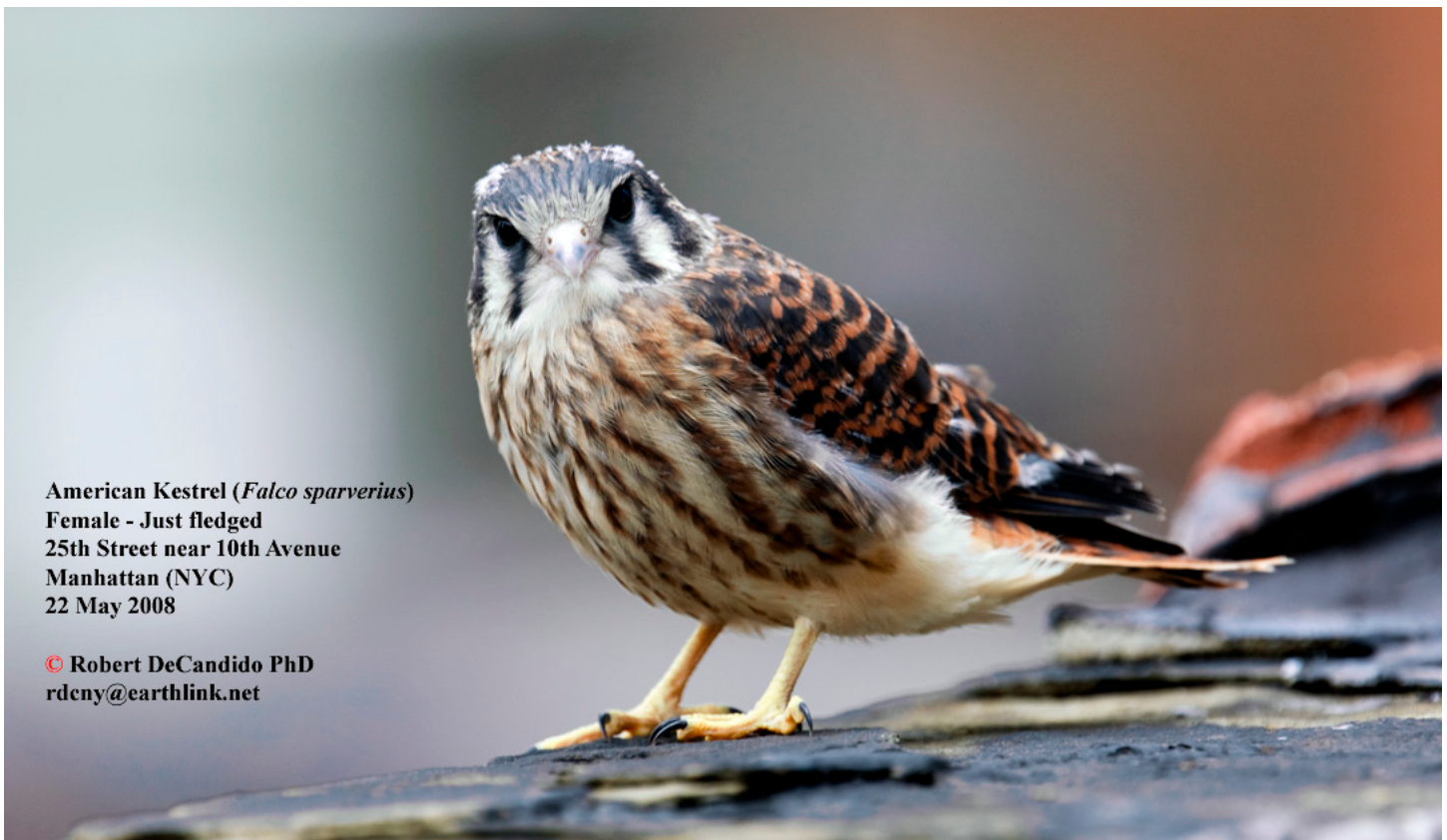
Bob,

Over the weekend (6-7 March), my kestrel - note the proprietary turn and the assumption it is the same bird - appeared on the water tower on the southeast corner of 93rd and Lexington again, **calling**. After I went outside for a better look, it flew to a perch on top of the 92nd Street Y, which is, of course, closer to last year's nest site.

I still have only seen one. **Do both the male and female Kestrel give the same call?** [*I don't know - really really good question....anyone?*]

Ken

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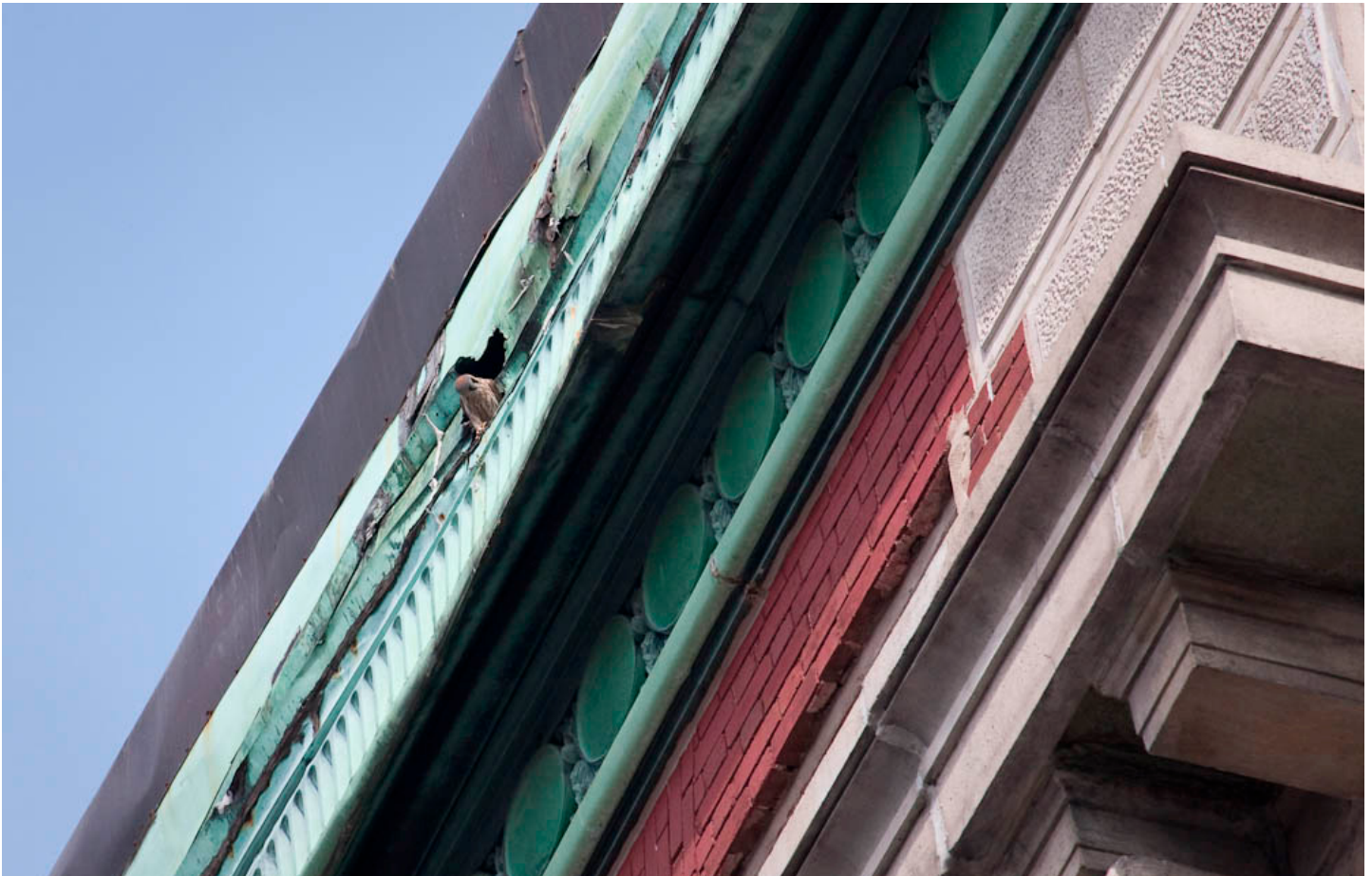


Above: Just fledged female American Kestrel (note down on forehead). Before anyone gets impatient for young kestrels leaving their nest, we have some time yet. In NYC, the earliest kestrels to fledge do so about 20-25 May, such as this one at the West 25th Street nest studied by Chuck McAlexander for about a decade. Kestrels no longer nest there - building maintenance closed the nest opening in early 2009. Right now (mid-March 2010) NYC kestrels are still investigating nest cavities, copulating and calling often. Do listen for them. By about 1 April the earliest nesters will be laying eggs. So for now, enjoy the activity including some dramatic flying maneuvers and the calls. In another ten days, silence will prevail, making it seem like all the kestrels have left town...

From: KA Peltomaa
Subject: Female Kestrel today 10:30am at CPW/85th street
Date: March 10 (Wednesday)

Hello Bob,

Today at 10:25am (Wednesday 10 March) I saw the female flying around the building's SE corner, she was very active. Three times she went into a cavity just west of the SE corner (see photo). She did several flights, landings at different locations on the corner ledge, different cornices, perched on the pole on the roof towards CPW, the edge of the roof and on the fence around it. [See Anders' photos below and on next page.]



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From: Robert Ridgely
Subject: RE: NYC Kestrel Newsletter #3
Date: March 10, 2010

Well, admittedly I'm up here in New Hampshire, and we've still quite a bit of snow, but I've had to visit s. New England and NYC for work and family several times already this year, and I still have yet to see a single kestrel.

They are crashing out here in the hinterlands. Maybe urban populations will do better. Bob, your enthusiasm and obvious love for this charismatic, if small, raptor is great.

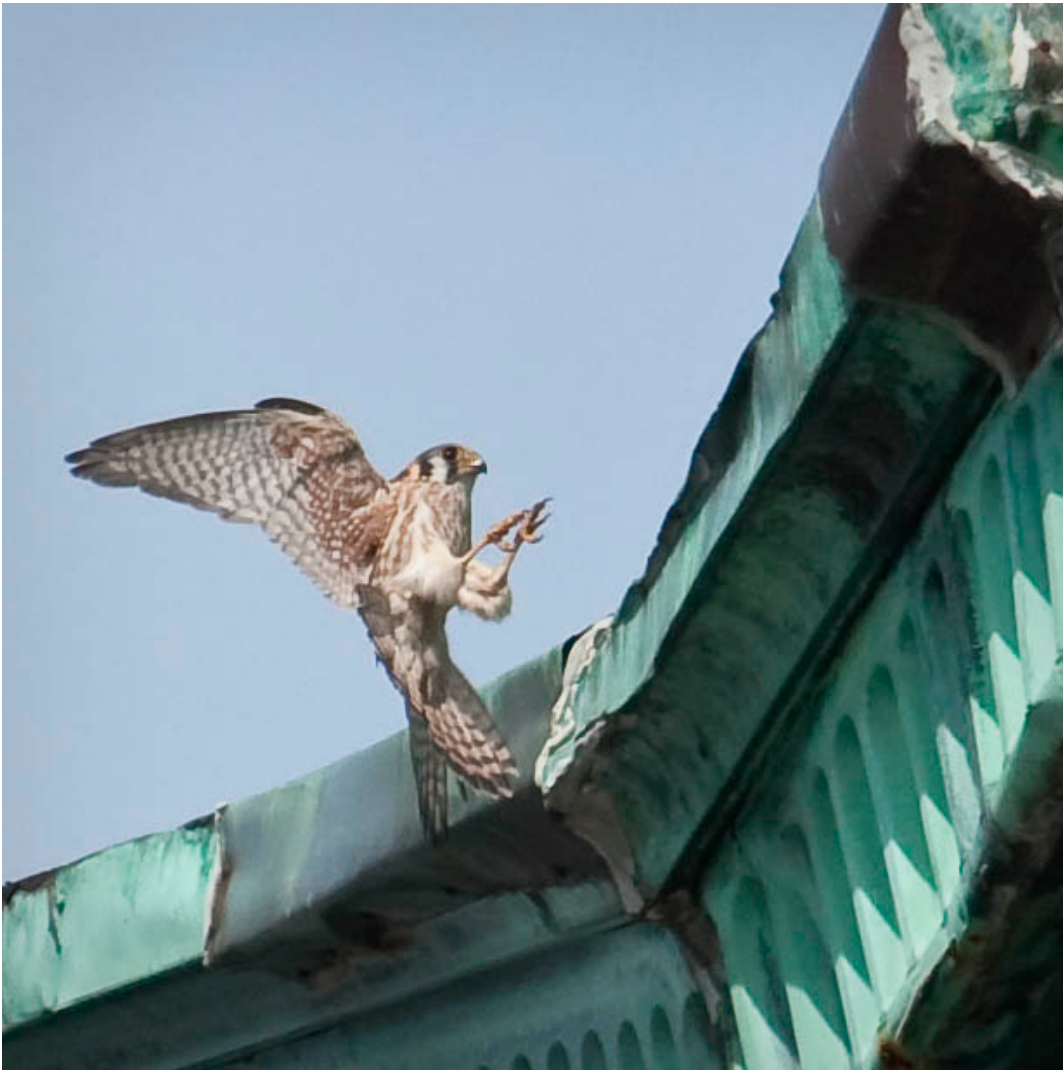
My best,

Bob

From: Michael DiPrima
Subject: Queens Kestrels
Date: March 11 (Thursday)

Kestrel vocalizing this a.m. while flying around

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Above: Female American Kestrel landing near nest site, upper west side, Manhattan. **Below:** Female kestrel in flight, same location. Photos by KA Peltomaa



From: K.A. Peltomaa
Subject: CPW/85th Street female in flight
Date: March 12, 2010 (Friday morning)

Hi Bob,

Sending 3 photos from Wednesday morning this week. The female was flying around the building on Central Park West/85th Street. It's a real challenge to get good flight photos...*[but see bottom of page 6!]*

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

Today, Friday, I walked by the 3 nest locations in my neighborhood, but there were no kestrels to be seen anywhere.

- Anders

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From: Rob Cicchetti
Subject: Upper West Side
Date: March 14 (Sunday after rain)

Hey Bob,

Just to keep you in the loop, both Kestrels (adult male and female) have been active around the nest this week. They are there now as I look out my window.

This weekend in particular, both male and female have been intermittently perched on the nest ledge most of the day today and **yesterday during the rain, and in many instances, together.**

I haven't seen them chasing any prey, or bringing in any kills but they have been around the area.

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Kestrels - National

Migration Monitoring Indicates Widespread Declines of American Kestrels in North America

Abstract.--We analyzed migration counts of American Kestrels (*Falco sparverius*) at 20 autumn migration hawkwatch sites throughout North America to estimate population trends. Prior to trend analysis, we converted counts to indexes adjusted for effort and patterns of passage. **In eastern North America, autumn counts showed a pattern of significant declines along the Atlantic Coast and eastern Appalachian Mountains**, stable numbers in the eastern Great Lakes region, and a significant increase in the western Great Lakes region from 1974 to 2004. **From 1994 to 2004, significant declines occurred at most hawkwatch sites in eastern North America**, with non-significant declines recorded in the western Great Lakes, northeastern Quebec, and Florida. In western North America, three counts from the Intermountain and Rocky Mountain regions that spanned the mid-1980s to 2005 showed mixed long-term trends. From 1995 to 2005, counts decreased significantly at three and non-significantly at two of six western hawkwatch sites active throughout the period. These results suggest population declines across much of the interior western North America and Pacific Northwest; however, kestrel counts remained comparatively stable since the mid-1980s in the southern Rocky Mountains. Migration counts along the Gulf of Mexico were variable from 1995 to 2005, with no strong indication of population changes in this region. **The overall pattern of migration counts suggests that kestrel populations have undergone a long-term decline in northeastern North America and more recent declines in the midwestern and western regions of the continent.**

Authors: Christopher J. Farmer, *Hawk Mountain Sanctuary* and Jeff P. Smith, *HawkWatch International*

From: The Journal of Raptor Research 43(4): 263-273 (2009)

If anyone wants a free PDF copy of this scientific paper, just send an email and I will forward.

Kestrels - International

From: Eric Salzman

Subject: Re: NYC kestrel Newsletter #2 - 2010

Date: March 8, 2010

Dear Bob,

Thanks for the newsletter. I've just returned from two weeks in Israel where I discovered that you are well known! As you are undoubtedly aware, the Israelis -- principally under the influence of Yossi Leshem -- have put nest boxes up all over the country for Barn Owls and Eurasian Kestrels in a seemingly successful operation to reduce the use of pesticides. Israel is also notable for a healthy and flourishing population of Lesser Kestrels. I visited one town where numbers of these birds were nesting in apertures in the roofs of the houses.

Best,

Eric

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Above: *Shimon Peres* (שמעון פרס, Szymon Perski), the President of Israel, releasing a male Eurasian Kestrel with Motti Charter. Motti just completed his PhD studying kestrels in cities, villages and rural areas throughout Israel. He is originally from Connecticut, USA. Photo by Yossi Leshem. Kestrels know no borders!

25 March 2010

American Kestrel Nest Survey NYC - Issue #5 (2010)

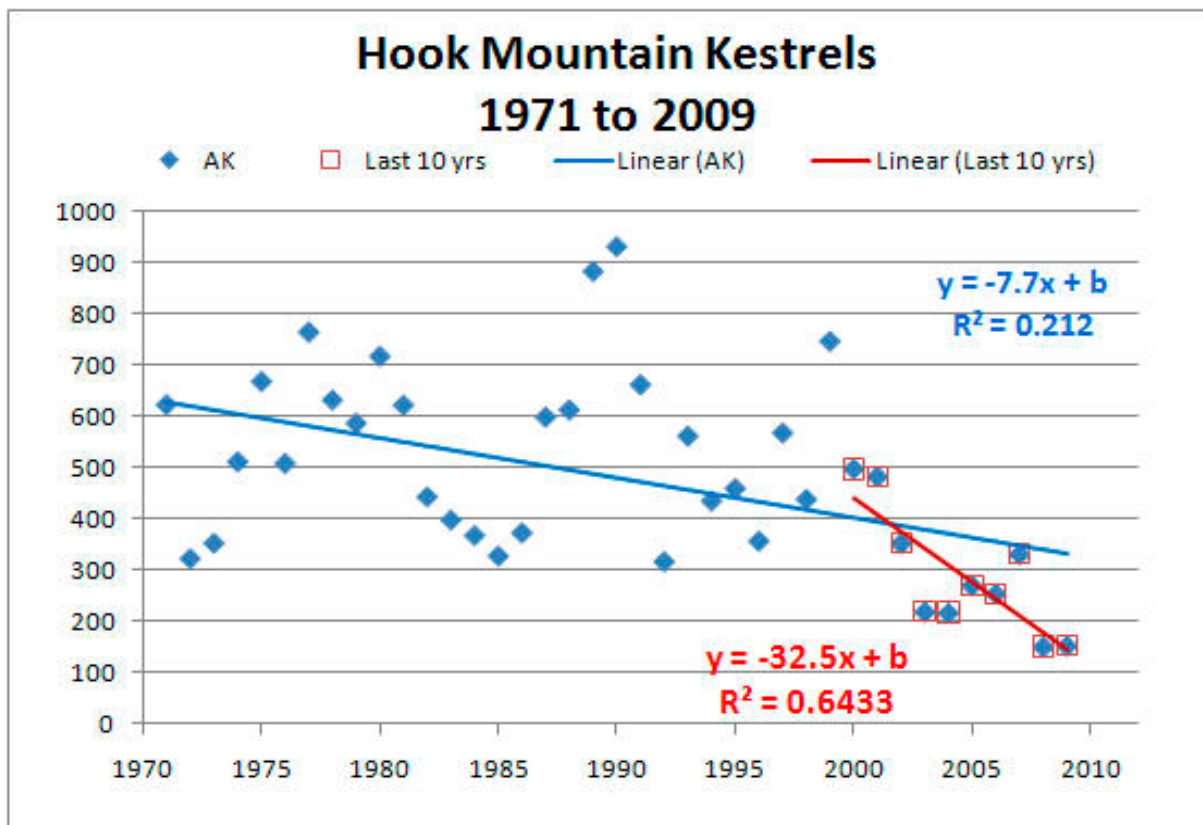
Kestrels near nest sites and vocalizing III

New kestrel reports from the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway (Hamish Young); West 30th St. & 8th Ave (Richard Schwartz); the Bushwick section of Brooklyn (Eileen Jones); the Castle Hill section of the Bronx; and an update on a pair first found last year in Long Island City, Queens (Louise Weinberg). Thanks to All - without your help there would be no kestrel newsletter...

From western Pennsylvania comes this kestrel tale:

<http://www.wqed.org/birdblog/2010/03/16/urban-kestrels-new-york/>

Finally, Drew Panko and Trudy Battaly have been studying raptor migration in our region for many years. They are "not famous enough" conservationists - we present a bit more of their research below.



Trudy Battaly's Interpretation: There is Cause for Concern! The number of Kestrels counted in migration at Hook Mountain (Nyack New York - overlooking Hudson River) has shown considerable variation, but has generally been declining these last 38 years. During the last 10 years, the decline seems to be more exaggerated, with numbers decreasing at a faster rate: four times faster. Closer examination of the graph shows other periods with sharp declines, suggesting that we should not be too concerned. However, the Kestrel counts for 6 of the last 7 years have been the lowest counts in the history of Hook Mountain, with 2008 and 2009 the lowest of all. <http://www.battaly.com/hook/species/kestrel.htm>



Female American Kestrel in flight.

From: Louise Weinberg
Subject: Queens Kestrels
Date: March 15, 2010 (Tuesday)

Hello Robert:

I saw one kestrel on Friday. Have some shots to send you when I have a minute.

46th Avenue between Vernon and 11th Avenue in Long Island City. 4th floor roof.

Best,

Louise

From: Hamish Young
Subject: Brooklyn Kestrels
Date: March 16, 2010 (Tuesday)

A kestrel (probably male) landed on a lamp-post on the BQE North of the Kosciuszko bridge on Tuesday 16 March. -- Hamish

[We are getting into migration time - so this may have been a kestrel making a stopover for food...or a resident. Wish we had more spies t look everywhere. These kestrels blend into the urban environment quite well.]

From: Michael DiPrima
Subject: Kestrels at Dawn in Queens
Date: Mar 17, 2010 (Wednesday)

it was above me
i did not see it but i heard it loud and clear at 6 am

[Astronomical Twilight is at 5:32 AM EDT - so these kestrels are up early, but we don't have proof yet that they are active in the dark...]

From: Daryl Giampieri (= Daryl Yee)
Subject: Kestrel (6th Avenue and Houston)
Date: March 17th (Wednesday)

Hey Bob,

Paul spotted the Kestrel we were working on the roof deck. It was there at 11:00am and 3:00 it is still up there, I think the nest might be up there on the other roof. Also there is the Red Tail I saw flying near West 4th Street

daryl



Kestrel Nest in Chelsea found by Matt Wills in 2008. Kestrels can do just fine nesting above crowded city streets so long as there is a cornice to nest in (or nest box), and an abundance of house sparrows.

From: Jennifer Mathews
Subject: West Village Kestrels
Date: March 18 (Thursday)

Hi Bob,

This morning I looked for Kestrels in the area of 6th Ave and Houston, but did not see any. Have the sightings there been confirmed? Is there a good time to look for them?

Jennifer

[Jen is encountering an all too common situation with kestrels here in NYC. Before the kestrels begin nesting, they are sometimes near their nest site, and sometimes elsewhere. One has to spend time just waiting and looking. Once kestrels begin nesting, they are secretive - the female can be hidden away for most of the day, and the male only delivers food to the nest, and then disappears to hunt again. Add to this that kestrels are small, and tend not to circle high over the city (like Red-tailed Hawks), and it is clear why these little falcons go undetected throughout much of NYC.]

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From: John Delaney
Subject: Kestrel sighting - Upper East Side (Manhattan)
Date: March 18th (Thursday)

Hey Bob, John Delaney here. Its been a while; hope you're doing well.

I saw one flying this morning at 8:22 a.m. and vocalizing (kek-kek-kek-kek). It landed on the water tower of the Omni building (a high rise complex) on the south side of east 95th street between 3rd and Lexington.

John Delaney

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From: Ken Hicks
Subject: Re: Kestrel sighting - Upper East Side
Date: March 18, 2010

I will look there also. It gives a view of the same area that can be seen from the water towers that I have been mentioning, just from a different direction. I wonder if Kestrels fly toward their prey from out of the sun, so to speak. That would be the place to do it from in the morning.

Ken

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From: Carol Wood
Subject: Kestrels - Manhattan
Date: March 19, 2010

Hi Bob,

On my way home from your walk on Friday, I saw both kestrels sitting on ledges on Rob's building [Broadway near 69th Street.]. The female was a couple of ledges higher than the male.

Carol

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From: Richard Schwartz
Subject: Manhattan Kestrels
Date: Mar 20, 2010 8:07 AM

Bob...How are you? Good winter I hope? I'm sure you're getting ready for the spring birding explosion.

I want to tell you that yesterday morning I went to the roof of the building I live in (and am the condo president of) on **West 30th St. & 8th Ave.** to get some roofers set for the day's work.(We've had a few leaks as a result of the storm last weekend). As I opened the roof door, I saw a Kestrel perched on a gutter no more than 10 feet from me. He yelped, then flew to the building next door and sat and just watched us. I had to leave but was very excited to see one of our good friends at my building on 30th St.

Next time I go to East 75th St., I'll take a look at the Kestrel next hole across the street. Anyway, that's my story. Oh...one more thing: As I drove upstate last weekend, a Bald Eagle flew past my windshield in the Saw Mill Pkwy! That was very cool too! Had a perfect look at him. I stopped and turned around but never found him again.

So, I had a great winter. Choreographed a show in LA where the weather was great.

I'll join you in the park the next time I'm in NYC for the weekend. I'm upstate on this beautiful weekend dealing with my golf addiction. But my binoculars are never far from me.

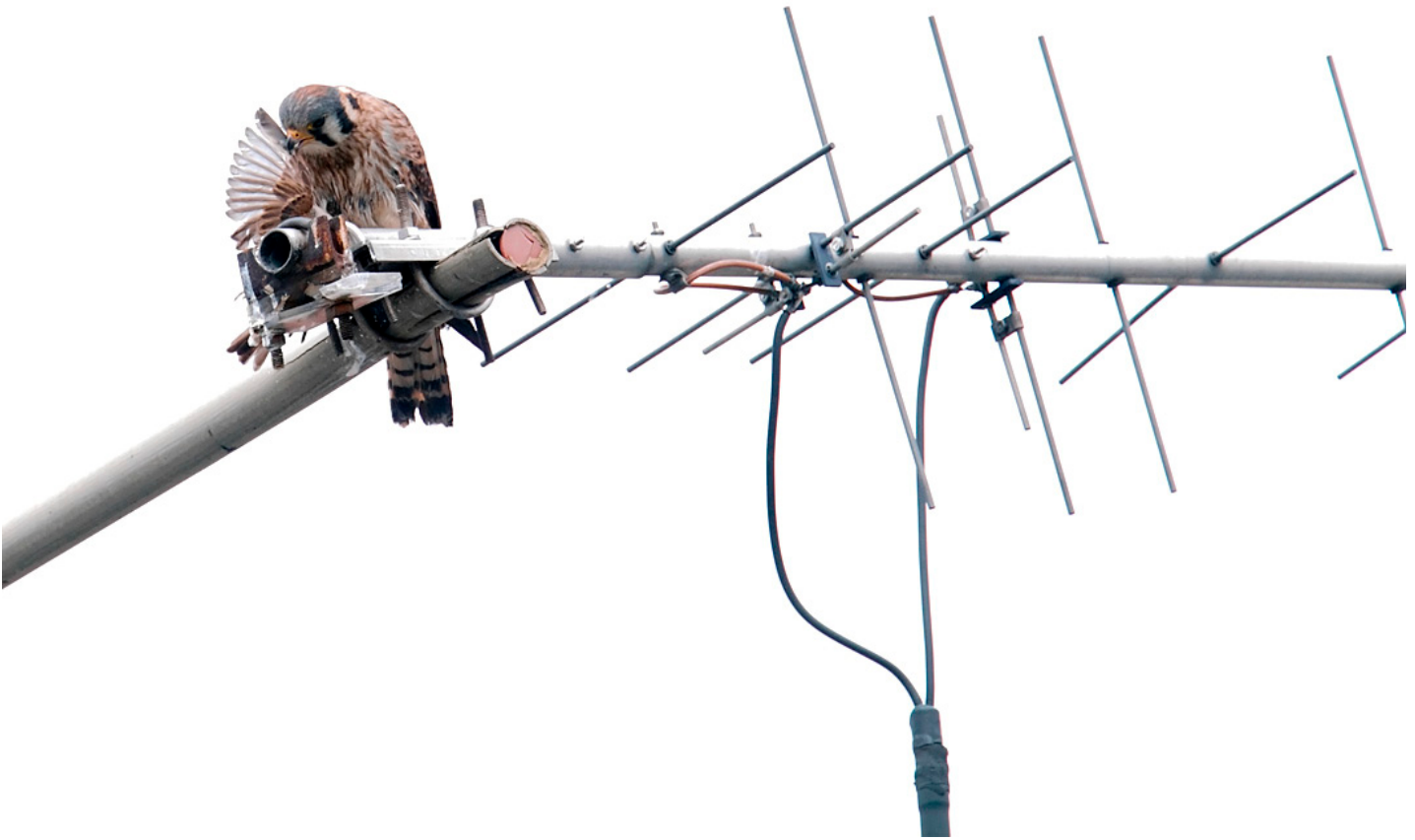
All the best,

Richard

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Male kestrel bringing food (sparrow) to nest at the East 75th Street site, that Richard Schwartz looks after so well. Female consuming that prey (top page 6).



From: Robert DeCandido
Subject: Adult male kestrel perched - new location (Bronx)
Date: March 21st (Sunday morning) 2010

Yo Bob: saw a male kestrel on a TV aerial at 7:15am Sunday morning at:

Castle Hill Ave and Westchester Ave (Bronx)

The Parkchester (Bronx) pair was at their usual location about a half-mile from this one - so this male represents a new kestrel at a new location. This bird might be a migrants just stopping over - or one half of a new pair...

rdc

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From: Eileen Jones
Subject: Adult male kestrel in for rehab from Bushwick (Brooklyn)
Date: March 21st (Sunday afternoon) 2010

Got an adult male in, appears to be some sort of collision, bleeding nares, good weight, 108 gms. Want to get him back out ASAP. You wanted feathers? Let me know and I'll try. But this time of year, I want to get him back to the Mrs.

Bushwick section of Brooklyn: Howard and Putnam Aves, just south of Broadway.

Eileen

Kestrels - North America

From: Steve Wilson
Sent: Sunday, March 21, 2010
To: David Bird, Prof.
Subject: Kestrel Observation

David,

I read your Raptor Research article (*From Common to Scarce*) with a great deal of interest. For what it's worth, I'd like to share a supportive anecdotal observation, uninfluenced by your conclusion, since I'd not read of the suspicions of decline until just now. However, for several years now I've been asking the same question: Where are the American Kestrels? My career in forestry, wildlife, and ecology has stretched to 38 years, all spent in NE Minnesota. I have a particular interest in birds, especially in tree selection by cavity nesters, and as such, am always on the lookout when afield for active nests in cavities. Whenever I come across one, I would document it. Because of my work, I've spent considerable time over the years in recent to older cutovers within the heavily-forested portions of NE Minnesota. Earlier in my career (70s and 80s), I regularly stumbled upon kestrel nests in snags in such locations, easy as they were to detect when you venture near a nest tree. However, I've not come across a nest in quite a few years, nor do I see as many kestrels in my travels around NE MN. With allowances for the lack of vigor in such observations, I can't explain away the apparent decline by changes in logging practices, my time spent afield over the course of a career, or other observer biases. So kudos to you for raising the alarm, and I look forward to the results of research that is sure to be inspired by it.

Steve Wilson steve.wilson@state.mn.us
Regional Scientific and Natural Area Specialist
MN Department of Natural Resources

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ABSTRACT. We assessed mate fidelity, nest-box fidelity, and breeding dispersal distances of American Kestrels (*Falco sparverius*) nesting in boxes in southwestern Idaho from 1990 through 2006. Seventy-seven percent of boxes had different males and 87% had different females where nest-box occupants were identified in consecutive years. High turnover rates were partly a result of box-switching. Forty-eight percent of males and 58% of females that nested within the study area in successive years used different boxes. The probability of changing boxes was unrelated to gender, nesting success in the prior year, or years of nesting experience. Breeding dispersal distances for birds that moved to different boxes averaged 2.2 km for males (max 22 km) and 3.2 km for females (max 32 km). Approximately 70% of birds that nested in consecutive years on the study area had a different mate in the second year. Mate fidelity was related to box fidelity but not to prior nesting success or years of nesting experience. Mate changes occurred 32% of the time when the previous mate was known to be alive and nesting in the area. Kestrels that switched mates and boxes did not improve or decrease their subsequent nesting success. Kestrels usually switched to mates with less experience and lower lifetime productivity than their previous mates. The costs of switching boxes and mates were low, and there were no obvious benefits to fidelity. The cost of waiting for a previous mate that might have died could be high in species with high annual mortality.

Site Fidelity, Mate Fidelity and Breeding Dispersal in American Kestrels
Karen Steenhof and Brit E. Peterson

The Wilson Journal of Ornithology 121(1):12–21, 2009

Kestrels - International



Rock Kestrel - Some consider this falcon a separate species (*Falco rupicolus*), while others consider this falcon a sub-species (perhaps even a race) of the Common (Eurasian) Kestrel (*F. tinnunculus*). "It is a widespread and fairly common species in southern Africa, and occurs at particularly high densities in parts of the southwestern Cape. It is the most common of the small breeding falcons of southern Africa. It has adapted well to humans, even breeding on buildings. Its distribution has probably changed little because its principle habitats are little altered by agriculture; however, large scale poisoning of locusts is likely to have considerable influence on local population numbers." This appears to be either a juvenile or a female - males have distinct blue (grey) heads and tail.

From: Rock Kestrel (Rooivalk) *Falco tinnunculus* by Anthony J. Van Zyl

www.kestreling.com

Do send any kestrel reports this way, whether from NYC, North America or International. Thanks -
rdcny@earthlink.net - Robert DeCandido PhD