



Become a Kestrel Nest Box Host

Get ready! We have a new program that you can be involved in! The Citizen Science Center has started the American Kestrel Nest Box Program. We want you to become a Kestrel nest box host by putting up a Kestrel nest box on your property and monitoring the success of that box.

What do you need to know?

Although our most widespread falcon, Kestrel populations are in decline. It is estimated, that between 1966 and 2019, the overall Kestrel population declined by 53%. The exact reason for this decline is not clear. Likely, there are numerous factors contributing to the decline of this mighty little raptor. One thing that biologists do know about the American Kestrel is that they respond well to human-made nest boxes. By erecting nest boxes, monitoring nest boxes, and sharing the data, citizens can contribute a wealth of knowledge to biologists to help them determine the cause of the overall Kestrel population decline. Do you have the right kind of property for an American Kestrel nest box?

What type of habitat does a Kestrel need?

American Kestrels favor open areas with short ground vegetation and sparse trees. You will find them in meadows, grasslands, parks, farm fields, cities, and suburbs. Kestrels need short vegetation to see their prey. Kestrels also need access to a few tall perches, trees, power lines, or fence posts. Kestrels are perch hunters, sitting and waiting until they see prey. We are looking for properties within a 30-mile radius of Beaver Creek Reserve.

What do you need to do?

Provide a clean nest box and monitor it from March through June. Keep track of nesting activity – adults in the area, eggs laid, chicks hatched, chicks fledged. Share your findings with the Citizen Science Center. Enter all of your data in the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's NestWatch program and the American Kestrel Partnership. Clean out your nest box for winter. Anxiously waiting for the Kestrels to return next year!

What will the Citizen Science Center do?

The CSC will erect a Kestrel nest box on your land. The CSC will train you to monitor your nest box, identify the eggs, and age the chicks. The CSC will provide information on how to share nest box data with our scientific partners. When the Kestrel chicks are of appropriate age, the CSC will band the chicks for hopeful recapture data.

What you will be provided with.

- Kestrel nest box and post
- Project acknowledgment plaque for post

- Kestrel nest box monitoring manual
- Training in nest box monitoring

The CSC is very fortunate to have Xcel Energy Foundation provide us with the grant funding to support this new project. For the first year of this program, the funding from Xcel will allow us to provide collaborating landowners with a Kestrel nest box, monitoring materials, and training. We will be looking for 7 land owners within a 30-mile radius of Beaver Creek with good Kestrel habitat to participate in the program.

If you think you may have the appropriate habitat and are interested in becoming an American Kestrel Nest Box Host, please contact our Citizen Science Center Director, Jeanette Kelly, at csc@beavercreekreserve.org or 715-877-2212.

Thank you to Xcel Energy Foundation for your continued support of avian conservation!

