



*Unifying citizen and professional scientists to  
advance conservation of the American Kestrel*

american  
**kestrel**  
partnership

a project of The Peregrine Fund

# Monitoring Instructions

Updated 2017

## 1. Install nest boxes

*Look for open, grassy areas. Avoid heavy roads, places with pets, or similar disturbances. Avoid heavily forested areas. **Please only install nest boxes if you intend to monitor them.***

- Place nest box at least 8-10ft off the ground. Remember: safety first! If a nest box can't be safely accessed, it is not useful for monitoring. In the Northern Hemisphere, northern-facing nest boxes should be avoided when possible.
- Install nest boxes between August and January to increase the chances of use by kestrels in the spring.
- Assign nest box a unique ID, record nest box characteristics according to this data sheet (on back), and register the nest box on our website.

## 2. Monitor throughout spring and into summer

*Nesting begins at different times in different regions. In general, if you begin checking around early March (Northern Hemisphere) you should catch the entire nesting season. Disturbance is unlikely to cause nest abandonment once eggs are laid. (See [Smallwood 2009](#)) **It is illegal to touch or possess any part of an American Kestrel (including feathers and eggs) without proper permits.***

- **At minimum**, please monitor once there are eggs, and then check again within 30 days for nestlings.
- **Our preferred protocol is for partners to check nests once every other week beginning in early March.** Do not monitor more than once a week to avoid stressing the kestrels.
- If possible, take a digital photo of the nest box interior during each visit. Photos will provide you with back-up and verification in case data are lost or mixed up.

## 3. Enter your nest record and observation data into the AKP website

*Please enter your data the same day you collect it whenever possible! Hard work collecting data in the field is often wasted by postponing entry of the data and then losing it.*

- Login to your profile on [kestrel.peregrinefund.org](http://kestrel.peregrinefund.org).
- Under the 'Research' tab, click  **Nests** or  **Observations** to enter nest record and observation data.

## 4. Maintain nest boxes

- In the fall or winter, repair nest boxes, scrape the insides clean with a putty knife, sweep out with a hand broom, and replace bedding.

*For assistance with anything, see our FAQ, post questions to our discussion forum,  
or email us directly at: [kestrelpartnership@peregrinefund.org](mailto:kestrelpartnership@peregrinefund.org)*

**\*\*\* Zero is a valuable number \*\*\***

**Monitor even if no kestrels use your box!**

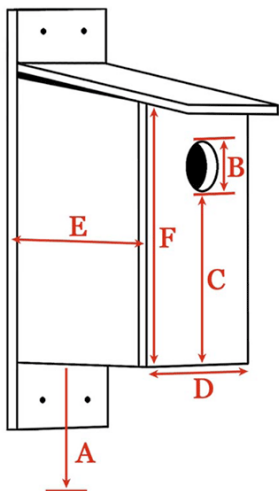
This is absolutely critical. We need to understand why kestrels use some boxes but not others, so from a data context, an empty box is just as important as an occupied one.

**Visit us: [kestrel.peregrinefund.org](http://kestrel.peregrinefund.org)**



# Data Sheet

Nestbox ID: .....



## Nestbox Characteristics (required for box registration):

Check Box when Nest Box Characteristics Data have been uploaded to AKP website

Geographic coordinates  
or descriptive location: .....

Month/year installed: .....

Dimensions: in. or cm. (circle one)

A (height from ground): .....

B: ..... C: ..... D: ..... E: ..... F: .....

Mounting surface (pole, wall, etc.): .....

Type of interior bedding: .....

Entrance orientation (N, SE, etc.): .....

Interior cleaned annually? Yes / No

Type of predator deterrent, if using: .....

Visit	Date	Year	Time	# Kestrel			Nestling age <sup>2</sup>	Other species using box? <sup>3</sup>														
				Adults <sup>1</sup>	Eggs	Nestlings		Yes/No	Species	Removed?												
1						♀ Live																
2						♂ Live																
3						Dead																
4																						
5																						
6																						
7																						
8																						
9																						
10																						
11																						
12																						

Check Box when Observations Sent to AKP

**\*\*\* Zero is a valuable number! \*\*\* Record data during every visit, even if there is no activity at the box.**

<sup>1</sup>Count only adults on, or flushed from, the nest.  
<sup>2</sup>Approximate age of oldest nestling. Use Klucsarits and Rushbuldt's nestling aging guide, available under partnership documents at [kestrel.peregrinefund.org](http://kestrel.peregrinefund.org)  
<sup>3</sup>Evidence of other species includes nest materials, eggs, chicks.

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