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

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](http://www.CityIslandBirds.com)
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...
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.]

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**

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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![Kestrel in flight](image-url)
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


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