Hello All,

We received several suggestions last week to include photos of actual NYC kestrels whenever possible - and not just photos of black-and-white buildings. Always sensitive to the requests of our readers (we just returned from the hot place by the way), here is a female American Kestrel on a "stoop" (dive) at one of the Red-tailed Hawks from that well-known nest at 74th and 5th Avenue. This female kestrel is defending her nesting territory - in March. It is a long-standing interaction between two raptor species that nest in that upper east side neighborhood. This female kestrel photo is by Lincoln Karim (thanks Lincoln!).

From Alex Paul we have this image of an adult male American Kestrel (below left). One of our staff photographers captured this side view of a different adult male kestrel in 2008 at West 68th street (right).
Note the great variation in the color of the plumage by males of this species - some are very blue while others are barely bluish grey.

Starting about now, kestrels are getting down to business, copulating frequently: http://picasaweb.google.com/jlbachant/KestrelBirthdayPresent?feat=email#

With the help of our kestrels spies (some of you are shown below), we were able to restore missing colors from last week's Newsletter, after our printers left us high and dry. Our spies below are just about to head out and paint the town red in celebration. Hooray! We can now go back to printing money to support our research.

Thanks to Deborah Allen who took the photo of the kestrel spies.

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Here are a few more kestrel comments from around New York City - please do send us yours - any and all observations are good one. Thanks from the editors!

From: Kenneth Hicks (Manhattan - Upper East Side)
Date: Mar 26, 2009

Bob: The local kestrel that I told you about previously has reappeared this year perching on the water tower of a building on the southwest corner of 93rd and Lexington (the spot where I see it most often). I have only seen it once this year, within the last few weeks, but I don't get a chance to look for it during the
week. I haven't figured out where it nests, but I will keep looking.

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From: Hamish Young
Date: March 27, 2009

I spotted a male kestrel flying near the Hecksher ballfields at the south west corner of the Park, Wednesday afternoon (25 March). He perched at the top of a tall tree to watch the frantic robins and other bird life. I don't know the direction from which he came. Hamish Young

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From: Matt Fuller (West Side, Chelsea, Manhattan)
Subject: kestrel in chelsea
Date: March 30, 2009

Robert,

i've emailed you before about kestrel sightings on my rooftop water tank on 21st and 6th, and we've agreed it is likely to be the local bird. just a note i got my first 2009 sighting this weekend. the kestrel was swooping to and fro on 21st between 6th and 7th. exciting!

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From: Ben Cacace (Upper East Side, Manhattan)
Date: Mar 30, 2009 7:16 PM

I got *very* lucky tonight. When I arrived home I spotted the female kestrel on a water tower a half block east of last year's nest location on 75th St between 1st & York Ave. This was at 6:40p.

Just now, at 7:10p, I was able to view the nest hole and the female perched on the water tower. In order to see the nest hole I need to stand on two huge books. While viewing the old nest location and the female I watched as she left her perch making a *direct* flight into the nest hole on the east side of the building you found the nest site in last year.

I'm not sure what the outcome was of last year's nesting attempt.
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Ben Cacace
Manhattan, NYC
http://novahunter.blogspot.com

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From: Mike DiPrima (Queens)
Date: Apr 2, 2009

This morning I was out on my terrace and heard the kestrel calling loudly. i looked around and could not see him but soon realized he was directly over my head on the roof so close yet so far. The spot where i saw the family last year has redone their chimneys and they no longer have the screen covering birds of prey seem to like - mike diprima

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From: Billy Benish  
Date: Apr 2, 2009

Hi Bob,

I attended one of your walks a few weeks ago at the NYBG where I saw my first saw-whet owl.

Thank you for sending issue #2 of the NYC Kestrel Newsletter. I noticed that there was no mention of kestrels in the vicinity of their former nest site at W105th St. between Amsterdam and Columbus in either issue #1 nor #2. Do you have someone keeping an eye out in that area? I head to Central Park across W104th St. or 105th St. frequently and will keep an eye out.

Today and a couple of weeks ago, I walked past the building on W105th St. where I could see the former nest site. I did not see any birds there. The last time I saw a kestrel nearby was on March 1st this year, on top of the water tower on building #123 on W104th Street, between Amsterdam and Columbus. I've often seen a bird there.

After visiting Central Park this morning, the kestrels came back into my mind as I strolled back home, so I started to keep an eye out for them. After I got to Broadway, I saw a bird soaring above that busy street which I assumed was a pigeon. I took a closer look, and it was definitely a kestrel. It swooped around in a few circles before leaving the area, heading East from Broadway, between 94th & 95th St.

Bill

From: barbyte@aol.com  
Subject: Kestrels doin' the 'wild thing'  
Date: Apr 3, 2009

Yesterday I got lucky and captured our kestrel pair copulating. It ain't easy - Jane and I have both missed several times. Thought you might get a kick out of seeing our lovers ;-) 


Barb

From: Rob Cicchetti (Upper West Side, Manhattan)  
Date: Apr 4, 2009

Sorry for not having emailed lately, I've been super busy (still employed fortunately) and have not been home much nor at home during daylight hours in the last several weeks, with the exception of today to watch our feathered friends across the street.

I been watching our favorite kestrels on and off today, and at least twice today I saw prey in their talons. They seem to be up to their active, young-rearing selves again. I am assuming they are the same pair I've been observing since 2006, but no real way to verify this.
They have been active though which given the time of year is a good sign there are hungry young ones on the way!

**Ed Note:** Rob is referring to the kestrels that nest at 69th street and Broadway.

From: Scott Barnes, Senior Naturalist, Sandy Hook Bird Observatory  
Date: 4 April 2009 (Saturday - day of very strong west-northwest winds)

There was an excellent American Kestrel [northbound migration] flight today; Sandy Hook New Jersey Migration Watch Counter Seth Cutright tallied 93+ today.

From: Barbara Ward (Spanish Harlem - 119th street and First Ave)  
Subject: 119th St. kestrels active  
Date: Apr 5, 2009 6:12 PM

We talked to our daughter Lyra, who lives in Harlem, last week. She said she had heard screaming birds and looked out to see the kestrels on the same building as before. She also mentioned walking down the street and exchanging smiles with some binoculared birders in the area. Was that you?

Barb and Dick Ward from Eastpointe, MI

From: Jared Harary  
Subject: Kestrels Union Square area (Manhattan)  
Date: Apr 7, 2009

I have seen an American Kestrel in the city. In early January 2006 I was at my then girlfriend's apartment in union square. She lived on the top floor of a 6 story building at 101 east 16th which is at the corner of 16th and Union Sq East. Her back window faced north, overlooking other rooftops with the W Hotel towering in the background.

I saw a bird with a rust colored breast and black bars on its tail perched on an antenna, and on closer inspection it was picking at a mouse in its talons. I snapped a few pictures with my digital camera (only the attached one was in focus, though the bird's face was unfortunately obstructed). In my excitement I looked it up in Sibleys and thought it looked most like a male Kestrel, but I wasn't sure. Not knowing many birders, I actually emailed the attached picture to David Sibley who confirmed my ID. I never saw the kestrel again, but I was convinced it lived on a cornice atop of the W Hotel, or the Barnes and Noble building at the north end of Union Sq, which is one of the tall buildings there.

From: Robert Schroeder (Union Square, Manhattan)  
Subject: American Kestrel Family back 3rd year in a row!  
Date: Aug 15, 2008

Hey guys, I'm happy to say that a pair of American Kestrels, have returned to the rooftops at 20th ST between 5th and 6th Ave, for the third year in a row. On this Wednesday I spotted the pair of Kestrels+ a juvenile, while on my companies rooftop at 36 West 20th St. I have been in this building for 13 years, I
first discovered the pair August 05 2006, they were raising a juvenile, stayed around till mid Sept then took off. They repeated that trend in August 2007, and I was very excited to see them back again this year, with a new juvenile. Thats 3 babies in 3 years. WOW. Watching them hunt, and performing aerial acrobatics is very cool. It's as if they recognize me, they have flown over my head and seemed to hover on the air currents, while calling down at me! Very rewarding!!!!!!! They love the water towers on the adjacent buildings. I am happy to have come across your names after doing a google search for "american kestrels in manhattan". Please feel free to contact me.

Peace Love and Birding

Robert Schroeder
Senior Designer / Interactive Samurai

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From Jim O'Brien on 13 August 2008: yes, I just discovered this nest a few weeks ago. The kestrels nest on 20th street in a modillion above the strip club there. I also see the male on the star flag pole in the park at lunch.

Well - we are outa here for this week - off to look for kestrels with our spies - hope to see you all // Debs and rdc ///