

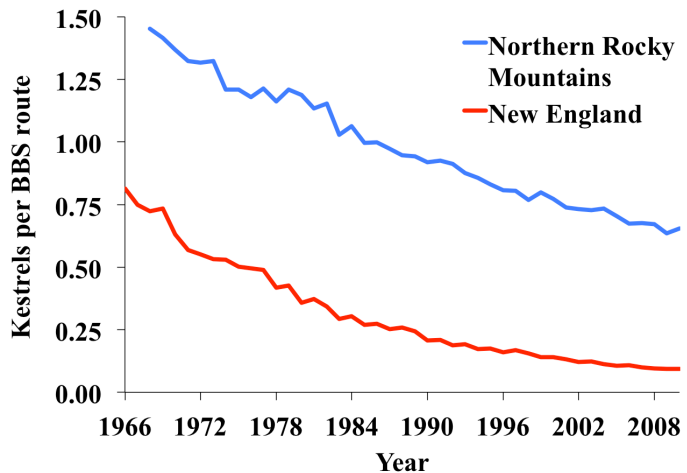


a project of The Peregrine Fund

American Kestrel populations are experiencing long-term declines in North America, and existing data are insufficient for understanding the causes. The American Kestrel Partnership is an international research network designed to generate data, models, and conservation plans for kestrel habitat and populations at large spatial scales. The Partnership unites the data-generating capacity of citizen scientists with the data-analysis expertise of professional scientists by promoting research collaboration among citizen scientists, universities, government agencies, conservation organizations, schools, and businesses. The Partnership also fosters long-term conservation values and appreciation of science by engaging the public with hands-on research experiences.

Population declines

Data from the US Geological Survey's Breeding Bird Survey, National Audubon Society's Christmas Bird Count, various nest-box monitoring programs, and migration counts, collectively indicate long-term regional declines of American Kestrel populations in North America. The causes are unknown, largely because of insufficient data, highlighting the need to generate data, models, and conservation strategies at a continent-wide scale.



Research

The American Kestrel is colorful, easy to identify, widespread, and has a strong affinity for nest-boxes—all of which make it an ideal candidate for research supported by citizen science. The American Kestrel Partnership is a research network consisting of citizen and professional scientists, focused primarily on generating data with nest-box monitoring programs for modeling and understanding the relationships between nesting and environmental conditions like climate, soil, land use, and competition with or depredation by other bird species. The Partnership is 1) supporting development of a coordinated, continent-wide network of independently managed nest-box monitoring programs and associated database; 2) providing an interactive research networking website; and 3) supporting professional scientists to develop targeted research on fledgling and adult demography, genetics, and toxicology.

Research network website

The Partnership is promoting research networking with an interactive website modeled after social networking, such that partners create customizable profiles for corresponding, sharing resources and knowledge, and entering, transmitting, and illustrating their nest-box monitoring data. The website also provides engaging activities, such as identifying prey items from streaming nest-box video; participating in discussion forums; recruiting, assisting, and collaborating with new partners; and participating in photo, art, and data competitions. The Partnership website will launch in early 2012. Until then, more resources can be accessed at: www.peregrinefund.org/american-kestrel.

Getting involved

The Partnership includes a diverse array of partners, from individual enthusiasts to large organizations. The primary means of contributing as a partner is by generating data from an existing nest-box monitoring program and/or establishing a new nest-box monitoring program, which could include one box, dozens, or even hundreds. The Partnership is also seeking professional scientist partners to 1) generate data and models for fledgling and adult demographic and toxicological research, and 2) use existing and future nest-box monitoring data to model and understand the relationships between environmental factors and nesting parameters. We encourage education professionals to enlist as partners and contribute to the design, implementation, and sharing of educational materials based on nest-box monitoring and kestrel ecology.



For more information about joining the American Kestrel Partnership, please contact the coordinators:

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