



# BEAVER CREEK

RESERVE



The American Kestrel Monitoring Project started in 2004. Since its start the project has had over 40 boxes set up in Eau Claire and Chippewa counties. Several boxes were set up through our partnership with Badger Mine Corporation. The program has resulted in over 800 birds being banded with many successful recaptures and recoveries.

If you would like to put a kestrel nest box on your property and to learn to monitor your nest box, please reach out to [CSC@beavercreekreserve.org](mailto:CSC@beavercreekreserve.org).

## American Kestrel

*Falco sparverius*

Length: 8-10 inches

Wingspan: 20-24 inches

Weight: 4-6 ounces



American Kestrels are the smallest, most colorful, and most common falcon in North America. Historically referred to as the “sparrowhawk,” this raptor is not a hawk but a falcon related to the larger Peregrine Falcon. Its scientific name *Falco sparverius* means “falcon of sparrows.”



SI County Rd K, Fall Creek, WI 54742 |  
(715)877-2212 | [beavercreekreserve.org](http://beavercreekreserve.org)



# The American Kestrel

Photo by Andy Morfrew

Although the size of a Blue Jay, these fierce hunters share the same characteristics as their raptor cousins: excellent eyesight for spotting distant prey; large curved talons and strong feet for capturing prey and hooked beak to cut up prey.

American Kestrels exhibit strong sexual dimorphism meaning that the male and female look different. Both the male and female are rusty brown and heavily marked, but the male sports blue-gray wings.

Kestrels are “sit-and-wait” hunters. When they spot prey, Kestrels hover in one spot in the air and then drop down on their prey. Kestrels also catch large insects and eat them in flight. Their prey includes small mammals, snakes, lizards, birds and bats.

Kestrels are cavity nesters. They cannot excavate their own cavity but rely on old woodpecker holes, natural tree cavities, and nest boxes.

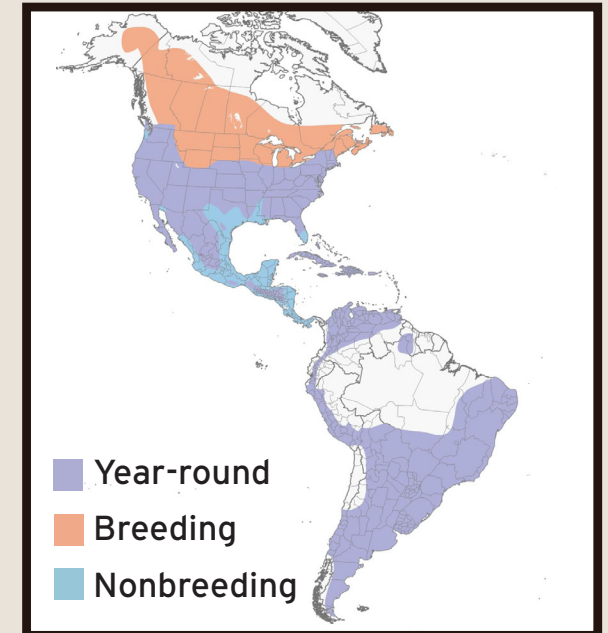
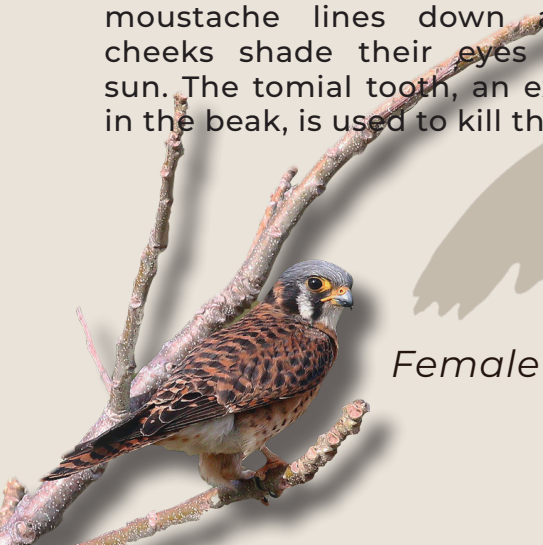
Although the country’s most common and widespread falcon, Kestrel populations have been declining since 1966. The exact reason for their decline is unclear but likely habitat loss, lack of cavities, and pesticides are major factors.



In addition, falcons have adaptations to make them excellent hunters. Kestrels’ long tapered wings are built for fast flight. The dark malar or moustache lines down a falcons’ cheeks shade their eyes from the sun. The tomial tooth, an extra notch in the beak, is used to kill their prey.

Kestrels have two dark “eyespot” on the back of their head, and these “false eyes” deter predators from attacking from behind.

American Kestrels are found from Canada to South America and live in open habitats with tree cavities for nesting and perches for hunting. Search for them along roadways and fields, perched on fence posts and power lines.



Map from TheCornellLab, All About Birds