



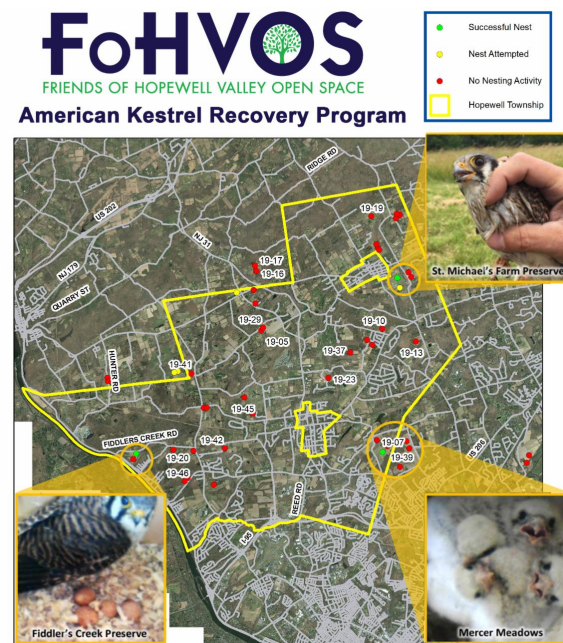
## Keeping Up with the Kestrels

### 2019 Review

In 2019, FoHIVOS received a grant from the NJ Division of Fish & Wildlife Endangered and Nongame Species Program, which provided a Conserve Wildlife Matching Grant to increase nesting opportunities for the state threatened American Kestrel with hopes of boosting their population in the Hopewell Valley. Thanks to more than 100 volunteers who attended box-building workshops this spring, we successfully constructed 50 nesting boxes! Since then, FoHIVOS staff, interns, and volunteers have installed all 50 boxes in the most suitable habitats throughout the Hopewell Valley, in FoHIVOS preserves, Mercer County Parks, State Parks and private lands.

The boxes were monitored every two weeks from mid-April to mid-June by volunteer citizen scientists, staff and interns to record any kestrel nesting activity and to thwart nest-building attempts by non-native starlings and house sparrows. At the height of the nesting season, we had seven active nest boxes. Unfortunately, four of the boxes failed. The nests were either abandoned or the eggs were destroyed, most likely by starlings. However, three boxes were successful. Mercer Meadows produced 5 chicks, St Michael's Farm Preserve produced 3 chicks and Fiddlers Creek Preserve produced 4 chicks. Two of the adult females from these boxes had previously been banded, but the one from Mercer Meadows had not been. The adult female that had not been banded before and all the chicks were captured and fitted with a uniquely numbered leg band by NJ Division of Fish and Wildlife biologists to help track the population's recovery. Overall, not too bad for our first year! This program will continue for years to come and we expect our success rate to go up.

If you wish to learn more about the American Kestrel, visit our designated webpage [here](#). We wish to extend our sincerest gratitude for your participation in this project, and for building the boxes that are currently providing nesting habitat for these state-threatened raptors. Thank you for your help and support!





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**CUB SCOUT**



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# FoHIVOS

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