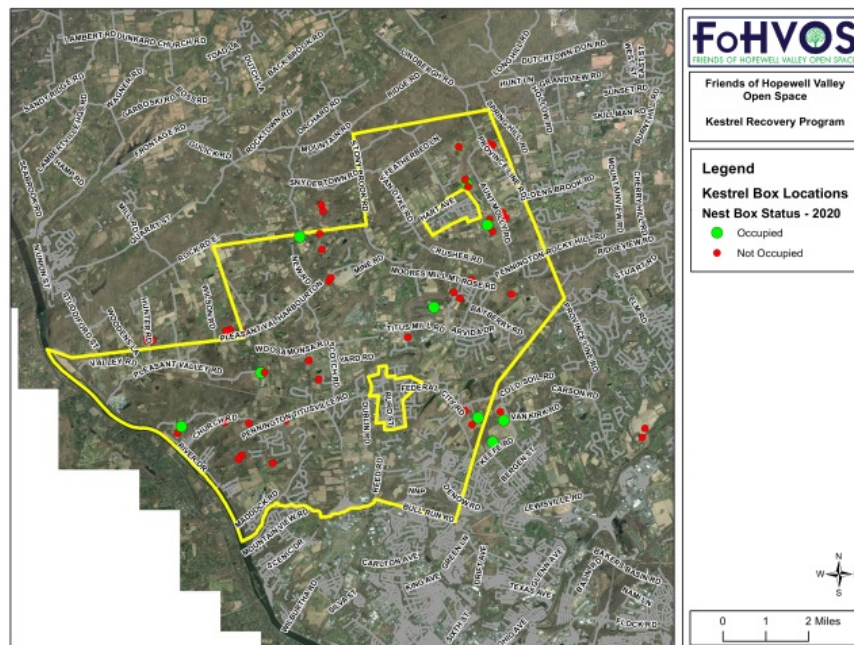




Keeping Up with the Kestrels

June 2020 Update



Dear Community Conservation partners,

For the past several weeks our tiny grassland falcons, the American Kestrels, have been returning to their summer territories and turning their attention toward nesting. Kestrels are a state-threatened species, and last year FoHVOS received a grant from the NJ Division of Fish & Wildlife Endangered and Nongame Species Program to boost their population in the Hopewell Valley. With the help of more than 100 volunteers, FoHVOS built and installed 50 kestrel nest boxes in suitable grasslands throughout the Hopewell Valley.

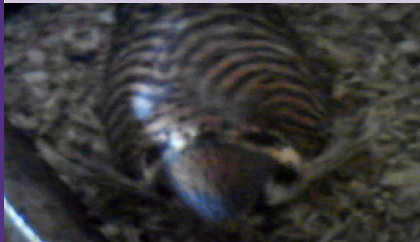
Each spring the boxes must be cleaned and readied with fresh bedding prior to the kestrel nesting season, and then monitored once every two weeks to monitor kestrel activity and thwart non-native starlings and house sparrows from usurping the nests. The COVID-19 pandemic imposed significant challenges to the kestrel recovery program this spring. FoHVOS has worked hard to minimize the impact of the pandemic on its stewardship initiatives, but our ability to maintain many of the boxes was hindered by

access constraints.

Thanks to FoHVOS's stewardship staff, volunteer citizen-scientists, and conservation partners, we were able to take rapid action once access to the boxes was regained to resume box monitoring and ensure the boxes were available and ready for kestrels. We are delighted to report that nine boxes are currently active, each with a clutch of 4-6 kestrel eggs! This is an increase from last year which had four successful nests and one that was abandoned prior to the eggs hatching.

This year's hatchlings are expected to appear in a matter of days. Once the chicks are older, they – along with the adults – will be banded by NJ Endangered and Nongame Species Program biologists to help track population recovery. We will provide additional updates as the season progresses!

Attached you can find images of the recent activity. 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!



Kestrel Spotted at Fiddlers Creek
Preserve Box



Nest inhabited with eggs on a
Private Member's Land



Eggs at St.Micheal's Preserve's
nesting box



Calvary Baptist Church

CUB SCOUT



Painted Oak Nature School

1776

Cambridge School

Bloomberg



Eggs at St.Micheal's Preserve's nesting box

FoHVOS
FRIENDS OF HOPEWELL VALLEY OPEN SPACE

Friends of Hopewell Valley Open Space
P.O. Box 395
Pennington, NJ 08534
(609) 730-1560

info@fohvos.org
fohvos.org



Donate