

DUTIES OF AN AMERICAN KESTREL NEST BOX MONITOR

madisonaudubon.org/kestrels

Thank you for volunteering for the Badgerland Bird Alliance (formerly Madison Audubon) Kestrel Nest Box Monitoring Program! The program is a fun, meaningful, and valuable way to support American Kestrel populations, and we are relying on your help to steward the nest box you've been assigned to.

It is important that you can complete each of the duties listed below. If you have questions or are unable to do aspects of this project, please contact Brand Smith (brandsmith2@gmail.com, 608-444-8952) or Brenna Marsicek (bmarsicek@madisonaudubon.org, 608-255-2473).

As a volunteer, you are responsible for maintaining, checking, and collecting data from the box that has been assigned to you.

This may involve checking on the box up to as many as eleven times or more over the course of the year.

When you check on the box, the **maintenance** items you're looking for include:

- In late winter, check that all nuts and bolts are tight, ensure that the box is secure, check if the hole is in good shape, and check that the sides of the box are in good shape.
- Each visit, if necessary and able, remove European Starling and House Sparrow nests and/or young.
- If you're unsure of the species, do not remove.
- In the fall clean out the box with a scrapper and install 3 to 4" of wood chips. Not cedar wood chips and not saw dust.

Data collection means to fill out the online data form with required information each time the box is checked (usually weekly).

You will not need a ladder unless Brand has specifically noted this. Do not fold down the box structure to monitor the box. To check the box:

- Using a camera device, look inside the box from the ground to minimize nest disturbance.
- See if the wood chips are still there and in good shape.
- Count the number of eggs and or chicks.
- Age the chicks to the best of your ability using chick photos to help.
- Note if other species are using the nest box.
- Note if the box has failed either by predation, eggs that have not hatched, dead chicks or box damage.
- Fill out the online data form after each visit.

If you are unable to monitor your box as required, please notify the box coordinator to arrange for another person to continue the process.

A calendar example of what a monitor will do:

- January/February: Check that wood chips are still there and in good shape.
- Mid to late March check and see if you see Kestrel activity at or near your box.

- Late March make your first nest box check with your camera device.
- April make weekly visits to your box to determine if kestrels are nesting. Fill out online data form after each visit.
- May can be the same as April if not in use. Weekly checks can be reduced to every two weeks. Fill out online data form after each visit.
- June and July are the same as above and weekly checks can be every three weeks. Fill out online data form after each visit.
- August to December clean out your nest box, fill it with fresh wood chips and volunteer to help with miscellaneous nest box duties in other areas.