

INTRODUCTION

The following three sections, A, B and C, are accounts of species respectively associated with **openland**, **woodland** and **wetland** habitats.

For reasons of economy, each species is listed only once among of these three habitats. Most of them, however, are regularly found in at least two of these general habitats. Habitat generalists, such as the raccoon, can be found in all three.

SECTION A - OPENLANDS AND WOODLAND MARGINS

Examples of openland situations where box placement may attract a desired species.

1. Farmlands in fencerows around croplands & pastures.
2. Orchards, nurseries and Christmas tree plantations.
3. Along the edges of woodlands.
4. In small woodland clearings.
5. On reclaimed strip mines.
6. Cemeteries, golf courses.
7. Along interstate highways.
8. On institutional grounds, e.g., schools.
9. In backyards.

American Kestrel

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The American Kestrel is our smallest falcon and is abundant in agricultural areas characterized by scattered woodlots, scattered trees, shelterbelts, meadows, highway rights-of-way, pastures and hayfields. This species is valuable because of the large numbers of rodents and insects eaten. Kestrels are frequently seen sitting on powerlines along highways or hovering above the grassy roadside ditches in search of their prey. An adult kestrel is about the size of a mourning dove.

Locate the box along a fencerow between crop fields, in a meadow, or in similar open country. Because kestrels hunt in open habitats, boxes should be placed in locations surrounded by at least one acre of open space. Place the box 10 to 30 feet high on a tree, utility pole, the back of a billboard or sign, or on your own



American Kestrel

post. Kestrels like a high perch near their box, so pick a site within 100 to 200 yards of utility wires or a tall tree. The 3" diameter entrance should face in a south or easterly direction. The flight path to the entrance should be branch free. Cover the bottom 2 or 3 inches of the box with wood shavings or pine needles.

Place boxes in the fall or late winter. Starlings may be a persistent problem. Check the boxes weekly to remove starling nesting material. Neither the Screech-Owl (a desirable occupant) nor the kestrel carry in nesting material. Occasional nest checks will generally not cause the kestrel to abandon the nest.

A ladder is best for nest checks. This makes it harder for raccoons to follow your scent trail to the nest. If raccoons, squirrels or other non-avian predators and competitors are a problem, place 3 feet of metal flashing under the box. This guard may prevent their climbing to the box.

You'll be rewarded when you spot the first white, pinkish-white or cinnamon egg that's evenly covered with brown spots. Kestrels normally lay five such eggs.