TIPS ON BUILDING A KESTREL BOX

Nesting Sites

Kestrels have historically been cavity nesters but will also use secluded buildings and crevices. Unfortunately, man has removed many dead trees and old buildings, and in addition, the Kestrel must compete with the millions of Starlings for nesting sites. Fortunately, Kestrels adapt well to manmade nesting structures.

Location

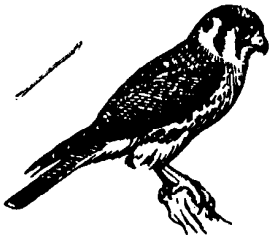
Good locations for the Kestrel box are open fields and meadows or along fence rows. Boxes can be mounted on utility poles, buildings, lone trees, or custom post (see instructions). The house should face south or easterly direction. Pick a location where a tall tree or pole/wires are within 100-200 yards, as Kestrels like a high perch near the box. The box height should be 10-30' from the ground and the entrance should not be hindered by twigs or branches as the Kestrel prefers an uninhibited exit from the box. They should be spaced, on average, one mile from each other, and no closer together than 1/2 mile.

When choosing a box location, keep in mind that it will need to be checked and cleaned periodically. Therefore, do not install it where it is impossible to reach later. An alternative is to use a 4" x 4" eight foot post attached to a 2" x 4" twelve for post with six inch bolts enabling the house to swing down.

Monitoring Boxes

It is important to check the boxes weekly in the spring to keep Starlings and other undesirables out. Kestrels take no nesting materials into the box, so 2-3" of wood shavings or coarse sawdust should be put into the house. Straw or dry leaves are also acceptable. Screech Owls will also use a Kestrel house and are desirable tenants. Any nesting materials found in the boxes are most likely that of Starlings and should be removed.

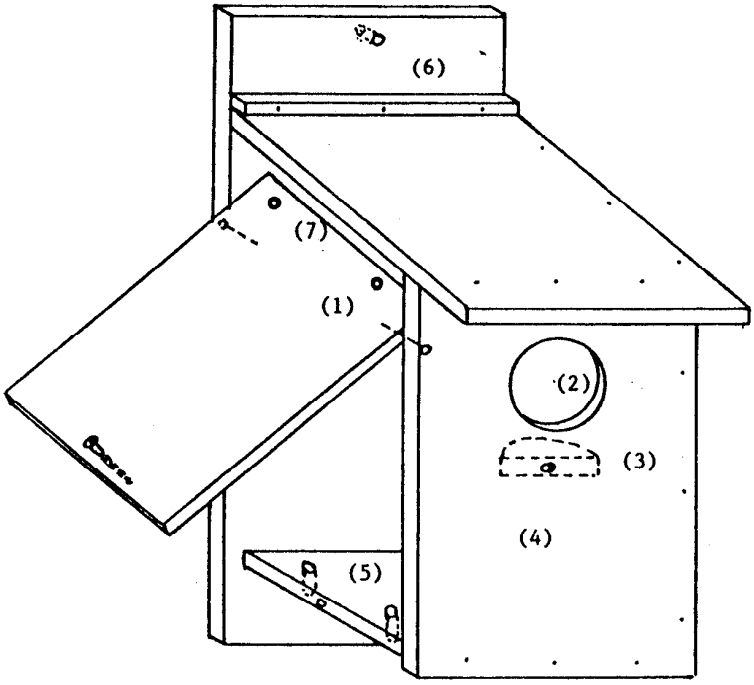
Kestrel eggs are white/cinnamon colored with brown spots, Screech Owl eggs are white and Starling eggs are pale blue.

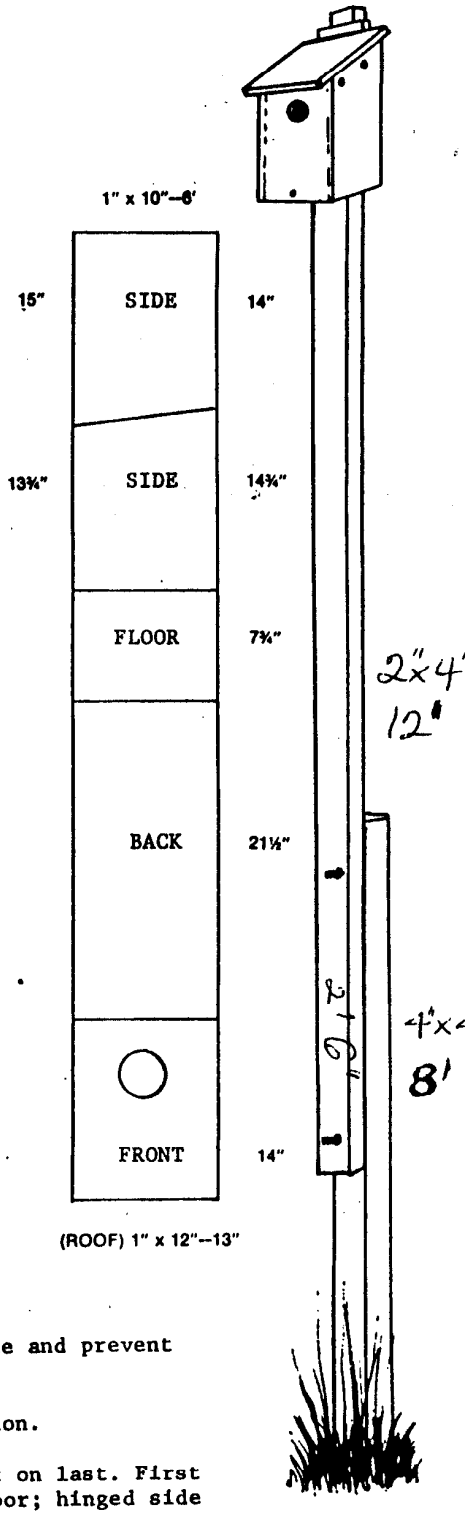


KESTREL KARETAKERS

BUILDING A KESTREL HOUSE

HOMES FOR OUR SMALLEST FALCONS





GUIDE

1) Nails act as hinges to swing side open for cleaning and monitoring.

2) Entrance hole is 3" in diameter and 9-10" above floor.

3) An inside perch should be placed 3" from bottom of entrance hole. Use half of entrance cut-out and attach with screw.

4) Use a screwdriver or auger to make indentations inside the front and under the entrance hole to enable the young to climb to exit.

5) Five ¼" holes should be drilled in floor for water drainage.

6) A cleat above roof is optional but may hold the roof better in place and prevent rain seepage.

7) Two 3/8" holes should be drilled at top of both sides for ventilation.

8) CONSTRUCTION TIPS: For easier construction, the roof should be put on last. First step is the side being nailed to back; then front to side; then floor; hinged side is next to last before the roof. NOTE: Hinged side is ¼" shorter than other side to allow side to swing open. The roof and top of front could be beveled 5 degrees for a tighter fit.

9) A six foot board, 1" x 10" can be used with no waste . For the roof, a 1" x 12" board 13" long should be used.