

2024 Project Update Report for Napa County Wildlife Conservation Commission

Project: Napa American Kestrel Nest Box Initiative

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Project summary: Grantee has applied for a grant to support the Napa American Kestrel Nest Box Initiative of the Wildlife Program, working collaboratively with private and public land managers to create a network of new and existing American Kestrel nest boxes and collect long-term data on Kestrel occupancy and productivity along a gradient of landscape features in Napa County.

Project accomplishments: We have successfully launched the first year of the American Kestrel Nest Box Initiative and have received an overwhelmingly positive reception from the community. To date, we have worked with a variety of land managers to install new and enroll existing American Kestrel nest boxes in the program in Napa County. We have made contacts that have donated nest boxes and other resources to the program. I have trained a technician and together we have started monitoring nest box occupancy and gathering data about nest box location and habitat.

Summary of Accomplishments:

- 36 new American Kestrel nest boxes installed across 18 sites
- 87 existing American Kestrel nest boxes across 51 sites were located with the help of Clark's Sustainable Solutions
- 12 consultations in progress with land managers who are in the process of getting nest boxes installed in time for next year's breeding season
- 13 nest boxes were donated and distributed in partnership with Napa-Solano Audubon
- Staff Research Associate was trained on monitoring protocols
- We began data collection including nest occupancy monitoring, location, and local habitat characteristics

Photos from the project:



Figure 1: Newly built American Kestrel nest boxes by participating land manager in fall 2023.



Figure 2: Top- By March 2024, a male and female Kestrel pair selected this new nest box that was installed in November 2023. Bottom- This pair had 5 eggs in April 2024, which is considered a typical amount of eggs for a Kestrel to have.



Figure 3: Three of five Kestrel nestlings visible in a photo from a nest check in April 2024. Nestlings are approximately 2 weeks old. Both of their parents were perched on a large tree nearby.



Figure 4: Examples of Americana Kestrel nest boxes land managers have installed as part of the Napa American Kestrel Nest Box Initiative.



Figure 5: Western Screech Owls are another beneficial small raptor that nests in nest boxes the same size as those recommended for Kestrels. We have seen several Kestrel nest boxes occupied by Screech Owls so far. This nest was visited 2 weeks apart, note mother sleeping in back of nest box and how much nestlings have grown between visits.