

American Kestrel

(Falco sparverius)



Flora
Fauna



How to Identify:

- The American Kestrel is North America's smallest falcon at nine to ten inches in length.
- Reddish back and tail.
- Double black stripes on white face.
- Male has blue-gray on wings, females have orange wings with black stripes.
- Long pointed wings

Habitat:

- Live in a variety of habitats including scrubland, deserts, urban areas, and agricultural fields.
- American Kestrels nest in cavities in trees and will also use nest boxes.
- Open fields, roadsides, power lines and telephone poles are all good places to search for American Kestrels.

Idaho's falcons include the peregrine falcon, prairie falcon, merlin, American kestrel, and gyrfalcon.

Explore Idaho
with Scout the Fox!

Scout



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Fun Facts!

- Raptors or birds of prey are a group of birds including hawks, eagles, falcons, and owls. These birds have excellent vision to help them spot their prey. Long sharp claws or talons help catch or kill food. A sharp hooked beak helps to not only kill prey but also tear food apart.
- Falcons can see their prey up to two miles away. They are able to focus their eyes very quickly to keep prey in focus until caught. Because raptors have both binocular and monocular vision, they have two well-focused side views and one well-focused front view all at the same time. Like most predators, raptors have eyes that face forward, just like yours. Both eyes look at something at the same time. This is called binocular vision.
- Kestrels eat eats small birds and mammals. In the summer, they also eat insects like grasshoppers, dragonflies and beetles, making this bird a friend to farmers!
- Kestrels have an amazing adaptation to help them find small mammals in fields. They can see ultraviolet light, which is invisible to humans. As it turns out, rodent pee reflects ultraviolet light! A perched or hovering kestrel can see the urine along a mouse trail. The kestrel follows the ultraviolet pee trail to track down a rodent meal. Kind of gross, but very cool at the same time!

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Help Protect the Kestrel

- Set up nest boxes in appropriate habitat.
- Populations are starting to decline, causes may include loss of habitat, predation by other birds of prey, pollution, and competition for nesting sites from species like the European Starling that were not originally in North America but were introduced by people.
- Support conservation of natural areas for all wildlife.
- Poisons used to kill rodents can harm Kestrels that eat rodents.

COLOR ME





Portals to Parks



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ACTIVITY TIME

1. Look for information on the falcons that live in Idaho. Which one are you most likely to see?

2. Count how many Kestrels you see on your next visit to an Idaho State Park.



Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation

parksandrecreation.idaho.gov

Thanks to the Idaho Department of Fish and Game for wildlife information.