

29 May 2008

American Kestrel Nest Survey NYC - Issue #8

With this issue we are coming directly for you...and apologies in advance if we seem to be “in your face.”

All kidding aside, we want to call your attention to a FREE American Kestrel Nest survey walk on Saturday, 31 May. We will meet at **9am** near the **City Hall train station** (#4, 5 and 6 trains stop here). We will meet exactly at the corner of Chambers Street and Centre Street (across the street from 1 Centre Street - the Municipal Building). The meeting location is the NE corner of the block of City Hall, and the location where our Peregrine Falcon walks begin. We will first visit a kestrel nest below the Brooklyn Bridge (Manhattan side – see photo of the adult female below) where the young are just about to fledge. From there we will venture up to East 6th street at another newly discovered kestrel nest (thanks Dennis Edge and Rob Bate!); and finally to the upper east side to look for a kestrel nest in the east 70s where we have received scattered reports. Bring binoculars and walking shoes and your metro card...Bathrooms (McDonald's/Barnes and Noble), we will find on the way...and feel free to leave at anytime. Email me with question or to let me know you are interested.



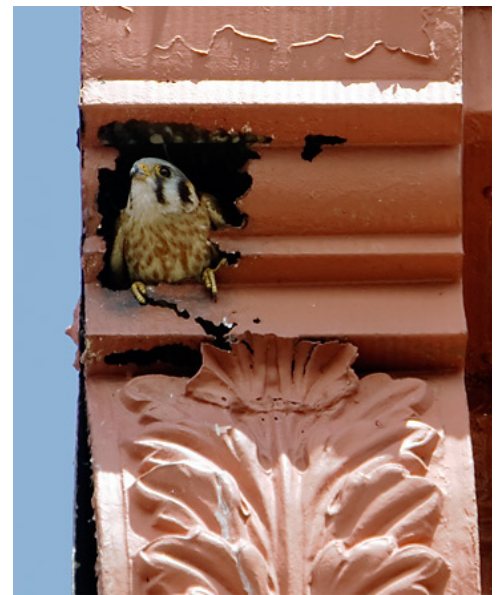
Adult female American Kestrel leaving the nest cavity at the Brooklyn Bridge nest site

Some of you might be interested in seeing the habitat where the Brooklyn Bridge kestrels live. See the next page...the nest is located on the face of a relatively small building (about 60-65 feet above street level). Once again note how urban the location is – the closest park (actually a collection of trees) is on the other (north) side of the Brooklyn Bridge. In 2007, the nest was located about one block west of this year's nest – in an opening of a water tower above the Peck Slip Post Office. See the photos on the following pages for more information.

**American Kestrel
Nest
Brooklyn Bridge area
Manhattan**



The photo on the left shows the 2008 nest building (a late 19th century apartment building with metal cornice). The nest (see white arrow) is located on the front of the building about 60-65 feet above the street. To take this photo I was standing on Front Street looking due south toward the financial center in lower Manhattan. The Brooklyn Bridge is directly behind me, and the South Street Seaport about 2.5 blocks in the distance. And in the photo below, you can see a close-up of the nest cavity in the modillion (bracket) of the cornice.

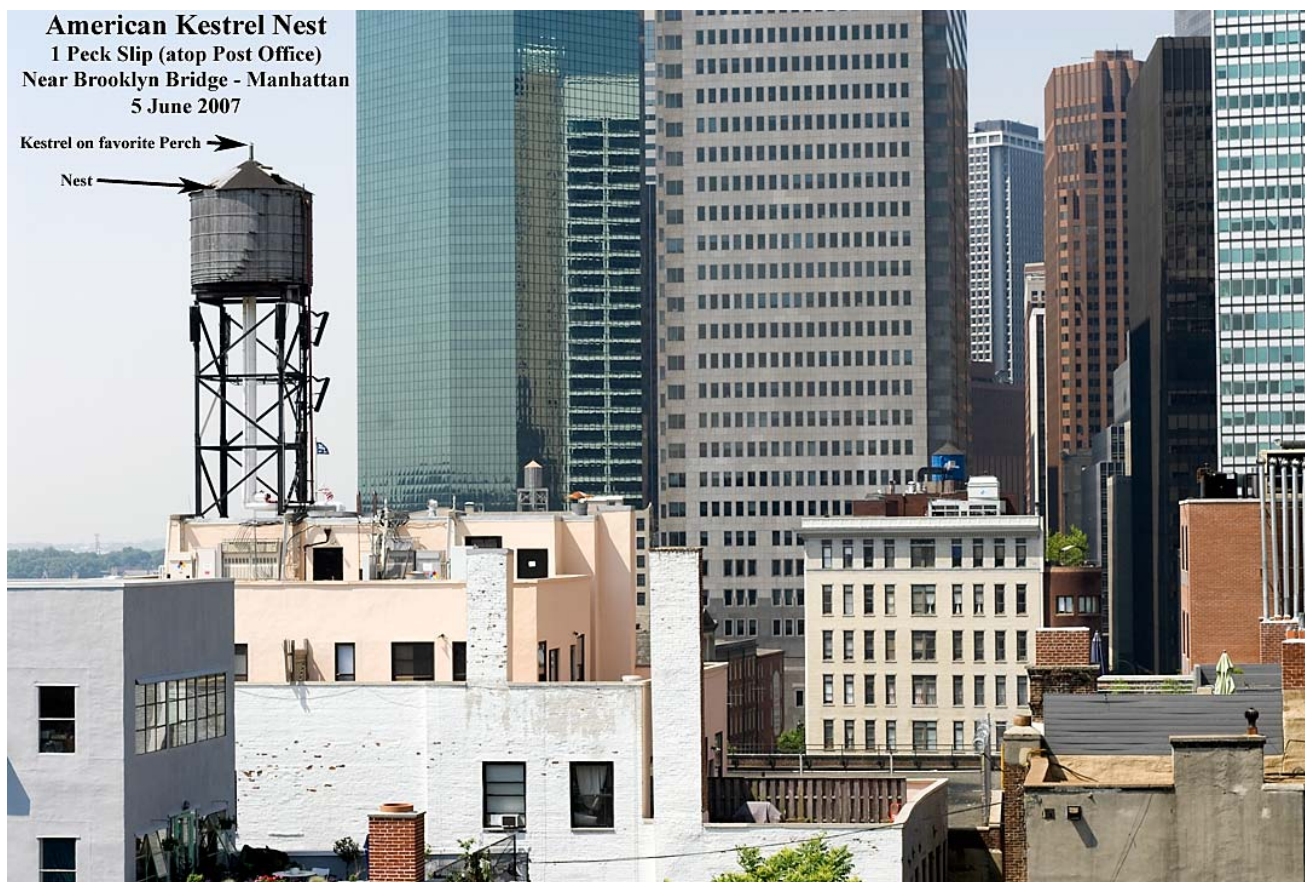


**American Kestrel Nest
Brooklyn Bridge
Manhattan
28 May 2008**



Kestrel nest building on Front Street in Manhattan

By comparison, here is a photo of the 2007 nest site of the Brooklyn Bridge area Kestrels:



And in 2000, kestrels nested in a building on Water Street, about 100 feet from the 2007 nest; and approx. 175 feet from this year's (2008) nest.

American Kestrel Nest Project

Kestrels nested in this cornice in 2000...and then repairs were made in 2001



Regarding what these kestrels are eating – Ivan Martinez and I watched the male bring in a small bird (most likely a fledgling House Sparrow) on 28 May to the Brooklyn Bridge nest. Though in other areas of the country, rural kestrels feed upon significant numbers of grasshoppers, we don't have many (if any) insects of significant size on NYC streets...yes our kestrels will eat the occasional dragonfly (or even bee), but so far as we can see (tell), their primary food in NYC is small birds and the occasional small rodent, such as a young rat.

We have more to report from other kestrel nest sites including that wonderful South Bronx site discovered by Ivan Martinez, as well as superb information from Lisa Darms about a kestrel nest (young just fledged apparently) next to Fort Greene Park in Brooklyn...I hope to send more info next week if time permits...in the meantime, do see if your schedule permits you to join us for even part of the free kestrel walk this Saturday morning, 31 May.

All previous seven issues of the 2008 NYC American Kestrel nest survey are available upon request (free) – and all are now PDFs.

To report kestrel nesting activity:

Robert DeCandido rdcny@earthlink.net and 718-828-8262



Here's looking at you! Can you see the face (and right shoulder) of this young American Kestrel at the Brooklyn Bridge nest site? This young female has at least two other siblings in the nest with her...and they might be flying by Saturday, 31 May – so do join us for the kestrel walk that morning, if you can.