

9 June 2008

American Kestrel Nest Survey NYC - Issue #10

Kestrels are Fledging!!! – Part 2

This week we had the opportunity to re-visit several kestrel nests in Manhattan and Brooklyn, to see what had happened in the June 3 through June 8 time frame. Here is what we can report:

At the Front Street nest (near Brooklyn Bridge), three young had fledged by Thursday (June 12), and one was still in the nest. All four young at this site appear to be females.

At the West 105th street nest (the Pablo, Blanca and Manny nest), three young had fledged by 6 June (probably on 5-6 June), and one was still left in the nest as of late Friday afternoon, June 6 (see photo below). All four young here appear to be males.

At the Brooklyn mall nest (the Danielle Gustafson and Brad Klein nest) three young (two females and a male) had successfully fledged by Sunday, June 1. See photos of the nest site area in this issue.

At the 80th and Broadway nest (the George H. Beane site), one young fledged on 2 June (see the NYC Kestrel Newsletter #9 of 3 June for details). We have received no information since that time. On a visit to the nest site on 6 June, we only saw the adult male flying and perching in the area of the nest.

Meanwhile with the help of Ben Cacace, Rosa Bonamusa and Christian Reik, we were able to track down a nest on East 75th Street. Time and photo ops permitting, we hope to get images of the young birds to present in a subsequent newsletter.

Visits to the West 111th Street nest (and St. Nicholas Ave.) revealed the parents bringing food to young (noisy but out of sight) still in the nest on Friday, 6 June. Similarly, at the West 69th Street nest site, Carol Wood reported that the female was feeding the young for six minutes on 1 June, after bringing food into the nest. This is down from about 22 minutes on May 24th and approx 11 minutes on 31 May.



The last young kestrel (a male) at west 105th street – 6 June 2008



Two other brothers just fledged at the 105th Street nest as of 6 June



A rare NYC photo: male American Kestrels (just fledged) perched in trees near the 105th street nest

The preceding three photos all come from the West 105th street nest. We want to send our greatest thanks and appreciation to Pablo, Manny and Blanca for making photo opportunities possible. We are sure that all four young males here will soon be fine flyers on the steady diet of house sparrows combined with Spanish Harlem rice and beans (arroz y frijoles).

In Brooklyn: The Most Urban Urban Kestrel Nest

Last week, we were learned of three young kestrels that just fledged in downtown Brooklyn (Brooklyn Mall) that Danielle Gustafson brought to our attention. Her husband, Brad Klein, took a few photos of the nest and young kestrels, and here is one:



This week, we made a visit to the site, and met up with Brad who provided wonderful details about the nest and happenings at the site.



The photo on the left shows the nest building at the Brooklyn Mall on the corner of Fulton and Hoyt Streets. It appears to be a late 19th or early 20th century department store (that will soon be a JC Penny's). The nest is located on the front of the building about 115 feet above the street. Fortunately while Brad was watching he saw one of the young kestrels make its first flight – landing gracefully on a balcony above him. Indeed, we have been surprised this spring at how agile young kestrels are just out of the nest – very different than just fledged Peregrine Falcons in NYC in our experience.



Detail of Brooklyn Mall kestrel nest (above). It is difficult to describe how urban this nest is...Brad tells me the nearest large park is about one mile away. See the following page for two more photos of the habitat of these kestrels.



Brooklyn Mall nest (arrow above and below) – the most urban of urban kestrel nests



Brad and I also wandered around the neighborhood – the only small park (a parking lot) near the nest site is approximately three blocks away. In our experience, small lots with lots of gravel and dust are prime habitat for House Sparrows that love to dust bath in such locations.

Next week we will continue to report on kestrel fledging activity in NYC. Overall we envision another two issues of the 2008 NYC Kestrel newsletter...for a total of twelve for the season. As always, all back issues are free upon request, and all are now available as PDFs.

Finally, see below for two superb reports from the field (the Upper West Side of Manhattan) we received this past week from Dr. Alexi Kalogerakis and long-time falcon researcher, Ms. Sharon Kass.

Thanks!

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Adult male American Kestrel – photographer and location unknown

REPORTS FROM THE FIELD

From: Alexander Kalogerakis
Subject: Re: NYC Kestrel Newsletter #9
Date: Jun 3, 2008 1:01 PM

Hi Bob,

Lotsa kestrel sightings lately! I saw 2 over 79th and Riverside calling and dive-bombing a red-tail, 2 days ago. I couldn't see if they were adults [most likely] or possibly new fledglings, presumably from the W. 80th/West End Avenue nest nearby. I've seen these birds regularly this spring as my office is right around the corner. I also saw and heard an adult flying around W 75th street between Columbus and CPW about one week ago. It was calling for a minute or more, even after it landed on a water tower. I didn't see another bird or a nest, being without binocs or time to linger.

all the best,

Alexi

From: Kass, Sharon
Sent: Tuesday, June 03, 2008 3:04 PM
Subject: kestrel calling

Bob,

I am working from home today – a very rare occurrence (doctor appt this morning). I hear a kestrel calling outside. He does not sound close, but not too far away. It sounds like he is flying by calling

from a few diff spots. I am tempted to run outside to try to find him but alas I really do have work to do and now he sounds like he's gone.. I have nothing to tell you other than this very distinctive and memorable sound.. no actual sighting.. it sounds like's near 76th and Riverside Drive or West End Ave – just a guess!

I'll try to keep my eyes peeled for him.. thought I should at least report this to you.. Of course you missed the jackpot all those years I was living feet away from a kestrel nest, but that's history now..

Sharon

From: Kass, Sharon

Sent: Tuesday, June 03, 2008 4:44 PM

Subject: RE: kestrel calling

Got em!

The pair is perched on the water tower of a yellow-brick building that I can see at a distance from my bedroom window. My guess is that the building is at the corner of 77th and West End Ave. I'll keep an eye to see if a nest is nearby but by the look of the pair and their behavior (calling) I would guess the nest is nearby. But since I see both kestrels then either the nest is empty or perhaps the chicks are old enough to be alone but in visual contact with parents??

Stay tuned for more!

Sharon



One last image of the urban urban kestrel nest in downtown Brooklyn at the Mall.

Just as we were going to press on Sunday, we received this information from a kestrel spy on the lower west side of Manhattan:

From: Matthew Wills
Subject: kestrels
Date: Jun 8, 2008 10:59 AM

BB,

A pair seems to be nesting in the very elaborate cornice of 253 W 15th St., just east of 8th Ave. You'll see a hole on the east side of the cornice. Watched male and female hanging out on the fire escapes across 15th St. from the probable nest yesterday late afternoon. Male made forays to and fro. There may have been some food transfer from male to female (me w/o my binds). Female ducked into the cornice hole at one point. No sign visual or aural of fledglings from the street, however.

I'd love to see your kestrel newsletter or re-cap of the season. Thanks.

Matthew



Male Eurasian Kestrel (Photographer Unknown)

Yes an American Kestrel nest can be found in your neighborhood...Thank You Matthew!