The Sacajawea Audubon

Kestrel Nest Box Project

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*A Partnership of Sacajawea Audubon*

*and the American Kestrel Partnership*

***Installing Nest Boxes:***

Install boxes in an open grassy area where rodents and grasshoppers are likely prey.  Look for open dry grasslands, meadows, grassy pastures, and sage-steppe habitat.  Avoid alfalfa hayfields or tall lush grass which will get too tall for kestrels to hunt in. Avoid forested areas, but a box can be placed on the edge of a patch of trees if it is facing out to open grassland.

Boxes can be mounted on poles, posts, trees, or the sides of buildings. Mount the box at least 6 feet high, preferably 9-12 feet high.  Fence posts can be used by attaching a 2x4 to extend the height of the post. If you want to use a utility pole you should first get permission from the utility company.

Use 3" wood screws for mounting.

Ideally a box should not face the prevailing west winds which could blow in precipitation.  If installing near a road, face the hole away from the road so fledglings don't fly out into traffic.

Place 2-3” of wood shavings, not sawdust, in the bottom of a box for bedding (Pine or aspen are best. Do not use cedar shavings).

***Maintaining Nest Boxes:***

Clean boxes each year in the fall or early spring. Throw out dirty wood shavings and old nests including those built by song birds. Add 2-3 inches of clean wood shavings for bedding if needed.

***Monitoring Nest Boxes***:

Be a citizen scientist and monitor the boxes each year throughout the spring and into summer. At a minimum, please monitor once there are eggs, and then check again within 30 days for nestlings. You can report findings in one of two ways:

* Be a part of the Sacajawea Audubon Kestrel Nest Box Project and make arrangements to report your information to Paulette Epple, the project director, at conservation@sacajaweaaudubon.org or call 406-580-6186. All data gets recorded with the American Kestrel Partnership.
* Become a partner of the American Kestrel Partnership at <http://kestrel.peregrinefund.org>. Download monitoring instructions and submit your data directly to them for use in research.