

Common Kestrel



Classification

Kingdom: Animalia
Phylum: Chordata
Class: Aves
Order: Falconiformes
Family: Falconidae
Genus: *Falco*
Species: *tinnunculus*



Range, Habitat, Conservation Status

- **Range:** Found throughout Europe, Asia, and Africa spanning from Great Britain to China and as far south as South Africa.
- **Habitat:** Prefer open, grassy fields and farmlands, which give them sufficient open areas to hunt.
- **Conservation Status:** Least Concern

Physical Characteristics

- **Body Length:** 11.81 to 14.17 inches (30-36 cm)
- **Wingspan:** 27.56 to 31.50 inches (70-80 cm)
- **Weight:** 5.29 to 6.70 ounces (150-190 g)
- **Lifespan:** There is limited data on the lifespan of this species. About 66% make it to 2 years old and they may live up to 16 years in the wild.
- **Identifying Traits:** Light-brown plumage with dark spots. Males have a grey-blue head, while females are all brown. Pointed wings and a tail that appears long in flight and fan-shaped when the bird is hovering.

Behaviors

- **Feeding:** Specializes in eating voles with the field vole accounting for the majority of its diet. It will also take mice and shrews, as well as small birds and occasionally worms and insects.
- **Breeding:** Breed in April and May in the northern hemisphere.
- **Nesting:** Do not build nests, instead they lay their eggs in natural cavities, such as holes in trees or cliff faces.
- **Migration:** Some are migratory in Europe, wintering in southern Europe and sub-Saharan Africa. However, most of the breeding population in Europe is non-migratory.



- **Call:** An alarm call, described as "kee-kee-kee."

Resident Bird(s)

Name: Derby

- **Age:** Hatched in 2014
- **Sex:** Male
- **Background:** Hatched at another educational facility in the United States.
- **Unique Individual Traits:** The highest perch is his favorite perch!

Fun Facts!

- Another name for the Common Kestrel is the Eurasian Kestrel.
- Several hunting techniques are used by kestrels, but the most well-known is the hover. A kestrel will fly into the wind and use its tail and wings to hold its position in the air. Keeping its eyes fixed on the ground, it will swiftly drop to catch on any prey sighted.
- With extremely sharp eyesight, kestrels can spot a beetle from 55 yards (50 meters) away.
- There are 12 subspecies of the Common Kestrel throughout its range.

Importance

- In some areas, Common Kestrels are key predators of small, herbivorous mammals, including voles and mice, and help control rodent and small mammal populations.

Sources

- <https://ebird.org/species/eurkes>
- https://animaldiversity.org/accounts/Falco_tinnunculus/
- <https://peregrinefund.org/explore-raptors-species/falcons/eurasian-kestrel>
- <https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/trees-woods-and-wildlife/animals/birds/kestrel/>
- <https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/kestrel>