

North Lanarkshire kestrel nest box scheme

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The kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*) is one of our most familiar birds of prey but numbers have been in heavy decline since the 1970s although there is no clear reason for this and it is most likely a combination of several factors, including agricultural changes, predator prey relationships and climate change to name but a few.

In 2012, several natural kestrel nest sites were monitored in North Lanarkshire on behalf of the Central Scotland Raptor Study Group but we felt we could do more so in 2013 we began establishing a kestrel nest box scheme throughout North Lanarkshire. By the beginning of the 2013 breeding season, we hope to have placed 20 kestrel nest boxes around the county. The aim of the scheme is to provide kestrels with nesting opportunities in areas where natural nests are in short supply, as well as helping in the monitoring of the nesting population. Previous studies have shown that kestrels readily take to nest boxes so our hope is that a good proportion of the boxes will be in use within a couple of years of being put up. As part of the scheme we plan to carry out more intensive monitoring of the nests, keeping detailed records of productivity and fledging success of the birds using the boxes.

The ultimate hope is that the study can help contribute to the understanding of why this little bird is struggling so much in certain areas of our countryside.



Photo caption: common kestrel (Photo by James Leonard)