

## ADVISORY INFORMATION – KESTREL



### Introduction

These small falcons, with long wings and tail, are master hoverers, often seen hunting over grass roadside verges. More than half of surveys returned in CEMEX's 2012 Bird of Prey survey reported kestrels hunting.

### Ecology

Kestrels eat a variety of prey, mainly small mammals but may also take birds, worms, beetles. They do not build their own nests but make use of old stick nests (e.g. crows), cliffs or building ledges. They are also regular hole-nesters and readily accept nestboxes if located with an open outlook. The same nest site is often used in successive years with some sites used for decades. A clutch of 3-6 eggs is usually laid in late April or early May, hatching a little less than a month later. During incubation and brooding the male provides food to the female.

### Managing your site

Provide a good habitat for their prey and an undisturbed nestbox. Kestrels feed primarily on voles so try to provide uninterrupted areas of rough, 'tussocky' grass (ideally non-grazed) where small mammals can tunnel and nest amongst collapsed new growth and old leaf litter. If grassland on the site is grazed then try to leave strips of 2-6m width alongside hedges. These strips can be cut every 2-3 years but avoid cutting all areas in the same year.

Nestboxes ([http://www.rspb.org.uk/Images/kestrelnestbox\\_tcm9-226479.jpg](http://www.rspb.org.uk/Images/kestrelnestbox_tcm9-226479.jpg)) can be fixed to trees, poles or buildings in undisturbed locations close to grassland and with good visibility. For further advice on fitting Kestrel nestboxes please go to: <http://shopping.rspb.org.uk/kestrel-nestbox-advice>

**Remember, all wild birds are protected by legislation making it an offence to intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird, its eggs or nests whilst in use or being built.**