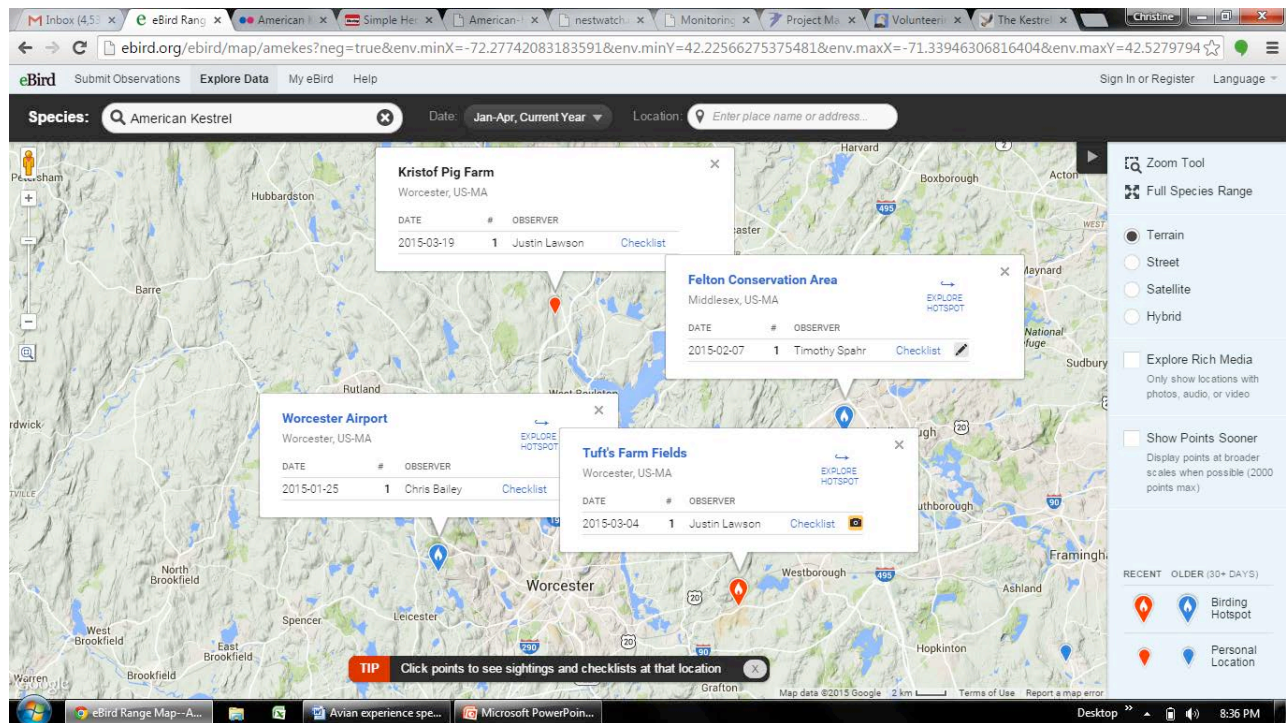


## NOTES from Grafton Land Trust Kestrel Project Volunteer Orientation, Tuesday March 24, 2015

According to ebird.org, American kestrels have been sighted in Massachusetts this spring!



You can visit <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist?subID=S22169274> to see the observation/photo of the one at Tufts.

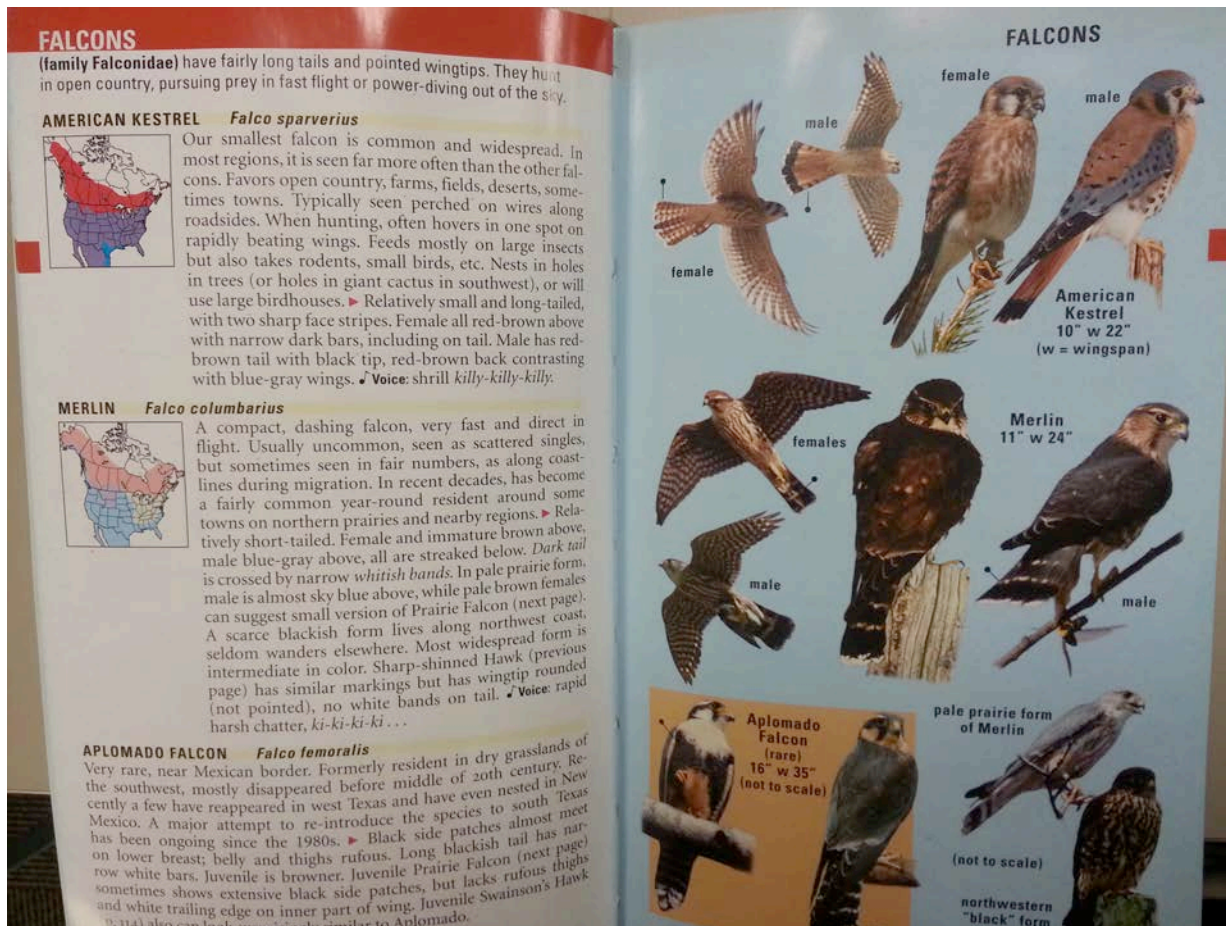
The best time to monitor is early morning (7-9 a.m.) or evening (4-7 p.m.) as that is when birds are most active. Try to avoid monitoring in inclement (really cold/hot/rainy) weather, as the birds are less likely to be active/more easily stressed. Kestrels bob their tails when they are agitated and defecate before they take off.

Do the best you can to keep a distance from the birds and minimize movement during observations; binoculars are a huge help with this. If you do not have a pair & can't afford them, please see if you can borrow some from family/friends, otherwise, get in touch with me.

Males are more brightly colored and have "pearls" on the leading edge of their wings, which females lack. Females have streaking on the breast and a subterminal band (at the end of their tail) that is twice as wide as the previous band higher up. My favorite ID site for birding:

[http://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/American\\_Kestrel/id](http://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/American_Kestrel/id)

Photo out of Kaufman Field Guide to Birds of North America:



Males bring food to incubating females. Please record any instances of this, as it can indicate courtship/incubation.

Kestrels can "hover hunt" and "kite", staying stationary in 20 mph winds! They expel pellets every morning, regurgitating the undigestible part of their diet.

Females lay 3-5 eggs over the course of a week (the earliest egg lay is April 24), which are incubated for 30 days. She may be seen leaving the box to feed/let the eggs cool during incubation. I'd like to record when on & off bouts start and end.

Once the eggs hatch, it takes the nestlings about a week to fledge (develop flight feathers). They can be banded 17-18 days after hatch (June 7-9). Fledglings may be seen roosting together outside of the box.