

# **The Richard Hendrick Kestrel Conservation Project**

## **5-year Summary**

### ***Background:***

In 2021 the North Central Washington Audubon chapter began monitoring Kestrel nest boxes in North Central Washington. Audubon both funded and implemented this project started by Richard Hendrick, a local orchard worker, woodworker, and bird enthusiast. He joined the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife back in 1993 as a volunteer working to expand kestrel populations on the Waterville Plateau. Eventually, the project became his and remained that way until his passing in December 2020. During his tenure he established a network of more than 250 boxes. He asked that we find a way to carry on his work.

Due to fires and other natural events, more than half of Richard's original kestrel boxes were either destroyed or rendered unusable. With the help of Ken Smith, a local woodworker, over the last 4 years we have assembled around 150 Kestrel boxes for the project. We now have 40+ volunteers monitoring 215 Kestrel boxes throughout the area as we record data that can be useful for establishing baseline information on productivity and population trends to aid future kestrel conservation work.

### ***Findings:***

#### ***2021 Year 1:***

For the first year of the project, volunteers were primarily tasked with looking for the original 250 boxes scattered throughout the Waterville Plateau. Monitoring the nest boxes was difficult as we did not have a full complement of volunteers and so we did not get an accurate count of the number of Kestrels that fledged.

## **Results:**

Some of the data gleaned from the volunteers' work:

- We monitored 93 boxes.
- We made a total of 187 box visits.
- 103 eggs were recorded.
- 30 Nestlings were recorded

### ***2022 Year 2:***

We were able to find many more volunteers to help with the monitoring of the Kestrel boxes and did a much more thorough job gleaning data throughout the breeding season.

Here are some interesting data points from 2022:

- The number of boxes that we monitored increased by 60%, from 93 to 156 in 2022.
- We made a total of 713 box visits, averaging 4.8 visits per box.
- 247 birds fledged
- 37% of the boxes fledged one or more young
- 91% of the eggs laid this year fledged.

### ***2023 Year 3:***

Data from the volunteers' work from 2023 includes:

- The number of boxes that we monitored increased by 20%, from 156 last year to 187 in 2023.
- We made a total of 905 box visits averaging 4.8 visits per box.
- 382 birds fledged, a 54% increase over last season's 247 fledglings.
- Almost half (47%) of the boxes fledged one or more young, an increase from last year's 37%.
- 90% of the eggs laid this year fledged.

## **2024 Year 4:**

Data from the volunteers' work in 2024:

- The number of boxes that we monitored increased by 5%, from 187 to 196 in 2024.
- We made a total of 1,029 box visits averaging 5.2 visits per box.
- 357 birds fledged, down slightly from 382 in 2023.
- 43% of the boxes fledged one or more young,
- 87% of the eggs laid this year fledged.

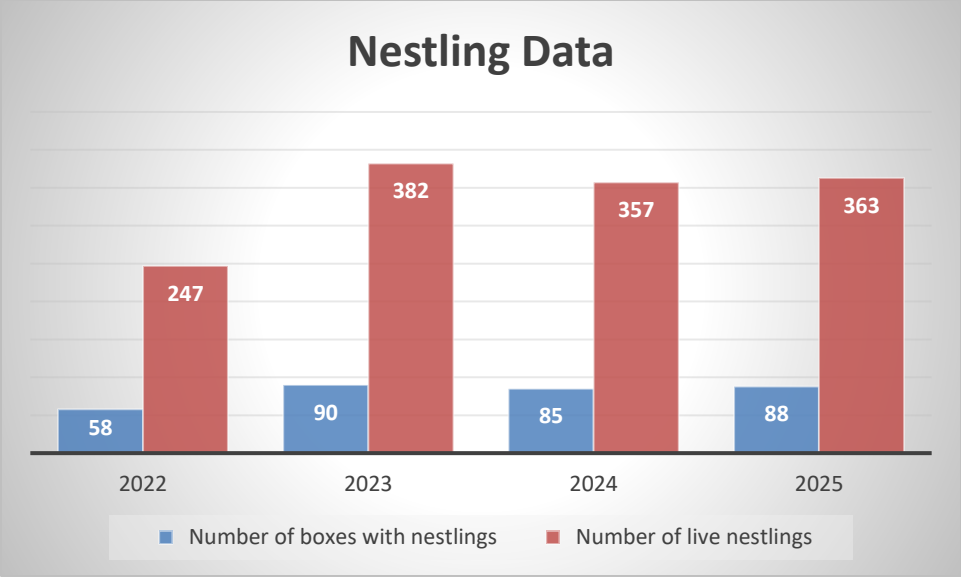
## **2025 Year 5:**

Data from the volunteers' work this year includes:

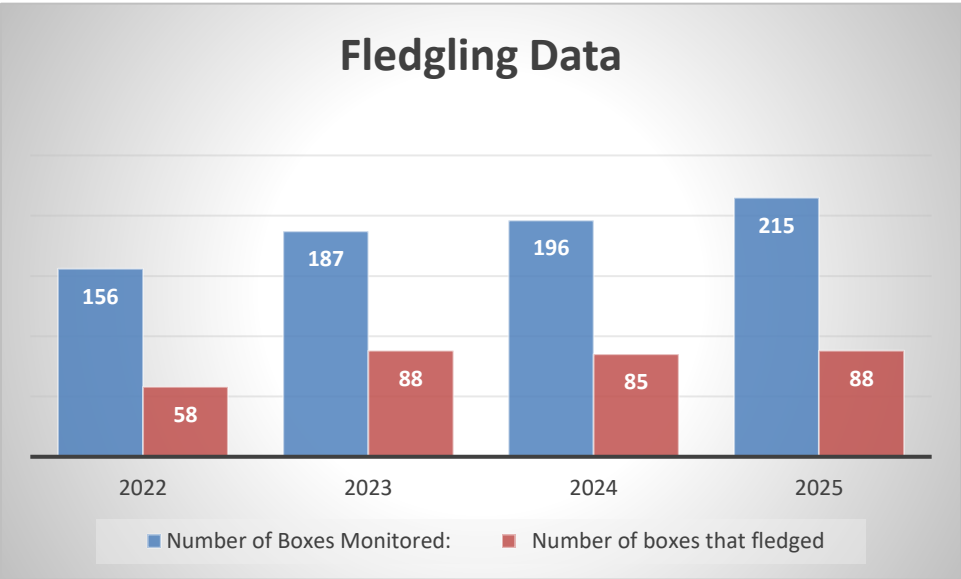
- The number of boxes that we monitored increased by 9%, from 196 last year to 215 in 2025.
- We made a total of 1,266 box visits averaging 5.9 visits per box.
- 357 birds fledged, same as the year before.
- 41% of the boxes fledged one or more young.
- 82% of the eggs laid this year fledged. This is down from last year's 87% success rate.
- This was the first year we banded Kestrels for a total of 269

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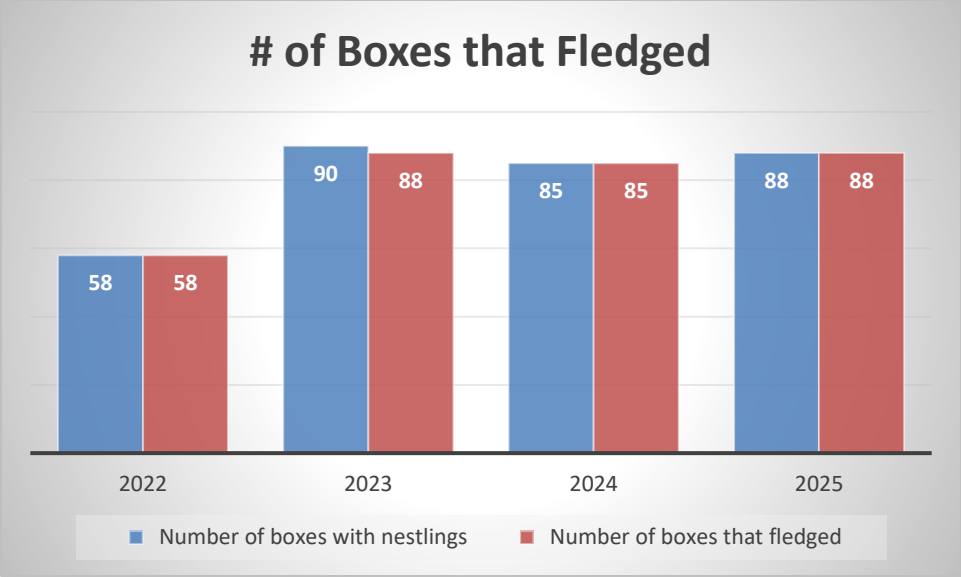
***Below are Charts comparing data of the past 4 years when we had a full complement of volunteers monitoring the nest boxes***



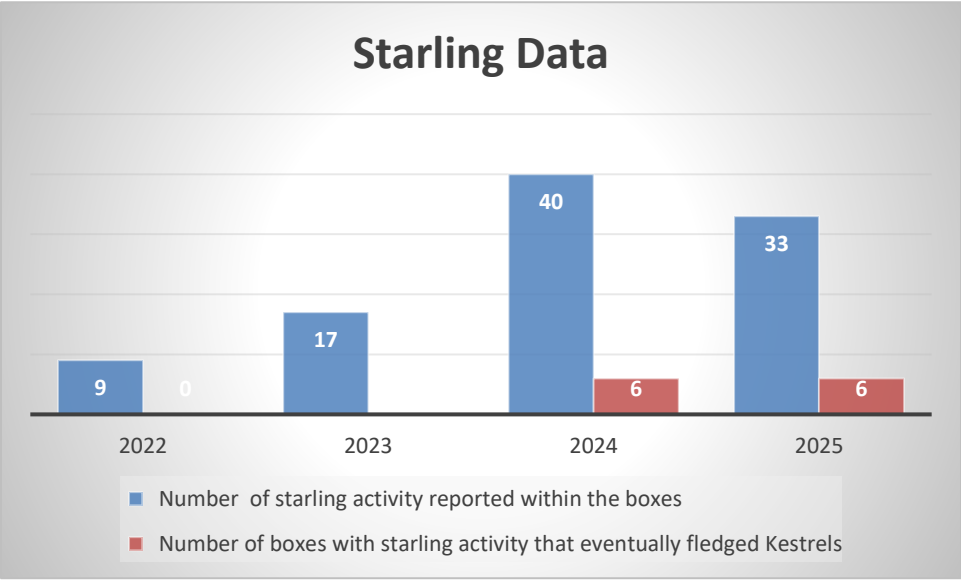
**The number of nestlings increased with the addition of more boxes in 2023 then later stabilized in 2024 and 2025**



**During the past four years, an average of 42% of the boxes had nestlings that successfully fledged.**



**We find that if the eggs make it to nestlings, they fledge 98% of the time.**



**Starling numbers increased until last year. In some cases, persistent removal of these intruders allows Kestrels to occupy the nest box.**