

BUILDING NATURE!

Advices on how to care birds and biodiversity during building works



LIFE17 NAT/IT/000586

www.lifefalkon.eu



THE LESSER KESTREL *Falco naumanni*

The Lesser Kestrel is a small raptor, which nests in colonies made up of one to a few dozen pairs. In the Po Plain (N Italy), colonies are found in isolated buildings within the countryside, such as intact or ruined farmhouses and barns. **The demolition or renovation of such buildings represents one of the main threats for the species, along with the sealing of cavities in walls and roof, where the Lesser Kestrel build the nest.**

Did you know?

- Once very common, in the last decades it suffered a 90% decline, and now is strictly protected.
- Global warming is pushing the species from the Mediterranean area to more northerly latitudes. In the next few years, the Po Plain will be crucial for the Lesser Kestrel.
- It is an amazing traveler: every year, it flies to sub-Saharan Africa and back, a ~ 10,000 km journey!
- It mainly feeds on large insects thus it is a valid aid for pest control. A single pair can hunt as many as 160 crickets or grasshoppers a day!
- In some areas, the Lesser Kestrel is a well-known attraction. Tourists from all over the World come to see them and take a photo. of these colorful raptors.

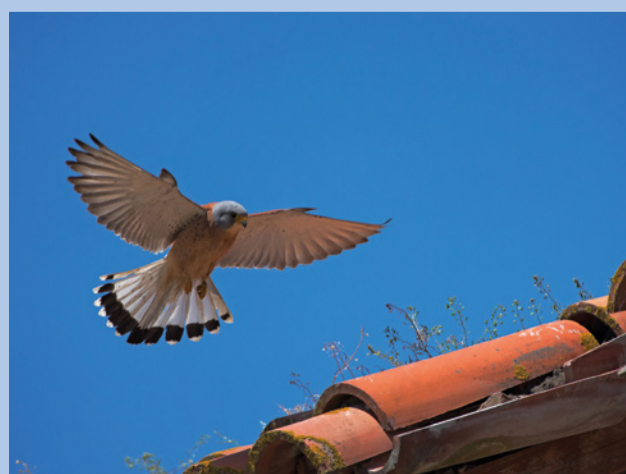


photo: A. De Faveri



Human buildings and biodiversity

Many species of birds have tightened their evolutionary success to those of we humans. Among others, Swifts, House Martins, Barn Swallow, Barn Owl, Sparrows, Little Owls and Lesser Kestrels nowadays almost exclusively lives in buildings.

Humans not only tolerated but appreciated these birds since **they are all useful**: they feed on insects, mice and other animals considered as pests by humans, including those harmful to agriculture.

Over the last decades, these species are threatened by the modernization of cities, the use of new materials and architectural solutions and the constant fight against Pigeons that leads to the seal of every and each cavity. **Their populations are now dramatically decreasing.**

To protect these species, which live alongside us since the Neolithic, it is urgent to sign a deal of collaboration and trust between people involved in biodiversity conservation, urban space designers and professionals who work with historic and building heritage.

Here, we show that it is not so hard to harmonize building practices with ecological needs of birds!



BEST PRACTICES to Lesser Kestrel conservation

Problem: Demolishing a building or erecting a scaffolding in front a colony of lesser kestrel during the breeding period, force the adults to abandon the nest, and the the death of eggs or fledglings. National laws (157/92 in Italy) forbidden these practices.

Solution: The best option consists in avoiding any work from April 1st to July 30th. *If is not possible to move the working period away from the breeding season, is recommendable to contact some expert (e.g. LIFE FALKON, S.O.M.) to evaluate the situation.*

Problem: Renovating the façade or the roofs of a rural building by closing the cavities that are used as nests imply the permanent loss of the colony.

Solution: Compensate the loss of nest cavities by placing nest boxes, possibly analogous to the lost nests: a 'tile', under-roof nestbox or a classical nestbox on the wall. If is not possible to put the box on the building, a nestbox on a pole in front of the building may compensate the loss. (See internal page)

These solutions can also be adopted if you want to increase the availability of nests to support lesser kestrel and other protected birds species!

During building works, care the nature, think to Lesser Kestrels!

- www.lifefalkon.eu/en/deliverables/ (vedasi deliverable azioni A e C)
- www.progettonaturaonlus.org [Linee Guida per la tutela dei rondoni nell'ambito degli interventi edilizi.](#)
- Lipu/Birdlife ITALY. 2017. [EDILIZIA SOSTENIBILE PER LA BIODIVERSITÀ - Manuale di progettazione e buone pratiche per architettura "bird-friendly".](#)
- [Linee guida della Stazione Ornitologica Modense sul progettare nel rispetto della biodiversità](#)



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Questo volantino è stato realizzato con il supporto economico dell'Unione Europea nel contesto del Programma LIFE e Natura 2000 così come della Fondazione Cariplo e del Green Fund. I contenuti sono sotto la responsabilità unica del consorzio LIFE FALKON e non possono essere considerati in nessun modo come rappresentativi della posizione dell'Unione Europea o di Fondazione Cariplo e del Green Fund.

The LIFE FALKON Project

LIFE FALKON aims at increasing the climatic resilience of the Lesser Kestrel at the northern edge of its range. As the southern areas become less and less suitable for the species due to climate warming, newly colonized territories, such as the Po Plain, will gain importance.

Nest-boxes and nesting towers are being installed throughout the countryside, so that the birds could move to breed from ruined buildings, which soon will be demolished, to safe long-lasting nesting sites.

Establishing a collaborative network of experts, farmers, local authorities, and architects is crucial for the Project to be successful over the long term!



photo: L. Eberle

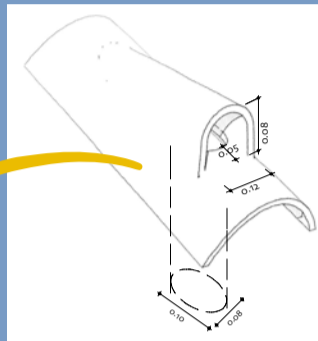
PRACTICAL INTERVENTIONS

A PERFECT LESSER-KESTREL HOUSE!



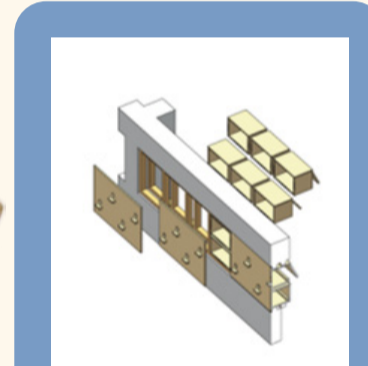
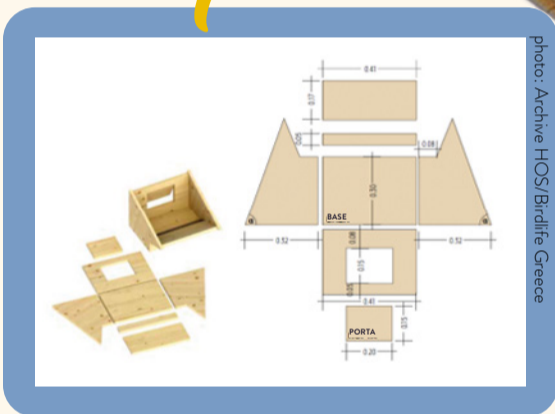
NOTE:
an entrance hole of 65mm stops pigeons. The nest will be only available for lesser kestrels and its friends!

A ROOF CAN HOST A LOT OF NESTS!

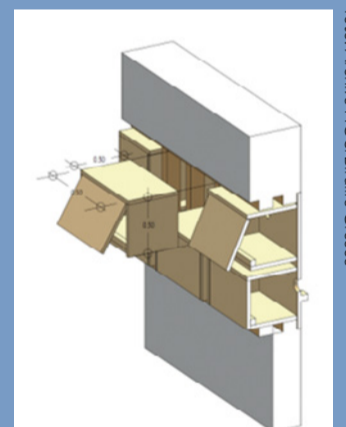


GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

- ★ create AT LEAST 4 nests: lesser kestrels are colonial birds!
- ★ nests must be at least 1.5 m apart
- ★ choose the least disturbed side of the building (far from roads, preferably looking on crops)
- ★ if birds were already breeding in the building, make the intervention in the very same site



NESTBOX COMPLEXES CAN BE INTEGRATED IN THE WALL!



A roof full of nest boxes (down-side view) in Greece



WALLS CAN BECOME POPULATED WITH HANGED NESTBOXES!

At least 3.5 m of altitude!

Cassetta nido per Grillaio (*Falco naumanni*)
(modello della ONG 'DEMA Primilla', disponibile in vari colori)



You want to buy nestboxes for your intervention?

As LIFE FALKON we worked with:

- ★ DEMA PRIMILLA www.dema.org.es/nidales-artificiales/
- ★ CISNIAR www.cisniar.it
- ★ ORNIS ITALICA www.ornisitalica.com

(the products of these companies are of certified efficiency and safety for installation in public buildings)

It is crucial to program the works out of the breeding season. Blue months are the right ones for building interventions:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
N Italy	Blue	Blue	Blue	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Blue	Blue	Blue
Greece S Italy	Blue	Blue	Blue	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Blue	Blue	Blue