



## Kestrel

(*Falco sparverius*)

**Order:** Falconiformes **Family:** Falconidae

**SIZE:** 9-12 inches tall. Wingspan, 20-24 inches. Females weigh about 4 ½ ounces, males 3 ½ - 4 ounces.

**DESCRIPTION:** Smallest falcon in North America. Rust colored tail and back. Adult male has blue-gray wings. Female has rusty wings and back with narrow bands on tail. Both male and female have black stripes on face. Short neck. Small head. Slender, pointed wings.

**SENSES:** Excellent vision. Acute sense of hearing.

**HABITS:** Found in open country, farmland, cities, wooded canyons and deserts. Able to live in desert habitat because of its tolerance for extreme heat, and ability to obtain moisture from a carnivorous diet. Hunts mostly in morning and late afternoon. Hovers over prey, rapidly beating wings. Flicks tail up in a jerky, annoyed manner when faced with a potential intruder. Will defend its nest aggressively by stooping and diving at the heads of intruders.

**DIET:** Rodents, lizards, birds, insects, frogs and small snakes.

**RANGE:** Most of North and South America.

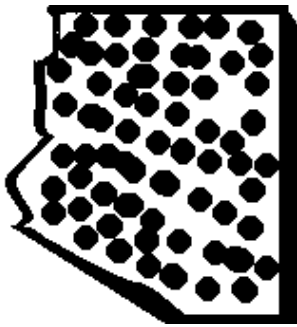
**FAMILY LIFE:** Kestrel pairs are monogamous. Female lays 4-5 white or pinkish eggs. Incubation done primarily by female, while the male brings her food. The male continues to bring most of the food after the eggs hatch. The young leave the nest approximately 30 days after hatching.

**NESTING:** Uses a natural or man-made cavity for nest site, such as a hole in a tree or cactus, or a niche in a wall. Little, if any, building materials used.

**ENEMIES:** Other raptors, cats, man.

**DID YOU KNOW THAT...?**

- The Kestrel is sometimes referred to as the "Sparrow Hawk" because of its appetite for House Sparrows.
- Life expectancy in the wild is only 2-6 years.
- The American Kestrel displays sexual dimorphism, meaning gender is determined by the coloring.



## Range

The kestrel is found in most areas in Arizona.