

**KESTREL *Falco tinnunculus***  
Common resident breeder/passage migrant.

**2009** - Very well reported, and including eight records of probable or possible breeding from across the area, though more activity was clearly not documented. Eight birds at Barden in July included a probable family party, but the same number at Draughton in January were adults.

**2010** - Continues to be well-reported and widespread from a variety of habitat. Locations were mentioned as having definite or probable breeding birds, and at least 27 young were seen, but this is probably still unrepresentative of Kestrel's abundance in the area.

**2011** - Perhaps surprisingly, not our best reported raptor, but self-evidently abundant, and the breeding data, comprising 42 young at 15 sites, is probably also understated, as there was only one record from an urban location. The maximum site count was a notable nine birds together at Nab End (Rombald's Moor) in August.

**2012** - The highest day's site counts, six from Barden Scale on three dates, were slightly down on last year, but breeding records were more productive. Around 54 juveniles were seen at or near 16 nest sites at 11 general locations, but, as in 2011, this is still probably unrepresentative, given the continuing absence of information from urban areas.

**2013** - Perhaps surprisingly, not our best-reported raptor, but self-evidently abundant despite numbers falling nationally. The highest day's site counts, six from Barden Scale on two dates, were slightly down on last year, but breeding records were quite productive. A pair, following two barren years, successfully raised four young in the nest box at Stockbridge. At Timble Ings and Swinsty Reservoir, a total of 11 chicks were ringed and at other sites, particularly in the north of the area, there was noticeable activity from adult birds during the breeding time.

**2014** - The Kestrel has regained top spot as our most reported raptor. 25% of the 370 records came from observations from Barden Scale where the resident pair, and occasional interlopers, were noted throughout the year. On 1st July, this pair and their three juveniles, were seen perched and then hunting over Barden Moor. From this vantage point, a Kestrel and Sparrowhawk were watched as they sparred and a Grey Heron came in for some attention from the local female.

Elsewhere, there was plenty of evidence of breeding activity with birds engaged in aerial courtship and food carrying. At Stockbridge, a pair showing interest in the new nest box had to fight off Jackdaws and Magpies, before having further battles with a Goosander which they eventually won and took over the site. Unfortunately there was no happy ending as the female suddenly disappeared and the box fell off the tree as the supports were rotten. Did she sense this?

Breeding reports of birds in Wharfedale and the Washburn Valley came from seven sites where 37 birds were ringed (PRo, CoH). Families of Kestrels were watched at Warley Moor Reservoir (Fly Flatts), Leeshaw Reservoir, Sconce and Keighley Moor and together with those at Barden accounted for about 24 juveniles.

**2015** - The 243 records are only two-thirds of those received during the previous year. This is most certainly due to the reasons given in the

In 2014, 25% of the Kestrel records came from Barden Scale, but this year there were just six! Many records included details of pairs hunting together, courtship activity and family groups ranging over rough grassland. At Bradup, Glovershaw, Keighley Moor, Barden Fell and Timble Ings birds involved in activities of this sort were seen in spring; and in late summer juveniles and adults

were witnessed interacting. This was particularly well- documented at Warley Moor Reservoir where double-figure counts were registered on five occasions during this summer period.

At three sites in Wharfedale, ten chicks were ringed and a box at Thruscross, thought to have been abandoned, contained four eggs. In the Washburn Valley, ten broods produced a total of 41 juveniles (PRo, CoH).

**2016** - Whilst some 200 records are reasonable (though 20% down on last year, and nearly 50% down on 2014), there were scarcely any reports of pre-breeding activity, far fewer breeding successes, and, in general, smaller numbers of birds were seen. This was almost certainly due, as mentioned by one observer, to it being a poor vole year, following a very wet winter.

Twos and threes were generally the best on offer, and only a family party of four at Slippery Ford, the same number relocating at Caldene Fields, and five seen at Esholt broke this pattern. As for breeding, even the work of the regular ringer in Wharfedale and the Washburn was less rewarded, as this year's total of 12 young compares with last year's 51. The only other breeding successes recorded was of two young raised at both Slippery Ford and Salts Mill, but a very young bird seen at Addingham had presumably local origins, though the birds occupying a box at Stockbridge weren't reported to have succeeded.

**2017** - Clearly abundant, though the only significant count was of 11 birds near Warley Moor Reservoir in August. An improved breeding picture, involving at least 31 young, although it is now clear the 2016 total may have been much understated. Most records came from the Washburn, with a few in Wharfedale and Airedale.

**2018** - The 259 records indicate the species' abundance throughout, but the only notable counts were up to eight at Warley Moor Reservoir in October. These were considered to be a post-breeding party, but the only specific data came from the Washburn and Denton, where 24 young were raised.