

# American Kestrel

*Falco sparverius*

**Smallest and most widespread  
falcon in North America**

## Nasal Tubercles

Similar to jet engines, these help falcons optimize air flow during high speed diving

## Malar Stripe

Vertical lines absorb solar glare, helping to hunt in bright conditions

## Sexually Dichromatic

(uncommon in raptors)

Vivid & contrasting plumage



**Males**

Wings blue-gray

Tail rufous (rusty red)



**Females**

Wings rufous

Tail rufous & dark barring

Wingspan 20-24"



**Diurnal**  
Day hunter

## Hover

A technique maintaining steady position mid-air to help precisely target prey

## Sharp Vision

Unlike humans, kestrels can see in the ultraviolet light range allowing them to track prey by detecting reflective urine trails



Weight

2.8 - 5.8 oz

≈ 34 pennies

## Habitat

Open fields, meadows, grasslands, and deserts



## Diet

Primarily insects



Kestrels also hunt lizards, snakes, small birds, and small mammals

## Nesting

Secondary cavity nesters, utilize holes made by other animals



Illustration & Design: Melissa Green