

# British Birds of Prey

# COMMON KESTREL

#4

The common kestrel, also known as the European or Eurasian kestrel, are one of the smaller members of the falcon family. They measure just over 30cm in length, and may weigh as little as 150g (5 ½ ounces).

They are a native species to Britain, and can be identified by the way they 'hover' in place mid-air. Currently in the UK, a population of just under 50,000 breeding pairs are estimated.

However, this number is falling rapidly. In some areas, numbers have declined by up to 70% in the last 25 years. This shows how important conservation efforts need to be to protect kestrels and other species.



▲ Tinker, Huxley's male kestrel, who you can fly with us during our displays!

<b>SCIENTIFIC NAME</b>	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>
<b>DISTRIBUTION</b>	UK, Europe, Asia
<b>WILD POPULATION</b>	50,000 UK pairs estimated, declining
<b>WINGSPAN</b>	Approx. 70 to 80cm
<b>SIZE &amp; WEIGHT</b>	Approx. 30 to 36 long, 150g to 250g
<b>MAXIMUM LIFESPAN</b>	Up to 15 years in the wild, longer in captivity
<b>MAIN DIET</b>	Small mammals: voles and mice



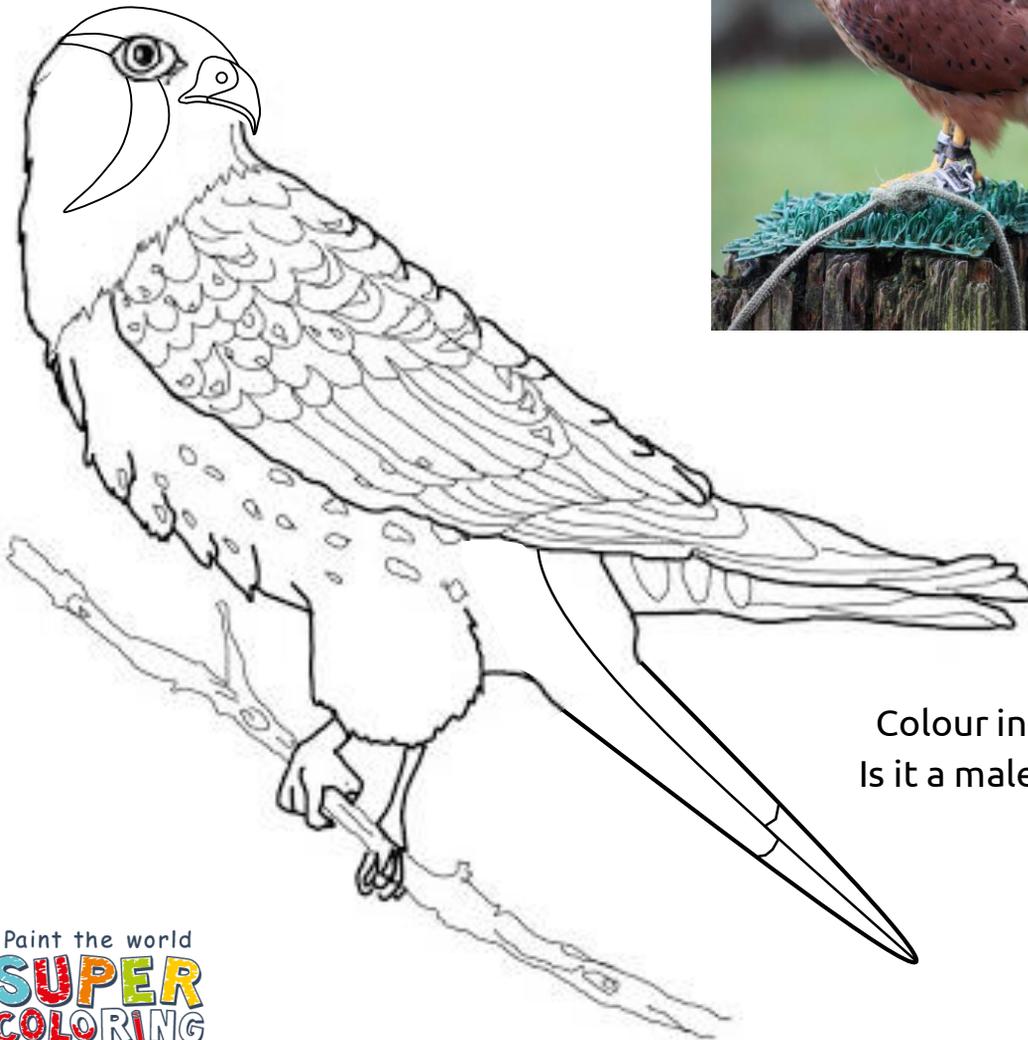
# Common Kestrel

Apart from the UK, common kestrels are found across most of Europe, parts of Asia and, during migration, as far as southern Africa!

As a juvenile, their plumage is mostly brown with black streaks on the feathers. As the male matures, this develops into a stunning bronze, and the head and tail turn almost silver in colouration. Females remain more reddish-brown in comparison to the male.



**COLOURING  
PAGE**



Colour in this kestrel!  
Is it a male or a female?

Paint the world  
**SUPER  
COLORING**

# Common Kestrel



▲ Turbo, Huxley's female kestrel, who you can also meet in our displays!

## CRACK THE CODE

Use this code to decipher some kestrel facts!

- |       |       |       |       |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| A = ○ | B = ■ | C = ▲ | D = ⊕ |
| E = ∪ | F = ⊙ | G = ◻ | H = ✕ |
| I = ◇ | J = ▽ | K = ◼ | L = ● |
| M = ⚡ | N = □ | O = ★ | P = △ |
| Q = ◐ | R = ⊖ | S = ◑ | T = ◒ |
| U = ◆ | V = ⊙ | W = ▼ | X = ▲ |
| Y = ▽ | Z = ▾ |       |       |

✕◆◻◻ ●○⊖◻∪ ◇◻◻∪▲◻◻ ★◻ ⊙★★◻

They may \_\_\_\_\_ .

◻⊖∪∪ ★⊖ ▲●◆⊙⊙ ✕★●●★▼◻

\_\_\_\_\_ are preferred

◻∪◻◻◆◻◻ ◻◆◻∪◻

\_\_\_\_\_ .

◻∪◻◻◆◻◻ △○◆⊖◻ ⚡○⊙ ●◆⊙∪

Several \_\_\_\_\_

◻★◻∪◻✕∪⊖ ◆◻ ○ ●★★◻∪ ▲★●★◻⊙

\_\_\_\_\_ .

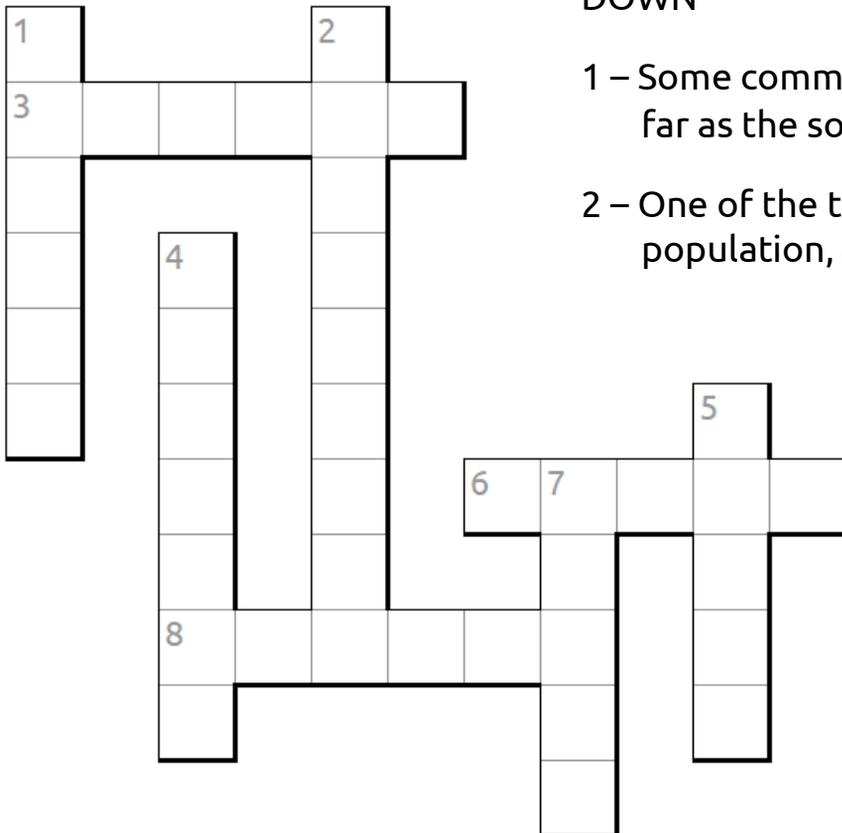
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Small mammals are their primary prey, though amphibians, reptiles and other small birds may also be taken. When hunting from the air, the kestrel will hover between 10 and 20 metres above the ground, before stooping downwards at their prey (tucking in their wings for a steep and fast dive).

Whilst they may live up to 15 years in the wild, unfortunately only about a third of common kestrels survive past their first two years. Pollution, habitat destruction and predation as fledglings are all threats.



Solve the clues to complete the crossword. All the answers can be found somewhere on this worksheet!



## ACROSS

- 3 – Kestrels are a small \_\_\_\_\_.
- 6 – The name for the quick dive of a falcon
- 8 – The name of Huxley's male kestrel

## DOWN

- 1 – Some common kestrels may migrate as far as the south of which continent?
- 2 – One of the threats towards the kestrel population, and many other species
- 4 – Kestrels hunt this type of prey on foot
- 5 – Kestrels are known for the way they \_\_\_\_\_ in mid-air.
- 7 – The name of Huxley's female kestrel