



Birdie of the Month 8

Kestrel

The **Kestrel** (*Falco tinnunculus*) is a medium-sized falcon with pointed wings and a long tail. They are often seen hovering beside a roadside verge.

Kestrels are common around Childwall Golf Club perched on a high tree branch or hunting for small mammals (voles), birds, worms and insects.

It is likely that you will see them more often on the golf course as they have successfully bred in a Kestrel box situated at the rear of the 10th green. Five young kestrels fledged this Summer (2022)!

Kestrels are masters of stationary flight, and hover-hunt extensively. Even in windy conditions their head remains absolutely still.

With their keen eyesight, sharp talons and strong beak, kestrels are well adapted to catching small agile prey. They can see a beetle 50 metres from its perch. Kestrels need to eat 4-8 voles a day. They have a habit of catching several voles in succession and caching some for later.

They usually nest in holes in trees but readily accept nest boxes. The same nest site is often used in successive years with some sites used for decades.

Hopefully they will be back next year!

(Photos courtesy of Steve Young)



Kestrel hover-hunting over the golf course



Male Kestrel



Female Kestrel



Young Kestrels fledged from the nest box at the 10th green



Fully fledged young Kestrel