

Report to the Blake-Nuttall Fund – Matthew Kamm

So far, Blake-Nuttall Funding has been used to procure light-level geolocators and to develop tools for trapping and tagging American Kestrels. Support from the Blake-Nuttall Fund made possible the creation of a Great Horned Owl taxidermy mount and custom Teflon ribbon leg-loop harnesses for geolocator attachment:



The 2016 field season brought the first successful capture and marking of an adult kestrel, a female captured in the box while incubating. The geolocator was attached with a leg-loop harness and the bird was released. Subsequent nest checks confirmed that the geolocator remained in place; however, the female's clutch of eggs failed to hatch. After consultation with the State Ornithologist, a decision was made to suspend capture during incubation so as not to disrupt incubation behavior.

Despite dozens of hours of trapping with mist nets and owl lures, no other adult kestrels were successfully captured during the 2016 field season. Hopefully the deployed geolocator can be recovered during the 2017 field season, and new capture protocols are being developed for the next season to hopefully increase trapping success rate.