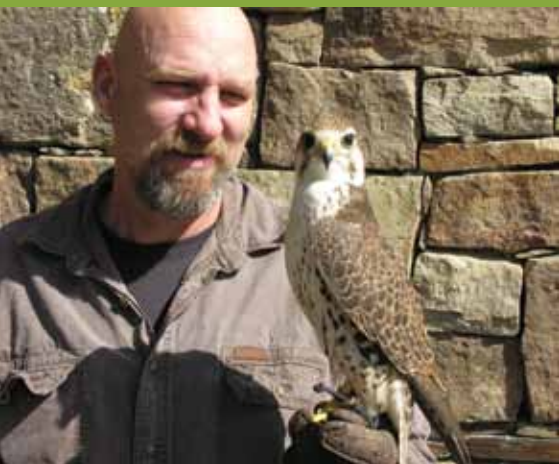


"Pigeons, starlings, sparrows and other non-native species flee in sheer terror at the sight of a patrolling falcon," says James Tigan

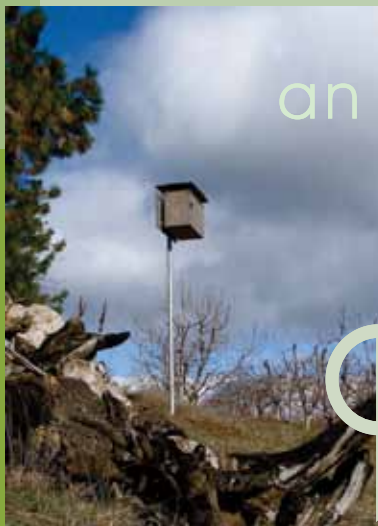


James Tigan, owner of Tactical Avian Predators, offers services to control pests. Tigan's solution is to put trained falcons on the job: not to capture the smaller birds, but simply to discourage them from foraging in the crop areas.

www.TacticalAvianPredators.com

The American Kestrel

is the smallest, most common, and most colorful member of the falcon family. On average, their weights range from 2.8 to 5.8 ounces. This is Hank; he is part of the Columbia Gorge Discovery Center's "Raptor Discovery" Program.



an **ELEGANT** solution for pest control...

Susan Lestock

RODENTS CAN CAUSE COSTLY DAMAGE to farm crops, orchards, and vineyards. With all the grace of a blowtorch, they eat and damage roots, plants, trees, seeds, and harvest crops.

To ensure crop productivity, some farmers resort to various poisons to control pests, with obvious environmental impacts as the toxins eventually end up absorbed into the farmland. This method also creates secondary poisoning, and ultimately death, of carrion eating birds and mammals that consume the dead (poisoned) rodents they find in the farmlands.

Fortunately, more farmers are using organic and earth friendly options for rodent and pest control. One of those going-green options is creating habitat and nesting space for birds of prey on or near farmland by installing specially designed barn owl and/or kestrel boxes. Once these cavity dwelling birds of prey nest in the boxes, the area becomes their new hunting and foraging territory, hopefully, for generations. To complement the boxes, farmers are also installing perches throughout their properties that the birds need for locating, stalking, and eating prey.

Some farmers only install kestrel boxes, while others only install barn owl boxes. However, the ones who create habitat for both birds have a daytime and nighttime patrol for their crops since owls are nocturnal and kestrels are diurnal. The two species remove hundreds, even thousands, of rodents from crops over the years and seasons.

"A barn owl family will eat 3,000 gophers in a season"

Mike Omeg, Omeg Orchards



This barn owl nesting box

and the one shown above are presently in use at Omeg Orchards in The Dalles. Their nesting program has proven to be a lot of fun and quite successful for natural rodent control. Mike Omeg, owner of Omeg Orchards, installed 50 owl boxes in his orchards, using the owls to control gophers and voles rather than poisons.

Need owl boxes? This particular nest box was built and installed by Tuck Contreras, owner of Tucks Dwellings, a local bird and bat box manufacturer. She reminds us that barn owls begin nesting in April, so installing boxes by late winter will be advantageous for successful nesting and crop protection. TucksDwellings.com