Recently hatched nestlings

Hatch-Day 8:

From the time of hatching until more than one week's time, nestlings are very small and are completely covered in white, patchy down. Size increases while down density decreases throughout this first week, although primary feather sheaths are completely absent at this stage. Lack of sheaths results in no clear indicator of development, making aging determinations in this range very difficult, especially from the age of Day 4 to 8. Aging in this range relies heavily on personal judgment and experience. When aging nestlings in this range, it is recommended to recheck the box within seven days to more accurately age nestlings.

One day old nestling with egg of sibling

Two day old nestlings

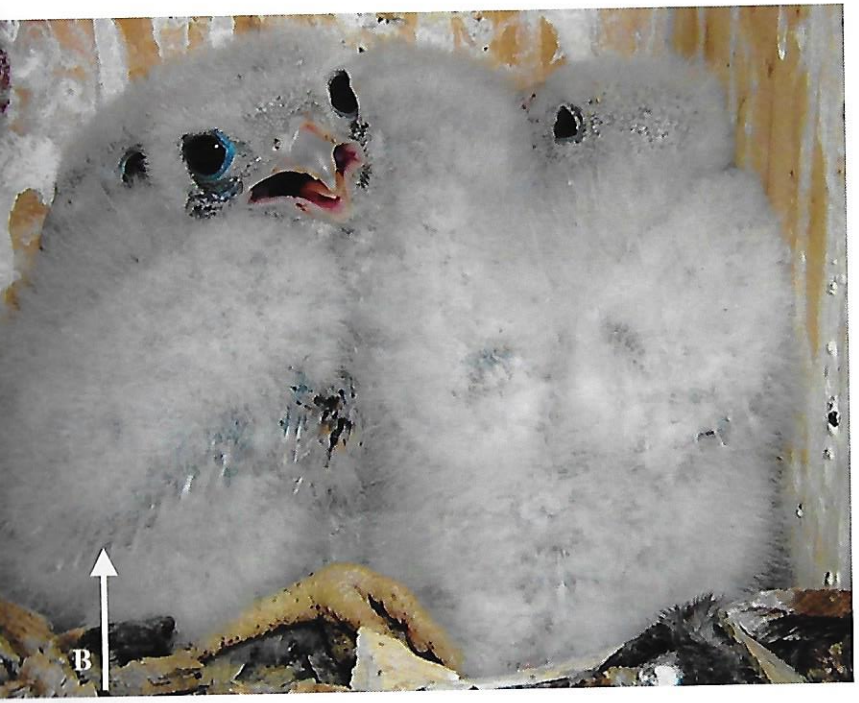
Five day old nestling

Seven day old nestlings

Ten day old nestlings

Day 9-Day 10:

Early into the second week of nestling life, very little developmental indicators are present. Though nestling size increases, they remain fully down covered. At this stage primary and back feather sheaths may be exposed, though small. If sheaths are present[A], they can range from 0.6 to 1.0cm (Mean: 0.82cm).



Eleven day old nestlings

11-Day 12:

During this stage of kestrel development, the prominent indicator of is the exposure of the primary feather sheaths[B,C], which are very distinct. aths range at this age from 0.7 to 1.6cm (Mean: 1.14cm). Patches of ored feathers begin to emerge on the exterior regions of the breast. tlings' backs remain completely down covered and tail feathers are ent.

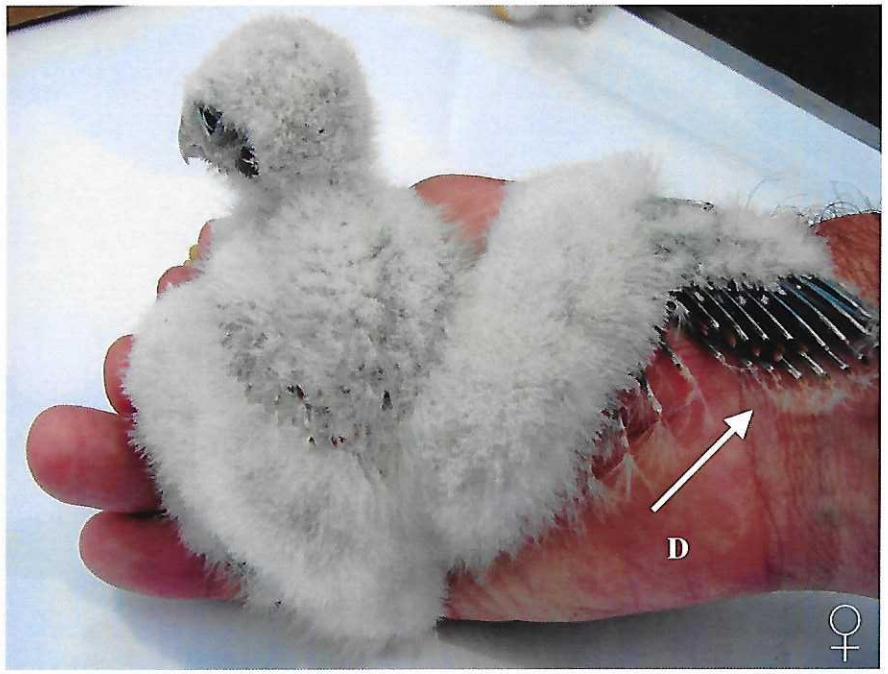
Eleven day old Male nestling

Twelve day old Female nestling

Fourteen day old Female nestling

13-Day 14:

After two weeks of growth, sheaths are still the dominant mical feature with ranges from 1.4 to 2.0cm (Mean: 1.67cm). ever, at this stage of development, other indicators of age also begin to ge. Most notably, primary feathers begin to erupt after approximately weeks, although at lengths less than 0.5cm (Mean: 0.28cm)[D]. Feathers e tail[E], flank[F], and back also begin to erupt in this period. The feathers ring the ear opening (auriculars) begin to darken at this age, and itute another distinctive indicator[G]. Depending on the brood, nestling er may also be determined at this point by observation of blue-gray ation on the male wing, and brown and black pigmentation on the le.



Fourteen day old nestlings