

1986

Peregrine Falcon Investigations

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PERFORMANCE REPORT

STATE: VIRGINIA PROJECT NO.: W-77-R-3
PROJECT TYPE: RESEARCH AND/OR INVENTORY STUDY NO.: IV
PROJECT TITLE: NONGAME AND ENDANGERED SPECIES INVESTIGATIONS JOB NO.: IV-A,B,C,D
STUDY TITLE: PEREGRINE FALCON INVESTIGATIONS

PERIOD COVERED: July 1, 1985 - June 30, 1986

JOB IV-A OBJECTIVE: To obtain sightings of peregrine falcons in Virginia and determine where migrants are located.

JOB IV-B OBJECTIVE: To introduce peregrine falcons at hack sites on the barrier islands of the Eastern Shore of Virginia. There are historical records of tree nesting peregrines in Eastern Virginia. This program will be an attempt to restore peregrines to this portion of the former range.

JOB IV-C OBJECTIVE: To operate a peregrine falcon banding station at Fishermans Island N.W.R. during the fall migration period.

JOB IV-D OBJECTIVE: To relocate and visit all known historical peregrine eyries in order to evaluate their continued quality and to determine the presence birds.

SUMMARY:

Four pairs of peregrines produced eggs at nesting towers in Virginia. Three pairs were successful with a total production of seven young.

Fall trapping sites were operated at Wise Point and Fishermans Island.

Two peregrine towers were reconstructed following their destruction by a hurricane in October. Both of these towers supported a pair of birds this spring.

Eight breeding adults were trapped in order to determine their origin.

FALL MIGRATION

Three stations to monitor raptor movements during the fall migration were operated at Fishermans Island, at Wise Point on the tip of the Eastern Shore Peninsula, and at Kiptopeke Beach. The stations were manned a total of 96 station days during September, October, and December. A total of 182 peregrine falcons was seen at these stations during migration.

TRAPPING STATIONS

Peregrine trapping was conducted at Wise Point and Fishermans Island. A total of 11 peregrines were captured at these sites, four of which had previously been banded. All of the banded birds were first year birds which had been banded one or two days previously on Assateague Island.

HACKING PROGRAM

It was intended that hacking would be continued in the mountains in the summer of 1986. Because of problems with chick mortality at the peregrine breeding facility at Boise, Idaho, no young were available.

A late hatch of chicks eventually became available and was released at Mount Rogers in August.

BREEDING EFFORTS

Three of the peregrine hack towers located respectively at Great Fox Island, Russell Island, and Parramore Island, were blown down during the hurricane in October. The towers at Great Fox and Parramore Islands were reconstructed during the winter. The tower at Russell Island was not reconstructed because of land ownership complications.

Considerable time was spent monitoring the towers for peregrines during the winter and early spring.

Pairs appeared at the towers at Fishermans, Cobb, Parramore, Metomkin, Assateague, and Great Fox Island. In addition, a pair appeared on the old Coast Guard station at Hog Island. This pair is clearly different from the pair at nearby Parramore Island. A single bird, apparently a tiercel, has occupied one of the supports of the Rappahannock River Bridge at Whitestone.

Of the above pairs, four attempted nesting. The pair at Great Fox Island laid four eggs and hatched two young. The pair at Assateague laid three eggs and hatched a single young. The pair at Metomkin Island laid four eggs and hatched four young. The pair at Cobb Island produced two eggs which failed to hatch. These eggs, as well as one at Great Fox Island, were collected for subsequent analysis.

The pair at both Parramore and Fishermans Island went through some courtship activities but failed to lay eggs. Both pairs were provided with dummy eggs in an attempt to stimulate egg-laying. The female at Fishermans Island incubated the dummy eggs for several days but abandoned them before young could be fostered to them.

All seven young which were naturally produced either fledged or were on the verge of fledging at the end of July.

TRAPPING ADULTS

In an effort to learn the origin of breeding pairs in the state, trapping of adults at towers along the coast was begun in 1986. Trapping was conducted by both project personnel and the Peregrine Fund at Cornell University. Results of this trapping are shown in Table 1, showing all birds of Virginia origin.

Table 1. Location of Breeding Peregrine Falcons in Virginia, or of Virginia Origin.

Breeding Location	Sex	Origin of Bird and Year	
		Hack Release	Naturally Hatched
Great Fox Island, Va.	Female	Cobb Island, Va., 1981	
Cobb Island, Va.	Female	Cobb Island, Va., 1983	
Parramore Island, Va.	Male		Chincoteague N.W.R., Va. 1983
Metomkin Island, Va.	Female	Smith Island, Md., 1984	
Chincoteague N.W.R., Va.	Male	Cobb Island, Va., 1978	
Chincoteague N.W.R., Va.	Female		Sea Isle, N. J., 1983
Hog Island, Va.	Male	Parramore Island, Va., 1984	
Fishermans Island, Va.	Male	Smith Island, Md., 1984	
Sedge Island, N.J.	Female	Russell Island, Va. 1983	

Table 1 (cont.)

Manahawkin, N.J.	Female	Parramore Island, Va., 1984
Brigantine, N.W.R., N.J.	Female	Chincoteague N.W.R., Va. 1982
Tuckahoe, N.J.	Female	Russell Island, Va., 1984

HISTORICAL SITES

No further work was done on historical sites during the reporting period.

TARGET DATE FOR COMPLETION: Continuing:

STATUS OF PROGRESS: On Schedule

SIGNIFICANT DEVIATIONS IN PROGRESS: None

RECOMMENDATIONS: Continue Study

COST THIS SEGMENT: Federal \$30,219 State \$10,073 Total \$40,292

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DATE: August 1, 1986 R.H. Cross, Jr.
Executive Director