

1980

Performance Report: Peregrine Falcon

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The Center for Conservation Biology

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PERFORMANCE REPORT

STATE: Virginia PROJECT NO.: E-4

PROJECT TYPE: Research and/or Inventory STUDY NO.: VI

PROJECT TITLE: Endangered Species Investigations JOB NO.: VI-F1,VI-F2,
VI-F3

PERIOD COVERED: July 1, 1979 - June 30, 1980

JOB VI-F1 OBJECTIVE: To obtain sightings of Peregrine Falcons in Virginia and determine where migrants are located.

JOB VI-F2 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 VI-F3 OBJECTIVE: To operate a peregrine falcon banding station at Fishermans Island N.W.R. during the fall migration period.

SUMMARY:

Counts were made of raptors passing Fishermans Island for a 36 day period in September and October. A total of 13,200 raptors was counted, of which 110 were peregrines including 26 adults. Hacking stations were established on both Cobb and Fishermans Islands from which 8 of 10 falcons fledged successfully. An urban site was established in Norfolk with six young birds. This site is still active at this time. A raptor trapping and banding station was operated for 36 days with 14 peregrines captured.

Fall Migration

A station to monitor raptor movements during the fall migration was established on Fishermans Island at the south end of the Eastern Shore of Virginia. This station was manned all day on a total of 36 days during September and October. A total of 13,200 raptors was counted, of which 110 were peregrine falcons. Of these falcons, 26 were identified as adult birds.

In addition, a raptor counting station was operated at Kiptopeke Beach across the inlet from Fishermans Island. This station was operated by co-operators for a total of ten days during September and October. A total of 40 peregrines was sighted at this station, some of which were undoubtedly the same as those seen at Fishermans Island. Of interest was the large number, 23, of adults observed at this station. The peregrine migration at both of these stations was exceptional in the fall of 1979 as it appears to have been at a number of other coastal and inland stations.

Winter Records

Twelve, one day trips, were made during the winter and early spring to the Virginia barrier islands and other coastal areas to locate wintering falcons. Wintering birds were located at Craney Island, Back Bay, Fishermans Island, Mockhom Island, Smith Island, Parramore Island, Hog Island and Assateague Island.

Although some of these individuals may have been the same, numerous reports received from other observers throughout the winter and early spring suggest a larger than usual number of birds wintering on the Virginia barrier islands.

It was suspected that some of these were previously hacked birds. One pair of birds apparently wintered at Fishermans Island and were there until at least early May. One individual appeared to be a subadult male. The age of the other individual, a female, was not determined. A pair of peregrines also was noted on Wallops Island in May, the male of which was a subadult that was hacked in Maryland in 1979. Nesting attempts have not been noted on any of the islands.

A single adult female occupied a bank building in Norfolk as a winter roost for the fourth consecutive winter. A single adult male occupied the City Hall Building in Newport News for the third consecutive winter.

Hacking Station

In 1980, a peregrine hacking tower was again utilized on Cobb Island. All five peregrines placed on the tower in early May successfully fledged and dispersed. This station was closed in early July.

In 1980, a second hack tower was constructed at Fishermans Island National Wildlife Refuge. Five peregrines were placed on this tower in mid-May. Three birds fledged and two were lost to severe thunderstorms.

A third urban hack site was established on a building in downtown Norfolk in mid-July. Six peregrines were placed at the site. The release was made on July 26. This site is still in operation at this time.

Trapping Program

A peregrine trapping station was operated on Fishermans Island for 36 trapping days during September and October.

Four hundred seventy nine raptors were captured, banded and measurements taken. Included in this total were fourteen peregrines, all juveniles. In addition, one bird banded the previous day at Assateague Island was captured at Fishermans Island.

TARGET DATE FOR COMPLETION: June 30, 1983

STATUS OF PROGRESS: On Schedule

SIGNIFICANT DEVIATIONS IN PROGRESS: None

RECOMMENDATIONS: Continue with Remaining Project Plans

COST THIS SEGMENT: Federal \$11,593.50 : State \$3,864.50 : Total \$15,458.00 :

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Chief, Division of Game

DATE: August 1, 1980

J. F. McInteer, Jr.
Executive Director