

1977

Peregrine Falcon Investigations

M. A. Byrd

The Center for Conservation Biology

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PERFORMANCE REPORT

STATE: Virginia

PROJECT TYPE: Research and Survey

PROJECT TITLE: Endangered Species Investigations

PERIOD COVERED: July 1, 1976 to June 30, 1977

STUDY TITLE: Peregrine Falcon Study

PROJECT NUMBER: W-40-R-24

STUDY NUMBER : VI

JOB NUMBER : VI-F

STUDY OBJECTIVES: To compile all historical information on this species in Virginia.
To compile current records on the species as a transient and wintering bird in the state.
To make management recommendations for the species in the state.

SUMMARY:

A review of the literature was begun for historical records. Groups were contacted to report observation of the species to the Project Leader. Observations were made of a number of wintering birds along the coast.

HISTORICAL RECORDS:

A review of the literature was begun to compile historical information on the peregrine falcon in Virginia. Data are being tabulated on transients, wintering birds, and the location of former breeding sites. Records of the hawk migration groups also are being reviewed for this purpose.

CURRENT RECORDS:

Local ornithological and other groups have been requested to report all sightings to the Project Leader.

In addition, eleven trips were made during the winter and early spring to the Virginia barrier islands and other coastal areas for location of wintering falcons. As a result of these visits, six different wintering falcons were located. These consisted of 3 adults and 3 juveniles.

Three of these observations were of particular interest. One adult bird at the Craney Island Disposal site in Portsmouth was approached closely enough on two occasions to observe a Fish and Wildlife Service butt-end aluminum band on the left leg. Arrangements were made to attempt to trap this bird to identify its place of origin. Severely inclement weather prevented this plan from being carried out before the bird departed the area.

A second bird, possibly the Craney Island individual, roosted on the log of a bank building in Norfolk for several weeks in April. It was reported that

a pair was nesting there but the presence of two individuals nor any nesting attempts could be verified.

A third observation was the presence of a very aggressive pair of falcons in the abandoned Coast Guard Tower on Hog Island, one of the Virginia Barrier Islands. This pair of birds apparently occupied the tower for some while in April and exhibited very aggressive behavior. The birds subsequently abandoned the tower, perhaps because of the presence of a nearby nesting pair of ospreys. A number of these barrier islands currently are owned by the Nature Conservancy and have abandoned towers located on them. They would appear to be ideal sites for the introduction of captivity reared falcons.

Emphasis will be placed on fall and winter observations along the coast in 1977-1978.

TARGET DATE FOR COMPLETION: June 30, 1981

STATUS OF PROGRESS: On Schedule

SIGNIFICANT DEVIATIONS IN PROGRESS: None

RECOMMENDATIONS: Continue with Remaining Project Plans

COST THIS SEGMENT: FEDERAL: \$1110 STATE: \$1390 TOTAL: \$2500

PREPARED BY: Mitchell A. Byrd

APPROVED BY: R. H. Cross, Jr.
Chief, Division of Game

DATE: June, 1977

Chester F. Phelps
Executive Director