



Photographer: Stephen Lang

Immature

With its bold temperament and superb aerial prowess, the Peregrine Falcon has captured people's passion and admiration throughout the ages. Although never commonly nesting in the state, peregrines historically occupied about 20 cliff eyries along the Mississippi and Wisconsin Rivers and in Door Co. Kumlien and Hollister (1903) reported peregrines nesting on rocky ledges along the south shore of Lake Superior, and Hickey (1942) reported a pair nesting along the St. Croix River in 1940. Although pairs generally nest on cliffs, Hoy (1852) states that a pair nested for several years within 16 km of Racine in the top of a large tree.

Like peregrines throughout most of the world, Wisconsin's birds began a slow but steady decline following the introduction and widespread use of DDT. The last eyries in Wisconsin were abandoned during the late 1950s to early 1960s (Berger and Mueller 1969a). From 1987 to 1992, 108 captive-produced young were hacked at five sites (Sherrod et al. 1981). In 1988 two captive-produced yearling peregrines became the first pair to nest in the state since their extirpation, producing two young in the original hack box atop Milwaukee's Firststar Center (Septon 1988).

Peregrine recovery efforts continued during the 1990s (Septon et al. 1996). Nine successful urban nest sites along Wisconsin's Lake Michigan shoreline produced 31 young, and 2 successful nests at Mississippi River power plants produced 7 young in 2000. Historical records indicate Peregrine Falcons were observed year-round, but there are few winter accounts (Robbins 1991). Most early observations were of nesting birds between March and June and of migrants in September and October. Today, reintroduced peregrines are found year-round in the state, with falcons overwintering at and near several urban nest sites (Septon 2000).

The median date for the fall migration in eastern Wisconsin is 29 September; this date \pm 13 d includes 89% of all peregrines seen (Mueller et al. 1988). Spring migration has been less well documented, but O. Gromme's (1941) field notes indicate that, of 85 sight-

ings between April and May, 72% occurred between mid-April and mid-May.

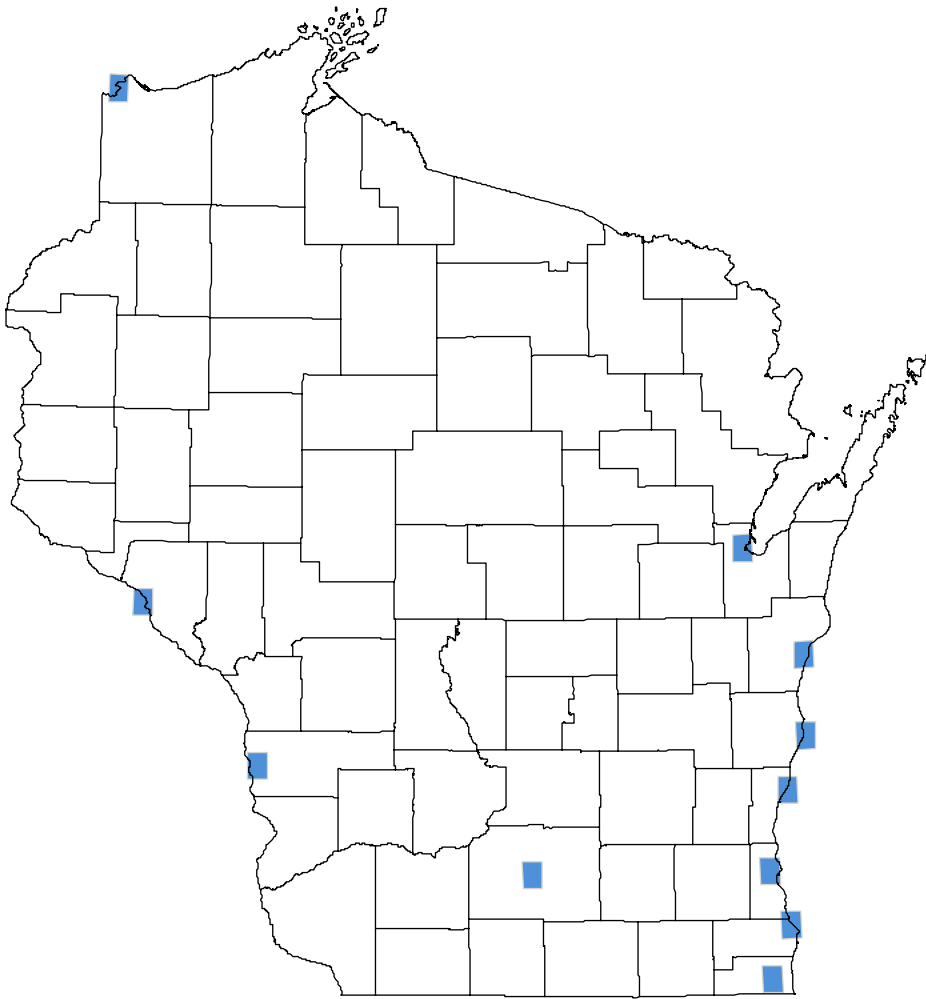
Peregrines historically laid their eggs in a scrape or shallow depression on a ledge. Stoddard (1917) described the substrate of such a nest site in Sauk Co. as a hollowed-out spot in the sand overlaying the sandstone, while at Ferry Bluff, three eggs were laid on a bare ledge (Stoddard 1921). At today's urban nest sites courtship behavior generally begins in mid-February (G. Septon, pers. obs.). Males do nearly all of the hunting during courtship, egg laying, and incubation, and continue to provide food for the female and young until the young are at least 10 to 14 d of age. Urban nesting peregrines also can be very defensive of their nest sites, striking and killing other raptors, including other peregrines, and even striking humans who venture near their nests.

Early and late dates for egg laying by reintroduced peregrines are 12 March and 22 May, respectively, with a peak occurring the middle two weeks of April. Hatching occurs between 26 April and 17 June, with a peak during the last two weeks of May. Both parents share in incubation that takes 33 to 35 d (White et al. 2002). Only one brood per year is produced; however, if a nest is destroyed or if eggs are lost early on, the pair may re-nest. Of 43 successful nesting attempts in Wisconsin between 1996 and 2000, clutch size averaged 4, hatch rate was 83%, and the fledge rate was 97%. Fledging generally occurs between 35 and 42 d of age (Sherrod et al. 1981), with males usually fledging first. Young falcons take six to eight weeks to gain independence and disperse. Few young Peregrine Falcons survive to join the breeding population. For the period 1987 to 2000, of 108 captive-produced young hacked in the state, only 18 are known to have nested, and of 198 wild-produced young, only 14 are known to have nested (H. Tordoff, unpubl. data). These falcons nested in Wisconsin and five other Midwestern states.

Peregrines prey almost entirely on other birds. Cade et al. (1996) documented 107 avian prey species in the diet of urban-nesting peregrines. Pairs nesting along the Lake Michigan shoreline take advantage of bird migrations, sometimes taking quantities of a particular species while that species is moving through the area, and find abundant prey during winter.

Atlas data list known urban nest sites, which are likely to increase in number in the future. Peregrines in Wisconsin, as elsewhere, are limited by suitable habitat. However, with numerous man-made structures increasingly occupied by nesting peregrines, it is conceivable that peregrines someday might exceed historical numbers in the state if they fill available urban niches and continue their success in reoccupying cliff sites. However, management concerns surround the security of urban and historical sites. Recreational use, human activities, and changing land use practices at or near some of these sites may hinder successful peregrine nesting. Still, given the recent appearance of Peregrine Falcons nesting on Mississippi River cliffs, reoccupation of at least some of these sites is ensured.

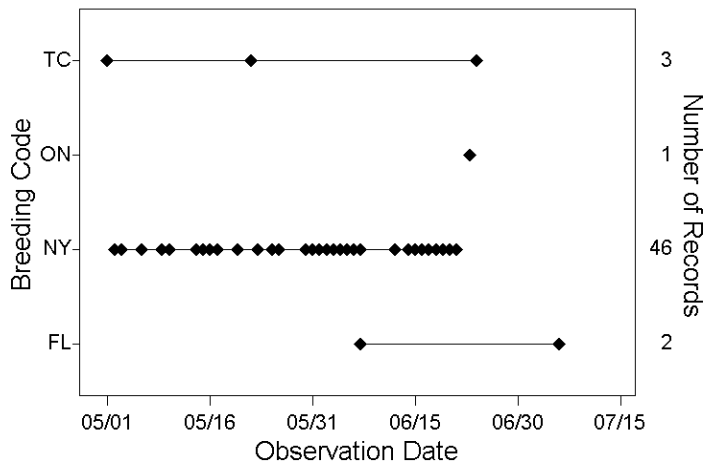
Peregrine Falcon



Breeding Status	# of Quads	% of Total (1132)
Confirmed	11	0.97
Probable	11	0.97
Possible	11	0.97
Total	11	0.97

Habitat	# of Records
Forest Upland	
Forest Lowland	
Shrub Upland	
Shrub Lowland	
Open Upland Agriculture	
Open Upland Native	
Open Upland Uncropped	
Open Lowland Agriculture	
Open Lowland Meadow	
Open Lowland Bog	
Open Lowland Uncropped	
Open Lowland Marsh	
Open Lowland Lake	
Open Lowland River	
Urban	10
Total	10

Breeding Phenology



BBS Trend - United States

