

MIDWEST PEREGRINE FALCON RESTORATION, 1988 REPORT

SUCCESSFUL BREEDING PAIRS

1. Multifoods Tower, Minneapolis, Minnesota. The female, MF 1, first nested here in 1987 as a one year old; she was back again but with a new mate, Alfie, a two year old also released in Minneapolis. They produced four eggs, three hatched. The two males and one female successfully fledged after transfer from the ledge nest box to a box on the roof to lessen the risks of the first flights. A fourth captive-produced female was added to the brood and also lived to become independent. The female youngster produced by MF 1 in 1987 with her first mate, Billy Ray, was located in Winnipeg, Manitoba, in summer 1988, paired to a Winnipeg-released male.

2. North Central Life Tower, St. Paul, Minnesota. A pair of two year olds, Meg and Cohan, released in Minneapolis in 1986, nested in the box installed in May, 1987. They produced four eggs in April. All hatched and we transferred the male and three female chicks to a box on the roof at about three weeks of age. Two of the female chicks died suddenly after about a week on the roof. We suspect that the parents delivered a poisoned pigeon to the nest, but are not sure. The other two chicks fledged successfully, although the female developed very slowly.

3. Palisade Head, Lake County, Minnesota North Shore. A two year old male, Larry, released at Tofte, about 30 miles up the shore, mated with a two year old female, Fridge, from Minneapolis and produced three eggs and two youngsters, a male and a female. This pair had to cope with rock-climbers, who flock to Palisade Head. The Minnesota Dept. of Transportation, responding to a request from the MnDNR, prepared a sign asking climbers to avoid the part of the cliff with the eyrie. Cooperation was good and the young falcons developed and fledged normally.

4. First Wisconsin Center, Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin. Peregrine history was made here when a pair of one year old birds nested successfully for the first time. Instances of one year old females mated successfully to older males are fairly frequent. Much less often, one year old males have nested successfully with older females. But never before, to our knowledge, have two first year birds produced eggs and young. Equally surprising is that neither parent was in the batch of 14 young released from the same spot in 1987. Instead, the 1988 female was Madonna, released in 1987 from the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, and the male was McArthur, released in 1987 at Fort Sheridan, Illinois (north of Chicago). The parents produced two chicks; two more were added from captive production. The male parent proved to be very aggressive towards his young after they began to fly, while showing normal parental behavior when they perched. By the end of the summer, he had killed two (one wild male, one fostered female) of the young falcons, a third (wild female) was captured and released in Omaha, and one fostered young male fledged successfully from its 'natal' territory.

5. Northern Building, Chicago, Illinois. A three year old female, Harriet, released in Minneapolis in 1985, paired with a two year old male released in Chicago, 1986, laid three eggs, hatched two

around April 29, and fledged two young on June 10, without human help beyond providing the building to nest on. The young were not banded. In 1987, an abandoned Peregrine egg was found on a ledge of the Northern Building; whether this was an earlier nesting attempt by Harriet is not known but appears likely.

On July 8, 1988, an unbanded young male peregrine was found dead on a farm between Sheldon and Matlock (Sec. 22, T97N, R43W), Sioux County, northwestern Iowa. Although the young bird was found under two power lines, it had several small punctures, lacerations, and severe bruises on the head and neck, suggesting attack by another raptor. The falcon had been seen chasing small birds in the area for several days. It was in good condition, although not fat. The stomach contained remains of a small bird. Plumage characteristics indicated that the bird was recently fledged. (Check this.) Since there are no known suitable breeding sites in the vicinity and since the only known source of unbanded young peregrines in the Midwest was the nesting in Chicago, it seems possible that the Iowa bird was one of the Chicago youngsters. Additional support comes from the timing; the Chicago nest was very early, earlier than any other of the known wild pairs in the Midwest. Had it come from Chicago, the Iowa bird would have been on the wing for about one month, which seems reasonable. The distance involved, about 435 miles, is within the range noted for other early dispersers from natal or hack sites.

6. Commodore Perry Motor Inn, Toledo, Ohio. A female peregrine appeared in Toledo in November, 1986. She was joined by an adult male in March, 1987. He has a closed breeder band on his left leg. When he broke his humerus in 1989 and was sent to the UM Raptor Center, he was identified as a Widener bird released in St. Louis by Walt Crawford in 1985. In February, 1988, a one year old female showed up and paired with the male. She has a red band and was released in St. Catherine, Ontario, in 1987. The pair nested in an old pigeon nest in an air vent of this closed hotel. They fledged two young females successfully. After the young fledged they were retrieved from the street several times, but survived to independence. A nest box was then installed just above the nest used earlier.

UNSUCCESSFUL BREEDING PAIRS

7. Alma, Wisconsin.--A nest box was installed on the cliff used in 1986 and 1987 on March 27. No falcons were yet in evidence, but by April 10 a pair was present. They nested on a ledge about 10 feet below the box, using the box only rarely in inclement weather. Again, the chicks (number not known) were lost to predators when very small. Raccoons are the most likely culprits, although some trapping and removal was done at the cliff. The adults, wearing plain aluminum bands, were last seen at the cliff on June 3.

8. Maiden Rock, Wisconsin.--Jack Oar saw a pair of peregrines at the south end of Maiden Rock on March 24. Over the next few weeks, they were seen copulating and moved about 1/3 mile north and apparently nested near the 1987 nest. They were present only sporadically through the rest of the spring, but were still there at times as late as June 20. No positive evidence of nesting. Adults wore plain aluminum bands.

NONBREEDING TERRITORIAL PAIRS

9. Mt. Leveaux, Tofte, Cook County, Minnesota. From 1984 through 1986, 29 Peregrines were released here. In 1988, a pair of falcons was in residence on the cliff at least through June, but no evidence of nesting was found nor were the birds individually identified.

10. Hastings, Washington County, Minnesota. A small cliff on the north side of the river just below the dam was occupied from April through August. Joanne Dempsey found the pair on April 21. Regular courtship feeding and copulations were seen starting April 24 through early June, but no eggs were laid in the scrape used. The male wore a gold band indicating release in Minneapolis in 1985 or 1986. The female was a one year old, Nicaragua, released in 1987 at Fort Sheridan, Chicago, Illinois. The territory appeared to be rich in prey, but the cliff faces southwest, exposed to the afternoon sun.

11. Chicago, Illinois. A rehabilitated male, Pacer, released in Chicago in 1986 was paired to a young female, Zoar, released in Milwaukee in 1987. Their territory centered on the Fisher Building on the north side of Chicago. No nesting was attempted.

12. Detroit, Michigan. A male, Solo, released in 1987 in Grand Rapids, Michigan, paired with a rehabilitated female, Bogey, originally released in Detroit in 1987 and re-released there in the spring of 1988. They did not nest but were still in residence in October, 1988. When six young falcons were released in July, the male was very aggressive, killing two male young. The four surviving young were trapped and released at Grand Rapids and at Trap Hills in the Upper Peninsula.

13. Fountain City, Buffalo County, Wisconsin.--John Arent found a pair using a large cave on a cliff 2.3 miles south of Fountain City on April 23. They were present over the next few weeks, but gone for the rest of the season by late May.

SINGLE TERRITORIAL MALES

14. Bayport, Washington County, Minnesota. An adult male hunted from the 700 foot smokestack at the NSP King power plant from late spring through November. He wears a plain aluminum band, suggesting release at Weaver Dunes. In October, a platform and nest box were installed at the 400 foot level of the smokestack, facing east.

15. Rochester, Olmsted County, Minnesota. A male, Will, released from the Mayo Clinic in 1987 was back in 1988. Fortunately, he was not seriously aggressive towards the young falcons released there in 1988. We placed a nest box on the Plummer Building in April, 1988, but the male remained unpaired.

16. Finland, Lake County, Minnesota. At the cliff on Kennedy Lake used for releases in 1988 at the Environmental Learning Center east of Finland, an adult male was in residence from June 22 through the rest of the summer. Not seriously aggressive towards the hatched youngsters, he wears a red band suggesting release somewhere in Canada.

17. St. Paul, Minnesota. A male, Twain, released in Minneapolis in 1986 resided on the apartment tower Seven Forty River Drive, about five miles downriver from the Multifoods Tower, through the summer of 1987. In 1988, an adult male, perhaps the same bird, used this building and Edina Tower in Minneapolis (assuming that only one male is involved). Nest boxes have been placed on the Trammell Crow 8400 Tower and the Control Data headquarters building in Bloomington. Another box will be placed on the Seven Forty River Road building if further falcon use is seen.

18. John Latsch State Park, Minnesota.--We installed a box on the south cliff on April 17 and 24, 1988. A male peregrine came over the cliff on April 17, but there was no regular occupancy of the park cliffs in 1988.