

FINAL REPORT

State: **South Dakota** Grant Number: **T-10-R-1, Amendment #5**

Study Title: Peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*) reintroduction in South Dakota

Period Covered: July 1, 2010 – September 30, 2013

Objectives:

By September 30, 2013, reintroduce 15-20 captive-reared peregrine falcons per year in an urban setting in South Dakota to facilitate the return of adult peregrine falcons to establish breeding territories in the vicinity of the reintroduction area.

Accomplishments:

South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks contracted with Janie Fink of Birds of Prey Northwest to serve as the hack site coordinator in Rapid City, South Dakota. Peregrine falcon chicks approximately 35 days of age of the subspecies *anatum* were purchased from falcon breeders and transported to the release site in 2011, 2012 and 2013, following health inspections and state and federal permit compliance. Hackboxes placed atop buildings accommodated up to 5 young birds per box. Birds were held for 7-10 days in the hack boxes. A total of 57 peregrines were reintroduced during the project; 20 birds in 2011, 21 birds in 2012 and 16 birds in 2013.

Birds were banded with a USGS band on one leg and a numbered color leg band on the other leg. Temporary wing paint was applied to allow monitoring in the immediate release area. All marking complied with federal permit conditions (Federal Bird Banding Permit #21966; Special Purpose-Miscellaneous Permit #MB071675-0). A live webcam allowed observations of birds in the hack boxes and of released birds that returned to the hack site as they learned to fly and forage on their own.

Two sites were used during the reintroduction project, both located in downtown Rapid City. This area was selected due to its proximity to an historical nest in the Black Hills of South Dakota. In addition, nesting golden eagles are not known near the area, removing this potential danger to newly-fledged peregrines.

The initial handling procedure was as follows: Upon arrival at the hack site, birds were weighed, divided by age and size and placed into a hackbox, which included a blind that helped in handling birds prior to release. An observation camera allowed staff to monitor developing falcons prior to release to detect and treat any health issues. Young falcons were fed quail daily, with supplemental vitamins. Food was provided through a food

chute to prevent the birds from seeing humans delivering food. Fresh water was provided daily.

Prior to release, birds were weighed, feathers examined, and wing paint applied. The nontoxic temporary paint allowed staff to identify different release cohorts. After being placed in the blind, the cage door was opened to allow birds to leave at will. A network of staff and volunteers monitored newly-flying birds to rescue grounded birds. Food continued to be provided on the rooftop release site long after releases to assure that young birds could return to feed if needed.

One of the birds released in 2012 (red band A22) appeared to overwinter in the area. This bird returned to the release site during 2013. Its specific band number was easily read with the observation camera. A second unbanded bird also visited the release site in 2013.

A nest box will be placed atop one of the release buildings in 2014 and in future years to encourage nesting by reintroduced or “wild” peregrines. The fact that 2 individuals visited the 2013 release site is encouraging for future nesting.

The network established by the contractor, Birds of Prey Northwest, will assist SDGFP in future monitoring for nesting attempts and for resightings of reintroduced birds. SDGFP has also shared information about the project with neighboring states and with the birding community within South Dakota.

Table 1 lists the reintroduced birds and their known status at the time of this report preparation.

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Table 1. List and known dispositions of peregrine falcons released in Rapid City, South Dakota, from 2011 - 2013

Band Number	Band date	Aux Marker Code	Red band leg	Sex	Wing paint color	Disposition
2206-73001	5/25/2011	A01	R	M	orange	
2206-73002	6/15/2011	A03	R	M	yellow	
2206-73003	05/25/2011	A02	R	M	orange	deceased
2206-73004	6/15/2011	A04	R	M	yellow	
2206-73005	6/15/2011	A05	R	M	yellow	
2206-73006	6/15/2011	A06	R	M	green	
2206-73008	6/17/2011	A07	R	M	yellow	deceased
2206-73009	6/17/2011	A08	R	M	yellow	
2206-73010	6/17/2011	A09	R	M	yellow	
2206-73011	7/3/2011	A10	R	M	orange	
2206-73012	6/16/2012	A11	L	M	orange	
2206-73013	6/16/2012	A12	L	M	orange	nonreleasable
2206-73014	6/20/2012	A14	L	M	blue	
2206-73015	6/24/2012	A15	L	M	green	
2206-73016	6/16/2012	A16	L	M	orange	
2206-73017	6/20/2012	A17	L	M	blue	deceased
2206-73018	6/13/2012	A18	L	M		
2206-73019	6/20/2012	A19	L	M	blue	
2206-73020	6/24/2012	A20	L	M	green	
1807-84008	6/16/2012	A34	R	F	orange	
1807-84009	6/09/2012	A35	R	F		deceased
1807-84010	6/13/2012	A36	R	F		euthanized
1807-84011	6/20/2012	A37	L	M	blue	
1807-84012	6/24/2012	A22	L	M	green	
1807-84014	6/15/2013	A42	R	F	none	missing
1807-84015	6/15/2013	A43	L	M	orange	missing
1807-84016	7/20/2011	A33	R	F	green	
1807-84017	7/3/2011	A32	R	F	orange	
1807-84018	7/3/2011	A31	R	F	orange	
1807-84019	7/3/2011	A30	R	F	orange	
1807-84020	6/17/2011	A29	R	F	green	deceased
1807-84021	6/17/2011	A28	R	F	green	deceased

1807-84022	6/15/2011	A27	R	F	yellow	
1807-84023	5/25/2011	A00	R	F	orange	
1807-84024	5/25/2011	A25	R	F	orange	
1807-84025	6/15/2011	A03	R	F		nonreleasable
1177-50458	6/17/2012	A38	R	F		
1177-50460	7/5/2012	A39	R	F	blue	
1947-20061	6/24/2012	A21	L	M	green	
1947-20062	7/11/2012	A40	R	F	blue	
1947-20063	6/26/2013	A44	R	F	green	
1947-20064	6/24/2013	A45	R	F	green	deceased
1947-20065	7/20/2013	A46	R	F	orange	
1156-14786	7/6/2012	A13	L	M	blue	deceased
1156-14787	6/15/2013	A23	L	M	none	
1156-14788	6/15/2013	A24	L	M	none	missing
1156-14789	6/22/2013	A50	L	M	blue	injured
1156-14790	7/10/2013	A51	L	M	orange	
1156-14791	6/22/2013	A52	L	M	blue	
1156-14792	7/10/2013	A53	L	M	orange	deceased
1156-14793	7/20/2013	A54	L	M	orange	
1156-14794	7/20/2013	A55	L	M	orange	
1156-14795	7/21/2013	A56	L	M	orange	
1156-14796	7/21/2013	A57	L	M	orange	
1156-14797	7/21/2013	A58	L	M	orange	
1807-84013	08/11/2012	A41	R	F	orange	

The following images from the 2013 release were provided by Janie Fink of Birds of Prey Northwest.





Unbanded adult peregrine atop Black Hills Power



Outdoor Campus West Program 2013



Mounting the nest box atop Black Hills Power

