

the peregrines still face.

Scientists remain concerned that although DDT has been banned in the United States, the Peregrine Falcons and other birds of prey remain exposed to the chemical. Migratory birds which breed in the north-central United States and Canada overwinter in Central and South America, countries where American-made DDT is sold and used. These birds accumulate DDT in their bodies, migrate north and pass through or breed in areas near resident falcons. The falcons feed on these migratory birds, thus also accumulating DDT in their bodies. The presence of Lake Michigan, which attracts migratory birds to its shores, increases the exposure of Chicago peregrines to DDT-contaminated prey. The falcons also prey upon birds that eat fish and invertebrates contaminated by polychlorinated biphenols (PCBs) in Lake Michigan. For example, some species the Chicago peregrines were observed preying upon include; Pied-billed Grebe (*Podilymbus podiceps*), American Coot (*Fulica americana*), Monk Parakeet (*Myiopsitta monachus*), Black and Yellow-billed Cuckoos (*Coccyzus erythrophthalmus* and *C. americanus*), and Chimney Swift (*Chaetura pelagica*).

As part of its work, the CPRR must address the health of the current population of peregrines. One way project personnel monitor the health of the peregrines is by analyzing egg contents. Eggs that fail to hatch are retrieved and sent to the National Wildlife Health Research Center at the University of Wisconsin. A 1989 Chicago peregrine egg that failed to hatch was found to have moderate levels of DDE, a by-product of DDT, and rather high levels of PCBs. Other unhatched Chicago eggs are currently waiting to be analyzed.

Other potential methods of evaluating the health of the peregrine population include examination of the nestlings, or eyasses, and the analysis of

blood samples. These examinations occur concurrently with banding by the Raptor Center in St. Paul, Minnesota. The blood samples are screened for genetic analysis. Contaminants are monitored solely through analysis of egg shells and contents, though blood samples could be screened if the need arose.

National Status

What is the status of peregrines today? In the western United States, surveys indicated less than 20 pairs on territories in 1975. Surveys in 1991 indicated more than 570 nesting pairs. Plans are to continue releases in several states (Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington, and Wyoming) at a rate of 140 falcons per year until 1996. It is hoped that by then, numbers will have reached historic levels. Last year the Peregrine Fund recommended the peregrine be removed from endangered or threatened species lists in all western states except those where releases are being continued (Enderson 1992).

In the eastern United States, the Peregrine Fund ended the release program in 1991. It is estimated that 90 pairs are established in this area. The Midwest and Great Lakes region continues its release program. At present, an estimated minimum of 30 territories exist. The Peregrine Fund predicts that if the 120 pairs now established in the Midwest and Eastern populations increase at a rate of 5% per year, the recovery goal of 175 pairs should be reached by 1999. If the Midwest and Eastern populations remain stable for a number of years, the Peregrine Fund would recommend delisting to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Project's Future Role

CPRR, part of the Midwest region, is advised by regional coordinators at the Raptor Center in Minnesota. CPRR is currently involved in monitoring and managing those peregrines holding territories in the

greater Chicago area. In addition, the program personnel are available if needed by neighboring areas. The Indiana Department of Natural Resources coordinates the management of wild nests and release efforts for its state.

It is the responsibility of the CPRR program to ensure the safety of the falcons, which includes identifying problems, conducting research, and implementing solutions to the problems. CPRR bands nestlings and tracks peregrines sighted in the area. The program also informs and educates the public and scientists regarding Peregrine Falcons. In order to keep the recovery of the peregrines on the rise, efforts must continue to preserve and protect the species.

Literature Cited

Byre, V. J. 1990. A Group of Young Peregrine Falcons Prey on Migrating Bats. *Wilson Bull* 102(4):728-730.

Enderson, J. 1992. Peregrines and the Endangered Species Act. *The Peregrine Fund Newsletter* No. 22. 6-7p.

Sherrod, S. K., W. R. Heinrich, W. A. Burnham, J. H. Barclay and T. J. Cade. 1982. *Hacking: A Method for Releasing Peregrine Falcons and Other Birds of Prey*. The Peregrine Fund, Inc., Ithaca, New York. ➤

Editor's Note: For more information on The Peregrine Fund, call the World Center for Birds of Prey at (208) 362-3716. To report sightings of Peregrine Falcons in the Chicago area or for more information on the CPRR project, call (312) 477-HAWK. Additional information can also be obtained from The Raptor Center in St. Paul, the Great Lakes Regional Headquarters, at (612) 624-4745.

— Mary Hennen is research and collections biologist for the Chicago Academy of Sciences, 2001 N. Clark, Chicago, IL 60614.