

American Peregrine Falcon

Range: Occurs throughout much of North America from the subarctic boreal forests of Alaska and Canada south to Mexico. Breeds only in North and Central America.

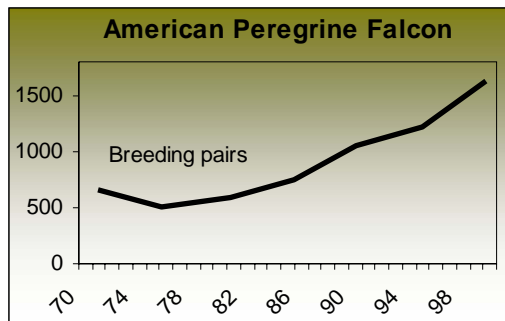
Endangered species listing: 1970

Federal recovery plans: 1979, 1982, 1984, 1985, 1991

Status since listing: Increased



Prior to the 1940s, there were approximately 3,875 nesting pairs of American peregrines (*Falco peregrinus anatum*) in North America. Populations crashed by the 1960s as a result of organochloride pesticides such as DDT which caused reproductive failures. By 1975, there were only 324 known nesting pairs in the U.S. The eastern population plunged from an estimated 350 active sites in the 1930s-40s to none by 1964. The use of DDT was banned in Canada in 1970 and in the U.S. in 1972. Efforts were also made to reestablish peregrine falcons by releasing offspring from wild stocks held in captivity by falconers. The first releases of captive-produced young occurred in 1974 in the eastern U.S. Since then, over 6,000 falcons have been released in North America. By 1980, peregrine populations were on the rise. Today, American peregrines can be found nesting in nearly all states within their historical range. The American peregrine was removed from the endangered species list in 1999.



Northeast Highlight: In 1975, the Peregrine Fund first released young captive-bred American Peregrines into New Jersey. In 1980 wild pairs were nesting on their own. Nest sites are often less than wild, can be found on tall buildings, bridges, and man-made nesting towers. In 2003, a pair nested successfully on the cliffs of the Palisades overlooking the Hudson River- the first successful nest in a

historic, natural site since reintroductions began. Each year since, nesting has occurred on natural cliff habitat that had been devoid of peregrines since 1950.

In New Hampshire, American Peregrines are also again soaring at many of their historic breeding cliffs. A dedicated group of rock climbers help New Hampshire Audubon and USFWS access the state's peregrine nests. Over the past two decades, a total of 119 climbs have resulted in the banding of 200 peregrine chicks and the collection of 80 peregrine eggs that failed to hatch for shell-thickness and chemical content analyses.