

## 2020 Raptor Resource Project Banding Report



*Ming Kester helps band a falcon at Homer Bluff. Photo credit Scott Boylen.*



Welcome! It was an interesting and rewarding year despite the challenges of the pandemic across our programs. While our families and routines were turned upside down, things in the raptor world looked pretty much the same. On reflection, I've realized that much of what affects us might not raise a feather in the natural world. But much of what we do has serious consequences for the wildlife around us, including raptors. Take the impact of DDT on raptor populations and the recent extremes of weather and climate. Wildfires, droughts, record-breaking hurricanes, pesticide residues, and lead are devastating to humans and birds of prey. Managing and minimizing our impact on raptor habitat is critical to their survival, which means that our mission of education, stewardship, and creating a lasting connection between our two worlds has never been so important!

On the education front, we have been growing our *Education In Action* program and we opened a new web interface with lesson plans and tools for teachers to use. Little did we know that the COVID-19 pandemic would shut down school as we know it and open the door for accelerated use of virtual learning programs and education tools. Our teachers led the way with teacher-created lessons, crafts, and activities that brought remote learning into classrooms and homes around the country. You can find them here: [www.raptorresource.education](http://www.raptorresource.education).

Our raptor cam fans were treated to a relatively normal year at our eagle nests and we got to watch and enjoy five fledges. The raptor rehabilitation experts at SOAR did their magic and D32, the last 2019 Decorah fledgling in their care, was released in March as our 2020 eagle eggs were being laid! Our Decorah North Nest youngster DN12 fledged next, followed by the Decorah Fish Hatchery trio of D34, D35, and D36! The successful fledges helped soothe the sting of losing much-loved peregrine falcons Elise and Floyd at Great Spirit Bluff, eaglet DN11 at the North nest, and an early end to what looked to be a promising year for the WI Kestrels. These sites taught us more about the circle of life in the wild and competition for food between raptor species.

Research and conservation are key stewardship contributions of the Raptor Resource Project. We donned our gloves and masks to monitor and band 50 young peregrines in MN, IA, and WI. We would have banded significantly more falcons, but pandemic restrictions locked us out of many partner sites. One of our most exciting events was returning to Effigy Mounds National Monument for the banding of nestlings 21 years after we completed a historic two-year release of cliff-hacked falcons. Our project successfully reintroduced the post-DDT population of peregrine falcons to the historic cliff eyries they called home along the mighty Mississippi River. It was a joyous occasion with RRP Board members and crew attending, including John Dingley and Dave Kester, who were instrumental in helping RRP founder Bob Anderson with the hard field work that resulted in the program's success.

Thank you to everyone who helps us monitor sites, ID falcons, track hatch dates, and band falcons. We couldn't get it done without you! A special thanks to Bill Smith, Maggie Jones, David Linton, Mark Blackbourn, Brett Mandernack, Bob Castanza, David Shealer, Kristin Bricker, Ethan and Cindy Brown, Ming Kester, and Isaac Ries for surveying and reporting in a very tough year. A big shout out to our forum members also – we are deeply grateful for your work monitoring nests and keeping Amy on her toes!

Education is a core part of our mission. A heartfelt thanks to all of our moderators, especially lead Decorah Eagle mods jfranc1, Tulsa, and Oregonian; lead Decorah North mod BremerBirdFan, Facebook leads Sherri Elliott and ModV, and Flyway chat lead izzysamlike eagles. Your leadership, dedication, and hard work are a vital part of our success. Our moderators volunteer long hours and are an invaluable source of information and inspiration for millions. Thank you so much for your hard work, knowledge, and experience. You rock!

Thanks to our camera operators, Explore.org mods, and the people who capture and post video to YouTube, especially Dave Reynolds, Tulsaducati, Beauty of Eagles, Camops Spish, Coqui, and Eaglewind, GABear, Katie G, Tiny Eagle, Eagle Cam, Sandy, TX Ninja, Blossom Holland, 70chico1, Mochamama, ginger52, Arlene Beech, Lizzie Eaglespirit, Chickiedee64, Lori D, and LifeMedia. Your hard work makes sure that no one misses life in and around our nests! Another thanks to Scott Boylen for many of the wonderful photos in this report.

We couldn't follow our eagles without Brett Mandernack! A very special thanks to Brett, the Eagle Valley staff, and David and Ann Lynch for their hard work trapping D35 and D36 and sharing data and maps with us. We have learned so much we would never have known without you.

Power plants, stackhouses, and other industrial sites have been crucial to the recovery of the peregrine falcon. We really appreciate the staff that help us get it all done, including Tina Lopez, Curtis Dominick, Jaime Massey, Robert Reents, Cindy Cox, Leo Simmons, Doug Peterson, Frank Sperlak, Melody Imholte, Jessica Keller, Cheryl Erler, John Kaczmarek, Luke Kusilek, Liam Grainger, Bill Heston, Lynn Hall, Dale Micheletti, Brad Foss, Ben Campbell, Jim Larson, Chuck Bremer, Doug Braff, Karen Kiekow, Trevor Shearen, Jim Fuchs, Jeff Blank, Brenda Geisler, Wendy Hoornstra, Randy Mata, Bridget Shore, Dustin Sanborn, and Huntley Leverenz. We couldn't manage all these sites without you!

A big thanks to landowners, site volunteers, and DNR staff, including Cynthia Kindlien and Lawrence Underkoffler, Tim Truttman and family, Dean Edlin, Joe Krumrie, Myrna Buri, Doug Wood, Stephen and Teaghan Grulkowski, Paul Owecke, Michael Monehen, Rich King, Crystal and Steve Fauster, William and Leann Conrad, the Nature Conservancy, the Guider family, Joyce Caley, Andy Roach, Dave Noble, Doug Wood, Mark Rasmussen, Dean Edlin, Gary Wolf, Pat Schlarbaum, and Matt Bonar. Another shoutout to the folks at BBL, US Fish and Wildlife Service, the Upper Mississippi National Wildlife and Fish Refuge, and the Brice Prairie Conservation Association. We appreciate your support and help.

And finally, a big thanks to Explore.org, especially Charlie Annenberg, Courtney Johnson and Candice Rusch for all their help and support. We'd also like to give a shoutout to Justin from A2Z Security for his hard work and technical support.

Our future leaders in raptor conservation stand among us. Each class of young students we introduce to life in an eagle nest or the beauty of a buteo moves us along in our goal of engaging and developing our future conservationists. It is so promising and exciting to watch and experience students learning through raptors in the classroom or in the banding blind. Whether it is watching the Decorah Eagles or holding and releasing a hawk, there is nothing more engaging or effective in developing a connection and love for nature. I'm proud of the success of our teachers, volunteers, and conservation partners. Thank you for supporting our programs, for your interest, and for your contribution to our future.

John Howe

Director, Raptor Resource Project

## **Productive Sites**

### ***Minnesota***

Xcel Prairie Island, Red Wing MN, Goodhue County .....	5
Great River Energy, Elk River MN, Sherburne County .....	6
Bay State Milling, Winona MN, Winona County .....	7
Ardent Milling, Lake City MN, Wabasha County .....	8
Red Wing Grain, Red Wing MN, Goodhue County .....	9
Rob's Nestbox, Greysolon Plaza, Duluth MN, St. Louis County .....	9
Great Spirit Bluff, Dresbach MN, Houston County .....	10
P-4 (Homer Bluff), Homer MN, Winona County .....	11

### ***Wisconsin***

Dairyland Power Alma, Alma WI, Buffalo County .....	12
Castle Rock, Fountain City WI, Buffalo County .....	12
Maassen's Bluff, Nelson WI, Buffalo County .....	14
Twin Bluff, Nelson WI, Buffalo County .....	14

### ***Iowa***

Dubuque County Courthouse, Dubuque IA, Dubuque County .....	16
P-15 Alliant Energy Lansing Cliff, Lansing IA, Allamakee County .....	16
Leo's Bluff Complex, Harper's Ferry IA, Clayton County .....	17
Effigy Mounds National Monument Harper's Ferry IA, Clayton County .....	18

### ***Unbanded Sites***

Xcel Energy Allen S. King Plant, Oak Park Heights MN, Washington County .....	20
Xcel Energy Sherco Plant, Becker MN, Sherburne County .....	20
Xcel Energy Monticello Plant, Monticello MN, Wright County .....	20
Xcel Energy High Bridge Plant, St. Paul MN, Ramsey County .....	20
Xcel Energy Ashland Plant, Ashland WI, Ashland County .....	20
Minnesota Power Clay-Boswell Plant, Cohasset MN, Itasca County .....	21
Minnesota Power Hibbard Plant, Duluth MN, St. Louis County .....	21
Dairyland Power Genoa Plant, Genoa WI, Vernon County .....	21
Bunge McGregor Stackhouse, McGregor IA, Clayton County .....	21
June 2: Redbird Bluff, Desoto WI, Crawford County .....	21
June 4: Desoto Bay, Desoto WI, Crawford County .....	22
June 8: P-11 Maiden Rock, Maiden Rock WI, Pierce County .....	22
June 9: Skidmore Bluff, Hagar WI, Pierce County .....	22

### ***Other Birds***

Decorah Bald Eagles .....	25
Decorah North Eagles .....	26
Xcel Energy Fort St. Vrain Eagles .....	27
American Kestrel Cam .....	30
Hawk Hill and Mississippi Ballard Banding Stations .....	30

## Peregrine Falcons: Minnesota

### Xcel Prairie Island, Red Wing MN, Goodhue County

#### Adult Data

Female: Freya \*Y/\*E, a 2008 hatch from the Colonnade Building

Male: Unknown

#### Nesting Data

Hatch began: 5/13 (estimated)

Banding date: 6/03 | Site visits: 6/03

- 1947-35551 | P/80 b/blu | Kim
- 1266-01942 | 62/R b/blu | Gill E
- 1947-35552 | 64/X b/blu | Cathy Mc

It was great to see our friends at Prairie Island this year! As always, Frank Sperlak expertly ushered us through the plant to the banding site. We used to have to rappel down the dome to get to the nest box that was mounted on its outer lip. As fun as it was, it added an hour or two to the banding process.

Frank built a new box in an easier-to-reach

location, which has the added benefit of protecting us from the talons of an angry Freya! Frank got the little falcons in between well-timed ducks, and John, Amy, and Rich Lockwood worked together to band them – masked and gloved, of course. The falcons were about 21 days old, well-fed, and free of ectoparasites. Thanks so much to Prairie Island for letting us band this year!

Prairie Island alumni include falcon Mel, who was spotted in Cancun, Mexico: falcon Artie, who went on to nest at Xcel's High Bridge plant in St. Paul, MN: falcon Seminoe, who went on to nest at Xcel's Sherco plant in Becker, MN: \*T/M, who went on to nest at Alliant Energy's Lansing plant in Lansing, Iowa: and Gamma, who went on to nest at Dairyland Power's Alma plant.

*The longer we watch falcons, the more we learn! Back in 2012, we thought that Prairie Island, Red Wing Grain, and Skidmore Bluff were too close together for falcons to nest at all three. We were happy to be proven wrong! Falcons are territorial and don't welcome neighbors too closely: still, falcons attract falcons and everybody appreciates a territory rich in resources. These three nests are located in and around a woodland-rich area at the head of Lake Pepin, the largest natural river lake on the Mississippi River: <https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/areas/fisheries/lakecity/pepin.html>. Prairie Island is located 2.4 miles from Skidmore Bluff and Frank has witnessed adult altercations and fledgling interactions between falcons at both nests. You might be surprised at what you see looking up!*

**Year falcons first nested: 1997 | Total number of young produced (2020): 72**



Frank Sperlak and Cathy Mc



## Peregrine Falcons: Minnesota

### Great River Energy, Elk River MN, Sherburne County

#### Adult Data

Female: Breezy 31/P, a 2015 hatch from Xcel Energy's Allen S. King plant

Male: 65/M Brooklyn, a 2012 hatch from the Colonnade Building in St. Louis Park, MN

#### Nesting Data

Laying began: 3/28

Hatch began: 5/06

Banding date: 5/28 | Site visits: 5/28

- 1947-35529 | D/54 b/blu | Kay
- 1266-10931 | 51/R b/blu | Hodgson
- 1266-10932 | 52/R b/blu | Falcor II
- 1266-10933 | 53/R b/blu | Kirby

Great River Energy's Elk River plant shut down in 2019. Falcon caretaker Brenda Geisler, who launched the plant's falcon program in 2006, wanted to keep falcons on site after the plant's turbine building was torn down. She launched an effort to build a first-of-its-kind pole nest box after we determined there were no other good options on site. Her hard-working and extremely cool efforts bore fruit when resident falcons Breezy and Brooklyn returned to adopt their new box and produce four young this spring. Thanks so much to Brenda and the good people at Great River Energy for keeping our utility-peregrine program alive! To learn more about GRE's utility-peregrine program, follow this link: <https://bit.ly/2FF14lv>.

*How do peregrine falcon nest boxes influence local populations? Check out [ebird.org](http://ebird.org) to take a look at sightings in, around, and between Great River Energy Elk River and Xcel Energy Monticello – or any site of your choosing! If you watch birds, consider getting an account and reporting them. The more you report, the data we have to help identify and protect birds!*

**Year falcons first nested: 2007 | Total number of young produced (2020): 42**



GRE's new pole nest



Brenda Geisler with a falcon

## Peregrine Falcons: Minnesota

### Bay State Milling, Winona MN, Winona County

#### Adult Data

Female: 88/C Jerry, a 2006 hatch from Lynxville Bluff

Male: unknown

#### Nesting Data

Hatch began: 5/11 (estimated)

Banding date: 5/28 | Site visits: 3/11, 3/15, 4/04, 5/14, 5/28

- 1947-35530 | P/82 b/blu | Reina
- 1947-35531 | P/81 b/blu | Keoxa
- 1266-01934 | 61/B b/blu | Dustin

In 1999, a 4-H'er named Maggie Lubinski put a nest box on the grainhouse where her father Rick worked. It sat empty until 2009, when falcons finally adopted it. We banded three healthy young falcons here this year! The Mississippi River valley teems with prey options, but nest box remains led us to guess that pigeons were the very favorite dinner options here.

For years, we thought that Bay State Milling and Castle Rock, located 1.8 miles northwest of the plant, were part of the same territory. That we knew, falcons nested on one or the other, but never both. We are absolutely thrilled to be wrong! Both territories are highly desirable from a falcon point of view: tall, steep, next to water, and filled with prey. The relative abundance of prey and separation of both sites – Bay State Milling looks downstream and Castle Rock looks upstream – may allow for closer nesting than we usually see in wild nests. It is also worth noting that Castle Rock, which is just across the river from Winona, is relatively urban for a cliff. Urban falcons often nest at higher densities.

**Year falcons first nested: 2009 | Total number of young produced (2020): 32**



*Falcon at BSM. Note its full crop!*

## Peregrine Falcons: Minnesota

### Ardent Milling, Lake City MN, Wabasha County

#### Adult Data

Female: 86/P Mya, a 2017 hatch from Bay State Milling

Male: Unknown

#### Nesting Data

Hatch began: 5/12 (estimated)

Banding date: 6/03 | Site visits: 3/11, 4/14, 6/03

- 1947-35547 | P/79 b/blu | Tessica
- 1266-01940 | 60/R b/blu | Floyd
- 1266-01941 | 61/R b/blu | Sawyer

Jim Fuchs at Ardent Milling has been a wonderful falcon friend for years! We were thrilled to see him again this year. He, Slater, and an Ardent Milling intern joined us on the roof to band three healthy falcons. All three were healthy, although we treated them for hippoboscids flies.

Based on *Guide to Management of Peregrine Falcons at the Eyrie*, Floyd is about 26 days old and his siblings are two or three days younger. Floyd is standing on his feet, which happens at around 25 days of age. His tail is about an inch long and we can see contour feathers emerging from his down, although he is still fluffier than otherwise. Sister Tessica is just a little bit younger – maybe 23 days? – and brother Sawyer is the baby of the group. Note Sawyer's nice little crop – a sure sign of a well-fed falcon! Thanks so much to Ardent Milling for letting us in to band this year.

*Ardent Milling falcons have gone on to nest at Dairyland Power Genoa, Alliant Cassville, the Weston Power Plant near Wausau WI, the 3M plant in Cottage Grove MN, the Lynxville Bluff complex in Lynxville WI, and the Prescott railroad bridge near Prescott, WI. While Ardent Milling isn't one of our top sites in terms of production, it has produced an extraordinary number of successful young. Husker, the first falcon to nest here, fledged from Woodman Tower in Nebraska and was the daughter of Project-produced falcon Zeus.*

**Year falcons first nested: 2002 | Total number of young produced (2020): 55**



*Ardent Milling staff and friends. Masks and gloves were this year's must-have accessories!*



## Peregrine Falcons: Minnesota

### Red Wing Grain, Red Wing MN, Goodhue County

#### Adult Data

Female: Unbanded

Male: Unbanded

#### Nesting Data

Hatch began: 5/16 (estimated)

Banding date: 6/05 | Site visits: 3/11, 4/14, 6/05

- 1947-35557 | 67/X b/blu | Jayson
- 1266-01945 | 29/B b/blu | Laney
- 1266-01946 | 30/B b/blu | Zeke

We banded three healthy little falcons at Red Wing Grain this year. They were in great shape, with full crops and a few hippoboscids, but no blackfly bites. We'll be going back this fall to replace the top of the nest box and change out the gravel. We really appreciate that Red Wing Grain manager Jim Larson was able to accommodate banding in a very difficult year!

**Year falcons first nested: 2000 | Total number of young produced (2020): 44**



*RRP Director John Howe with falcon Jayson*

### Rob's Nestbox, Greysolon Plaza, Duluth MN, St. Louis County

#### Adult Data

Female: Unknown

Male: Junior 89/B, a 2013 hatch from Sappi Paper

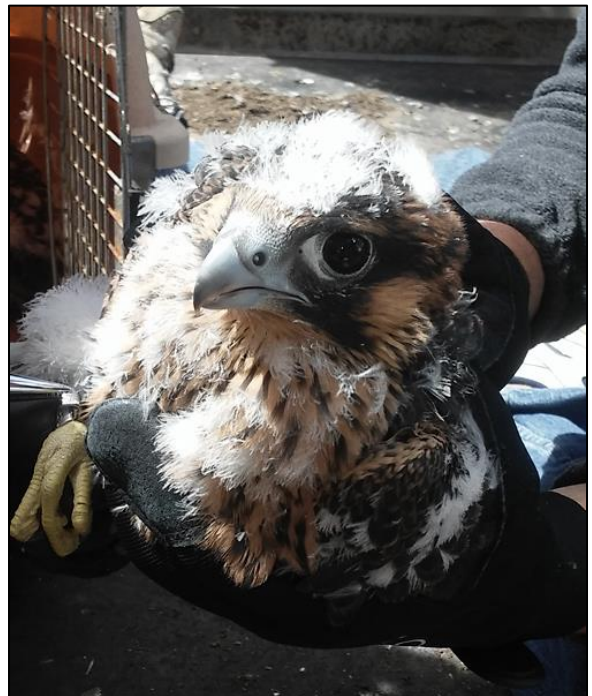
#### Nesting Data

Hatch began: 5/10 (estimated)

Banding date: 6/12 | Site visits: 5/27, 6/12

- 1266-07926 | 36/B b/blu | Oscar
- 1266-07927 | 37/B b/blu | Michael
- 1266-07928 | 62/B b/blu | Stanley

We weren't able to hold a public banding event this year, but we still loved going to Greysolon Plaza. The view from the roof is spectacular and it was a perfect day: windy, sunny, and cool. We weren't able to get a band number but believe that resident female 'Canada' was replaced two years ago. While male falcon 'Sappi' still gets close (although not quite as close as he used to), his new mate is not nearly as aggressive as his former mate.



*Ken Ries with a 34 to 35-day-old falcon*

## Peregrine Falcons: Minnesota

The little falcons were healthy and around 34 days of age. Thanks to Isaac and Ken Ries and property manager Wendy Hoonstra for their expert help! We were able to share photos via the building's newsletter and falcons Oscar, Michael, and Stanley were all named after residents. We hope to be able to see everyone in 2021.

*Duluth provides ample prey year-round and may serve as an 'island' for wintering falcons that come in from across the Northland. Check eBird reports for more information: <https://bit.ly/2O3B89O> (and select Duluth, MN).*

**Year falcons first nested: 2003 | Total number of young produced (2020): 47 | Sites in complex: 2**

### Great Spirit Bluff, Dresbach MN, Houston County

#### Adult Data

Female: Unbanded female Nova

Male: Unbanded male Newman

#### Nesting Data

Laying began: 3/26

Hatch began: 5/7

Banding date: 5/30 | Site visits: 5/30

- 1947-35533 | P/75 b/blu | Elise
- 1266-01937 | 56/R b/blu | Floyd

It was a tough year at Great Spirit Bluff. Long-time resident Michelle failed to come back and was replaced by a new unbanded falcon that John named Nova. Nova and resident male Newman produced four eggs. One was broken during a territorial dispute on April 13, but the remaining three hatched between May 7 and May 9. The third nestling died shortly after hatching on May 9, leaving two young falcons in the box. Nova and Newman took great care of them – with fewer blackflies and a few new parent hiccups on Nova's part – but a Great Horned Owl killed Floyd on June 6 and Elise on June 8. This marks the second year in a row that we've experienced problems with GHO predation at GSB, although this owl was not the same banded female owl who attacked the nest last year.



*Great Horned Owls have nested here for years, so why is predation happening now? The first predation event that we know of involved a female owl with eye damage. Her need to find relatively stationary prey could have provided a catalyst for ongoing nest box predation: she found the box and additional owls – perhaps a mate? – continued to exploit it. It is also possible that predation has been happening without our knowledge, post-banding. Older falcons don't need the care and attention that hatchlings do, which might make them more vulnerable to predation. John is weighing his options and we'll see whether owls continue to be a problem in the spring.*

**Year falcons first nested: 2005 | Total number of young produced (2020): 44**



## Peregrine Falcons: Minnesota

### P-4 (Homer Bluff), Homer MN, Winona County

#### Adult Data

Female: Unknown | Male: Unknown

#### Nesting Data

Hatch began: 5/21 (estimated)

Banding date: 6/15 | Site visits: 3/11, 4/09, 5/14, 5/30, 6/15

- 1266-07930 | 98/B b/blu | William
- 1266-07931 | 99/B b/blu | Conrad

In 2019, falcons nested in the giant cave-like pothole near the bluff's top. But in 2020, they moved back to the small pothole on the cliff's north face. We first visited on May 30 and found two addled eggs and two little falcons who were about nine days old. We returned on June 15<sup>th</sup> to band them.

*In 2019, the nestling falcons were about 21 days old on May 30. In 2020, they were about 12 days behind last year's schedule. The change in timing, location, and behavior could signal a mate changeover. Unfortunately, the falcons didn't come close enough or perch long enough for us to get a band number.*

**Year falcons first nested: 2007 | Total number of young produced (2020): 27 | Sites in complex: 2**



*Dave and Ming Kester band a falcon at Homer Bluff*



*New team member Sophia Landis on Homer Bluff*



*Adult falcon at Homer Bluff*

## Peregrine Falcons: Wisconsin

### Dairyland Power Alma, Alma WI, Buffalo County

#### Adult Data

Female: Unbanded

Male: Mackey K/36, a 2017 hatch from Maiden Rock

#### Nesting Data

Laying began: 3/31

Hatch began: 5/11

Banding date: 6/05 | Site visits: 3/11, 4/05, 6/05

- 1947-35558 | 68/X b/blu | Rona
- 1266-01947 | 31/B b/blu | Zig
- 1266-01948 | 32/B b/blu | Kingpin
- 1266-01949 | 33/B b/blu | Middy



*Four beautiful little falcons at Dairyland Power Alma*

We had to forgo a banding demonstration, but we were very grateful to Dairyland Power for allowing us into their Alma plant to band during Covid! We banded four healthy falcons with no hippoboscids or black flies – one female and three males. We had two new adult falcons at Dairyland this year! Male Mackey was a 2017 hatch from Maiden Rock, about 24 miles upstream as the falcon flies. The female was unbanded.

*Sometimes new falcons result in a changed schedule and sometimes they don't. In this case, the new falcons were on about the same schedule as their predecessors. In reviewing the past few years, I found a mate switchover last year (resident female Power was replaced by falcon Adeline), a non-productive year in 2018, a territorial battle and a reclutch by Power in 2017 (we found five fresh eggs on June 5 in the cliff nestbox), and a move from the old nestbox to the cliff in 2016. Despite the drama, Dairyland Power Alma remains one of our most productive territories.*

**Year falcons first nested: 1997 | Total number of young produced (2020): 79 | Sites in complex: 5**

### Castle Rock, Fountain City WI, Buffalo County

#### Adult Data

Female: Unknown (black/blue band)

Male: Unknown

#### Nesting Data

Hatch began: 5/11 (estimated)

Banding date: 6/1/20 | Site visits: 3/11, 5/14, 6/1/20

- 1947-35534 | P/76 b/blu | Teaghan
- 1947-35535 | P/77 b/blu | Piedra
- 1947-35536 | P/78 b/blu | Castilla
- 1266-01938 | 57/R b/blu | Stephen



## Peregrine Falcons: Wisconsin

We spent a lot of time looking at Castle Rock this spring! We had falcons at Bay State Milling, but we were also seeing them on the Rock. Would we finally have falcons at both this year? We did! All of us, but especially Project master bander Dave Kester, were thrilled that falcons were back!

Landowner Stephen G. kindly gave us a ride out to the cliff, where we harnessed up and went down to retrieve the falcons. Castle Rock is a favorite rappel – the edge is a little steep and somewhat challenging, especially for new rappellers, and the pothole is large but overhung, which requires a descent to the ledge below and a scramble up! Dave and John went down to get the nestling falcons, Dave and Amy banded on top, and Amy went down to return them. We have a very fun video from a falcon's perspective at <https://youtu.be/vDN32lqk4Z8>.

**Year falcons first nested: 2002 | Total number of young produced (2020): 34**



*The view from Castle Rock. You can see Winona and Bay State Milling across the Mississippi River*

## Peregrine Falcons: Wisconsin

### Maassen's Bluff, Nelson WI, Buffalo County

#### Adult Data

Female: Unknown | Male: Unknown

#### Nesting Data

Hatch began: 5/09 (estimated)

Banding date: 6/08 | Site visits: 3/11, 5/14, 6/08

- 1947-35559 | 70/X b/blu | Clutch
- 1947-35560 | 71/X b/blu | Striker
- 1947-35561 | 72/X b/blu | Speedy
- 1947-35562 | 73/X b/blu | Tisiphone

It's always a little sad when a truly adversarial falcon is replaced. Mrs. Mamba, the former (unbanded) resident falcon was legendary for striking intruders. While we haven't yet been able to ID her, the new resident falcon is nowhere near as fierce as the falcon she replaced. But it makes the rappel easier and we were very happy to find four healthy little falcons after last year's blackfly deaths! The banding was attended by Joe and Abbey Krumrie and their children, who helped name the falcons. Joe and Abbie run River Valley Raptors Inc. You can learn more about it here:

<https://www.facebook.com/rivervalleyraptors/>.

**Year falcons first nested: 2001 | Total number of young produced (2020): 31 | Sites in complex: 4**

### Twin Bluff, Nelson WI, Buffalo County

#### Adult Data

Female: Unknown | Male: Unknown

#### Nesting Data

Hatch began: 5/15 (estimated)

Banding date: 6/09 | Site visits: 3/11, 5/14, 6/09

- 1947-35563 | 74/X b/blu | McKinley
- 1947-35564 | 78/X b/blu | Mercedes
- 1266-01950 | 34/B b/blu | Sawyer
- 1156-23757 | 35/B b/blu | Camden

Landowner Myrna Buri has been an excellent friend to the falcons and the land for a very long time. We installed a nestbox at her request in 2009. Falcons adopted the box in 2014 and have bounced around between a large pothole on the south side of the bluff, another cliff in the territory, and the nestbox, although they choose the nest box more often than not. The nestling falcons were named after Myrna's great-grandchildren. All four were healthy and about 25 days of age.



*New team member Mark Webber at Maassen's Bluff*



## Peregrine Falcons: Wisconsin

Year falcons first nested: 2014 | Total number of young produced (2020): 26 | Sites in complex: 3



*Falcons in the Twin Bluffs nestbox after banding. The youngest, sitting at front, is 23 or 24 days old. The other three are 25 or 26 days old.*

## Peregrine Falcons: Iowa

### Dubuque County Courthouse, Dubuque IA, Dubuque County

#### Adult Data

Female: She-Beast D/20, banded as an adult

Male: Jeff 58/N, a 2013 Savanna silo hatch

#### Nesting Data

Laying began: 3/31

Hatch began: 5/09

Banding date: 5/29 | Site visits: 5/29

- 1947-35532 | P/74 b/blu | Ciara
- 1266-01935 | 54/R b/blu | Cielo
- 1266-01936 | 55/R b/blu | Sippi

Dubuque is always an adventure! While Amy went to watch the Bellevue cliff, Dave and John banded in Dubuque. She-Beast was as protective as ever, although Dave did not capture her this year. The three young were healthy and fledged in late June, although sadly Ciara was found dead in late September this year. She was in Dacada, WI – 156 miles northeast of her natal nest. Peregrine falcons are known to wander and female peregrines tend to wander further than males, but we were a little surprised that she had flown overland north and east instead of following the course of the river.



*Dubuque Courthouse falcons*

Thank you to Dubuque County Conservation and the courthouse for allowing us to band this year!

**Year falcons first nested: 2017 | Total number of young produced (2020): 9**

### P-15 Alliant Energy Lansing Cliff, Lansing IA, Allamakee County

#### Adult Data

Female: Unknown | Male: Unknown

#### Nesting Data

Hatch began: 5/17 (estimated)

Banding date: 6/02 | Site visits: 4/20, 6/02, 6/30

- 1947-35546 | 58/R b/blu | Madison
- 1266-01939 | 59/R b/blu | Malice

Alliant Lansing was an adventure this year! We access the cliff by walking up its steep (but not vertical) northern slope. Why did I schedule Red Bird Bluff and Alliant Lansing for the same day? We got up and Dave Kester rappelled down to the nest box to retrieve the young. While we hadn't had problems with blackflies at most of our sites, the little falcons were badly bitten and one of the four was dead. We



## Peregrine Falcons: Iowa

decided to treat them for flies but didn't have any Endure in the banding bag. Amy and John ran back down to the raptormobile to retrieve it and Amy ran up back up the bluff. We treated the three surviving falcons and got them back into the nest box.

*If you compare the photo at right with other falcons in this report, you can see the damage that black flies have done. The featherless areas on its face are badly bitten and it has hematomas on its face, its neck, and its underwings. Although it can sit up, it has very little energy and its eyes are droopy and a little slit-like: unusual in a young falcon we are banding.*

*Did our treatment work? Amy verified that at least two of the three little falcons fledged when she visited Alliant on June 30<sup>th</sup>. One was balancing on the roof of the plant's turbine building and another was perched on a stack catwalk. We'll make sure to bring a blackfly treatment with us next year.*



*Blackfly bites on a falcon at Lansing Bluff*

**Year falcons first nested: 1999 | Total number of young produced (2020): 38**

### Leo's Bluff Complex, Harper's Ferry IA, Clayton County

#### Adult Data

Female: Unknown | Male: Unknown

#### Nesting Data

Hatch began: 5/01 (estimated)

Banding date: 6/04 | Site visits: 3/04, 3/08, 5/20, 6/04

- 1947-35555 | 65/X b/blu | Zodiac
- 1947-35556 | 66/X b/blu | Zaffer
- 1266-01943 | 26/B b/blu | Zig
- 1266-01944 | 28/B b/blu | Zag

The falcons at Leo's Bluff usually ignore the nest box we mounted for them in the early 2000's. This may be for the best, since we think owl predation is an issue here. For the last two years, falcons have nested in potholes with cracks and boltholes that are small enough to protect them from almost any predator, including raccoons and owls. Despite not knowing where to descend, we quickly found the site with the help of Bill Smith, a retired WI DNR employee

who is very active in falcon monitoring, and researcher Jon Stravers, who is studying red-shouldered hawks and cerulean warblers in this part of the Driftless. The two guided us in from boats on the river – an



*Dave rappelling down Leo's Bluff*

## Peregrine Falcons: Iowa

invaluable time saver in places like this! Much to our surprise, the not-so-little falcons were about 34 days old! Dave was able to retrieve them with some difficulty (the pothole isn't large, but it is narrow and deep) and Amy and John banded them on top of the cliff. We'll schedule banding here a little earlier next year!

**Year falcons first nested: 2004 | Total number of young produced (2020): 11 | Sites in complex: 4**

### Effigy Mounds National Monument Harper's Ferry IA, Clayton County

#### Adult Data

Female: Unknown | Male: Unknown

#### Nesting Data

Hatch began: 5/26 (estimated)

Banding date: 6/15 | Site visits: 3/08, 3/21, 4/02, 6/04, 6/15

- 1266-07929 | 63/B b/blu | Robert
- 1947-35565 | 79/X b/blu | Maggie

This is a very special site for us. Back in 1996, RRP founder Bob Anderson became convinced that peregrines weren't returning to their historic Mississippi cliff eyries because they were imprinting on nest boxes and buildings. He moved to Bluffton, Iowa to raise falcons in a special eyrie that was built to look like a cliff pothole. The young falcons faced a meadow and were fed from behind a door to avoid any chance of imprinting on people or urban places. Once the falcons were ready for fledge, they were hacked from Hanging Rock at Effigy Mounds National Monument. Bob chose Hanging Rock because it was tall, overlooked the valley, and served as a landmark for fledgling falcons. He released nine falcons a year in 1998 and 1999. In 2000, one of Bob's releases came back to nest on Queen's Bluff in southeastern Minnesota, proving his idea!



Amy and John with Maggie and Robert

Over the next three years, falcons from Bob's cliff release would nest at Queen's Bluff and Maiden Rock. Once they began exploring cliffs, urban/industrial falcons quickly followed. In 2000, two pairs of falcons nested on river cliffs. While not all sites are successful every year, we have recorded falcons nesting on well over 20 river cliffs between 2000 and 2020.

*It is hard to describe just how many people were involved in the events that led up to banding here in 2020. Brett and Carole Mandernack worked with Bob to produce young falcons in captivity back in the mid-1980s. Bob fleshed out a plan for nest-site imprinting with the help of our late Board president Rob MacIntyre and current Board president John Dingley. After Bob moved to Iowa, Dave Kester and John Dingley helped him build the special eyrie and hack the falcons. Pat Schlarbaum got the Iowa DNR arrived in returning the Peregrine Falcon to Iowa's skies and also provided a lot of hands-on help. The staff of Effigy Mounds supported our work and provided a place for it to happen. 22 years after Bob's visionary project began, we returned to Effigy Mounds to band young falcons from a population that his work helped found.*

**Year falcons first nested: 2020 | Total number of young produced (2020): 2**



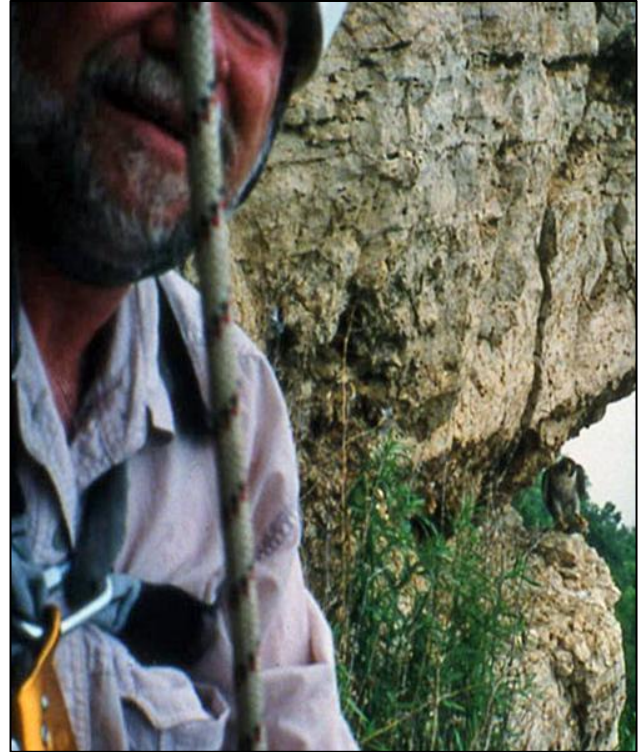
## Peregrine Falcons: Iowa



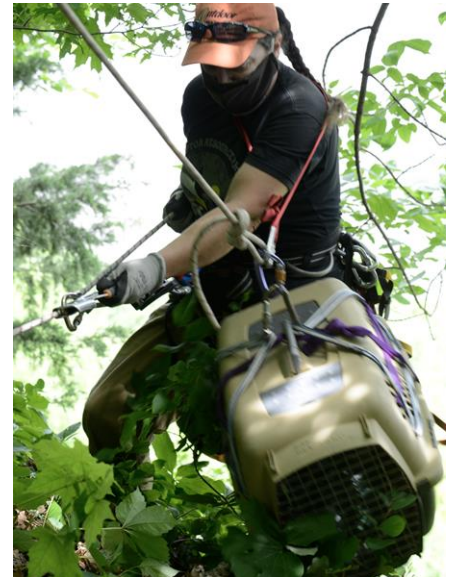
*Falcons in the cliff chamber at Bob's farm in Bluffton*



*Table 1: Falcon Effigies: <https://bit.ly/33M8iU8>*



*Bob with falcon Gunnar, from the cliff release, at Maiden Rock*



*Fire Point rappel team: Dave Kester, Sophia Landis, Amy Ries*

## Peregrine Falcons: Unbanded Productive Sites

### **Xcel Energy Allen S. King Plant, Oak Park Heights MN, Washington County**

- In 1990, Xcel Energy's Allen S. King plant became the first power plant in the world to house nesting peregrine falcons. 20 years later, the King still reigns as one of our most productive sites! Falcon caretaker Doug Peterson reported three falcon nestlings at King this year, bringing the plant's total production count to 77. We were unable to ID the adult falcons.

### **Xcel Energy Sherco Plant, Becker MN, Sherburne County**

- In 1992, RRP founder Bob Anderson put two captively-raised nestling falcons into the newly installed nest box at Xcel's Sherco plant after the resident pair's eggs failed to hatch. His experiment worked and the resident falcons went on to nest successfully in 1993. While we don't know how many falcons were produced this year, the plant's total production count stood at 68 as of 2019. We were unable to ID the adult falcons.

### **Xcel Energy Monticello Plant, Monticello MN, Wright County**

- In 1995, 40 wild falcons hatched in Minnesota. Three of them hatched high above the ground on the off-gas stack at Xcel Energy's Monticello plant! Mother 1807-29453 was from the Rouchleau mine in Virginia MN, roughly 164 miles NE as the falcon flies. While we don't know how many falcons were produced this year, falcon caretaker Melody Imholte observed parents bringing prey in and heard young falcons begging for food. As of 2019, the plant's total production count stood at 59. We were unable to ID the adult falcons.

### **Xcel Energy High Bridge Plant, St. Paul MN, Ramsey County**

- Falcons nested at Xcel's High Bridge plant from 2000 to 2007, when the company removed the smokestack and converted the plant to natural gas. Unfortunately, the falcons rejected our replacement nest box at a nearby ADM plant for the lofty spaces of St. Paul's High Bridge – although really, who could blame them for choosing such a spectacular view? In 2015, the Minnesota Department of Transportation approached Xcel Energy and the Raptor Resource Project about installing a nestbox on the plant's turbine building to shift the falcons away from the bridge. It was a bit of a gamble – would the falcons really move to a lower spot? – but the project was successful! Falcons returned to Xcel's High Bridge plant in 2016 and have nested there ever since. Falcon caretaker Luke Kusilek reported one falcon nestling at High Bridge this year, bringing the plant's total count to 27. Adult female Miracle, a 2017 hatch from Weston Power in Rothschild, WI, nested here with her mate Boreas, a 2017 hatch from the MultiFoods building in Minneapolis. Thanks to Amber Burnette for the ID!

*Saint Paul is the winter playground of King Boreas, King of the Winds. You can learn more about the city's winter carnival mythos here: <https://www.wintercarnival.com/legend/king-boreas/>.*

### **Xcel Energy Ashland Plant, Ashland WI, Ashland County**

- The Ashland nestbox overlooks the wide blue waters of Lake Superior's Chequamegon Bay, which is bustling with birds! Falcons began nesting here in 2014 after a nest box was installed to shift



## Peregrine Falcons: Unbanded Productive Sites

the falcons from the ore docks just east of the plant. Falcon caretaker Lynn Hall reports that four eggs were laid, three eggs hatched, and two young falcons survived to fledge, bringing the plant's total count to 22. We were unable to ID the adult falcons.

### **Minnesota Power Clay-Boswell Plant, Cohasset MN, Itasca County**

- Bob Anderson and falconer Darryl Councilman worked to install Minnesota Power's Cohasset nest box back in 1992. Darryl, a big fan of goshawks, wanted to add a couple of peregrine falcons to his workplace. He didn't have to wait very long, since falcons began nesting there the following year. Falcon caretaker Doug Braff reported two falcon nestlings at Cohasset this year, bringing the plant's total to an incredible 81 falcons. Adult female falcon Lucia, who was banded as a three-year-old in 2019, nested here for her third year in a row. We were unable to ID her mate.

### **Minnesota Power Hibbard Plant, Duluth MN, St. Louis County**

- The MPL Hibbard nest box overlooks Duluth Harbor and the Bong Bridge. Over the past two years, emergency repairs and inspections during nesting season have given us an invaluable chance to learn more about how falcons react to disruption around their nests...and how to manage them safely when disruption can't be avoided. Falcon caretaker Doug Braff reported four falcon nestlings at Hibbard this year, bringing the plant's total to 33 falcons since 2003. We were unable to ID the adult falcons.

### **Dairyland Power Genoa Plant, Genoa WI, Vernon County**

- We planned to band here in late May, but the stack elevator needed repairs. 2020, am I right? Still, we preferred this year's outcome to 2019, when the nestlings were eaten by an exploring raccoon – 400 feet up the stack! Falcon caretaker Ben Campbell reported that four falcons were produced here, bringing the plant's total to 70 since 1998. Genoa is our fifth plant to reach over 70 falcons! Adult female Peta 32/V, a 2012 HY from Busch Ag, nested here with her mate Marcelle A/36, a 2013 HY from West Bluff. Marcelle is a male falcon banded with 7A bands.

### **Bunge McGregor Stackhouse, McGregor IA, Clayton County**

- We weren't able to enter Bunge's McGregor Stackhouse, but RRP's Dave Kester climbed nearby Angel Point and was thrilled to see three fledglings in the nest box. This is much better than last year, when the site failed for unknown reasons. The plant's total stands at 24 since 2010. We were unable to ID the adult falcons.

### **June 2: Redbird Bluff, Desoto WI, Crawford County**

- This site is a bushwhacker – and it doesn't help that the falcons choose new holes and ledges every year! Dave made two descents but was unable to reach the eyrie thanks to the thick brush and falcon Lefty's incredible defense of her young. Amy joined him for the third descent, keeping Lefty away with a carefully timed stick while Dave looked high and low for the eyrie. You can't bat at or hit falcons, but you can move them away with a small branch, slender stick, or anything a falcon can strike without hurting itself. While tracking Lefty's flight to the south, Amy noticed

## Peregrine Falcons: Unbanded Productive Sites

two 38 to 40-day-old falcons on a nearby ledge. The banding was called off and Amy and Dave quickly descended. Adult female falcon A/47 Lefty, a 2015 hatch from US Bank LaCrosse, nested here for her third year in a row. We were unable to ID her mate.

*Last year, the nestling falcons were 21 or 22 days old on June 2. This year, they were 38 to 40 days, which means the adult falcons moved their cycle up by about eighteen days – a big surprise, since resident falcons don't usually vary their reproductive timing very much. Landowner Rich King reported them back in February of 2020 - quite a bit earlier than he has previously seen them. Could an early return account for a change in timing? We'll be curious to see what happens here next year.*

### June 4: Desoto Bay, Desoto WI, Crawford County

- The little falcons weren't really too old to band. But their ability to run, coupled with an eight-foot overhang and no climb-ups below the nest, made banding impossible. After an hour or so of bushwhacking and redirecting, Amy finally made it down to the correct ledge, where she counted four roughly 25-day old falcons while swinging back and forth in the breeze.

### June 8: P-11 Maiden Rock, Maiden Rock WI, Pierce County

- I'm pretty sure you could have heard Dave's 'augggghhhhh!' on the Minnesota side of Lake Pepin. The little falcons were only about 25 days old, but they were able to run and showed very little fear of the edge, so Dave called the banding off rather than risk losing a falcon. Four falcons were produced here, bringing the site's total to 44 since 2001. Maiden Rock is tied with GSB for our most productive cliff site. We were unable to ID the adult falcons.

### June 9: Skidmore Bluff, Hagar WI, Pierce County

- "Ouch! Ouch! Stop it!" While he's no Mrs. Mamba or Canada, the male falcon here is extremely aggressive and it takes a fair amount of work to keep from being hit on the long rappel down. While Amy went down to discover that the nestlings were fledglings and too old to band (she counted two brown heads from above the eyrie), Dave descended to remove a cedar tree at the request of the landowner – a great falcon friend! We were unable to ID the adult falcons, although Amy is pretty sure we have the same male here. He is much more aggressive than his mate – a fairly unusual trait in male peregrine falcons.

*Like RedBird Bluff, this site was a real surprise. Last year's lone falcon was about 24 or 25 days old when we banded on June 12, which means the falcons moved their cycle up by about 21 days. Resident falcons don't usually vary their reproductive timing very much and new females tend to move banding dates later, not earlier. We'll be watching this site closely next year.*

## **Peregrine Falcons: Failed and Unknown Sites**

### **Arcola Mills, Stillwater MN, Washington County**

No falcons were seen or heard here this year.

### **Xcel Energy Riverside Plant, Minneapolis MN, Hennepin County**

Riverside is located along the Mississippi River in an industrial neighborhood north of the city's heart. The plant's grounds are home to an incredible array of urban wildlife, including fox, kestrels, screech owls, beaver, peregrine falcons, Canada geese, ducks, and a great blue heron rookery. Unfortunately, the plant was not productive this year. As of 2019, the plant's total production count stood at 22.

### **Aggie's Bluff, Lansing IA, Allamakee County**

Maggie Jones and David Linton reported falcons here this year, but we don't know if the site was successful.

### **Guiders Bluff, Lansing IA, Allamakee County**

Date: 6/02/20

We had high hopes for Guiders Bluff this year. Unfortunately, we found nothing except one broken egg and one addled egg – still liquidy – in the nest box. We did not see or hear any falcons, although we regularly heard and saw them on our spring surveys.

Since the site failed, we did a rappel clinic with new team members Sophia and Mark. It was a lovely day, the rock at Guider's Bluff is very solid, and the clinic went well!

### **Eagle Park Quarry, Dubuque IA, Dubuque County**

Bill Smith surveyed this EP this spring and didn't see or hear falcons during either visit. But since we were in the area, we decided to take a look. We put our scopes and binoculars on the wall but (like Bill) didn't see or hear any falcons – although we did find Great Horned Owls nesting in a pothole! We decided to skip rappelling this year, especially given that Dave was hit by loose rock here last year. We'll see what happens next year.

### **Bellevue State Park, Bellevue IA, Jackson County**

Date: 5/29/20

Amy watched the Bellevue nest box from below while Dave and John banded falcons at the Dubuque courthouse. During her two hours of observation, she did not see or hear falcons and could not find whitewash anywhere on the cliff. When she rappelled down to the nest box, she found it empty, with no signs of attempted nesting, although there were prey remains from orioles and blue jays in the nest box.

### **Alma Marina Bluff, Alma WI, Buffalo County**

Amy saw falcons and one fledgling here on June 29, but we were not able to gain access to the site for banding. Dan Berger and Fred and Fran Hamerstrom trapped an adult female falcon below this cliff in the early 50's. It has also been home to a pair of nesting Great Horned owls since at least 2008, although that hasn't stopped falcons from successfully nesting here. We hope to band here next year!

### **Greshik's Bluff, Fountain City WI, Buffalo County**

Amy and John each briefly saw a falcon here this spring, although the territory didn't seem occupied in the sense that the falcon was engaged in territorial defense or courting and provisioning a mate. Bill

## Peregrine Falcons: Failed and Unknown Sites

Smith spent four hours checking this territory by boat on May 20 and didn't see or hear falcons during that time, and local observer Doug Wood did not see or hear falcons from his house, which is at the base of the bluff. It might be more accurate to say that this site was never occupied as opposed to *failed*. We'll need to spend more time figuring out Fountain City next year.

### **Hole in The Wall, Fountain City WI, Buffalo County**

Neither Bill nor Amy saw falcons here this year. We're not sure that the site was ever occupied.

### **Eagle Bluff, Trempealeau WI, Trempealeau County**

Jim Jenkins, Bill, and Amy all saw falcons here, but we were unable to gain access for banding.

### **Hobbs Hollow, Lynxville WI, Crawford County**

It can be a challenge to gain access to land, both in the sense of getting permission and in the sense of figuring out the topography of any given cliff. While Bill and Maggie regularly reported falcons, we were not able to get landowner permission in time to check the site. The issue was complicated by the area's steep topography, which didn't allow a walk straight in from the side. We hope to gain access next year.

### **Monehen's Bluff, Lynxville WI, Crawford County**

Did the falcons shift to Hobb's Hollow? Hobb's Hollow is about four miles north of Monehen's Bluff, which means we could have had falcons at both sites. However, no one – not Bill, not Maggie, not Dave Linton, not Dave Kester, not Sophia, and not the landowner – saw or heard falcons here this year. Like Fountain City, Lynxville has wonderful cliffs, but relatively poor production. This territory remains an enigma to those of us that watch it.

### **Wyalusing Quarry, Wyalusing WI, Grant County**

Brett Mandernack and Bill both watched this site but, despite hours of observation, never saw any signs of nesting. Wyalusing has been disappointing. We put up a nest box in 2014. It has attracted falcons almost every year, but we have never had production here. The closest we came was in 2017, when two falcons hatched. Both hatchlings died within the first day. The carcasses were bitten by blackflies and soaking wet when we came to retrieve them, so we don't know why they died. If this box doesn't become productive, we will need to pull it down.

### **Glen Haven, Glen Haven WI, Grant County**

Crystal, Steve, Bill, and Brett all reported falcons here in March and April, but they vanished in mid-May and the site appears to have failed.



## Bald Eagles

### Decorah Bald Eagles



2020 marked DM2's second year as a father. He was much better at basic eagle Dad tasks this year, including incubation, brooding, and feeding young. However, he seems to remain a little shy when it comes to copulation, since we once again witnessed several instances of Mom initiating copulation, i.e. 'Mom on top'. Unlike last year, he stayed all summer. We saw him feeding fledglings in July and early August, hunting in the retention pond, and perching with Mom on the bluff and in various trees in September.

Mom usually begins laying eggs in mid-February, but she started a little late this year. Thanks to our cameras, we know that she injured her eye in late January and spent several weeks recuperating. During that time, we didn't see much of her or see or hear copulation, although DM2 continued to stay on territory and provide her with food. Her eye appeared to have healed by the second week of February, but we think the injury pushed her laying schedule back. Follow the link to learn what Laura Johnson had to say: <https://www.raptorresource.org/2020/01/29/dr-laura-on-moms-eye/>.

Mom laid the first of three eggs on February 26. Although she laid her eggs three days apart, D34 and D35 hatched just a little over six hours apart. Everyone was worried about little D36, who hatched three days later, but he held his own against his older, larger siblings. This year's milder, drier winter and spring resulted in fewer black flies and all three eaglets fledged successfully in mid-June.

We captured D35 and D36 and fitted them with transmitters in early July. While D36 stayed relatively close to home, D35 traveled to east central Minnesota, where she remains as of this writing. D27 spent her third summer up in northwest Ontario, returning to the Decorah area on August 29<sup>th</sup>. She turned

## Bald Eagles

three years old this spring. We hope she stays healthy and the transmitter keeps working so we can see where she nests as an adult!

Watch the eagles at <https://www.raptorresource.org/birdcams/decorah-eagles/> or <https://explore.org/livecams/raptor-resource-project/decorah-eagles>.

### Egg Laying

Egg #1: February 26, 2020 @ 5:44 PM CT  
Egg #2: February 29, 2020 @ 6:28 PM CT  
Egg #3: March 4, 2020 @ 5:59 PM CT

### Egg Hatching

D34: April 5, 2020 @ 9:45 AM CDT  
D35: April 5, 2020 @ 4:07 PM CDT  
D36: April 8, 2020 @ 6:50 PM CDT

### Fledge

D34: June 18 @ 8:40 AM  
D35: June 21 @ 8:44 AM – fall turned fledge!  
D36: June 21 @ 6:09 PM

### Camera/Mic cleaning, replacement, and upgrades

September 15 – October 1

## Decorah North Eagles



2020 marked DNF's second year as a mother. In 2019, we saw similarities between new mother DNF at Decorah North and new father DM2 in Decorah. Like DM2, DNF was clearly learning as she went about instinctual activities like nest building, brooding, incubating, and caring for young. She had clearly learned from her first year of parenting and watchers enjoyed seeing her devoted, skillful care. Unfortunately, the second of her two eaglets died on April 10<sup>th</sup> after it appeared to get something stuck in its throat.



## Bald Eagles

Remaining eaglet DN12 thrived under the care and attention of its parents. Mr. North especially appeared to enjoy spending time with his lone eaglet and the two could often be seen in the nest together. DN12 fledged on June 9, 2020, at just 70 days of age! <https://youtu.be/4xmdobar8Vg>.

Watch the eagles at <https://www.raptorresource.org/birdcams/decorah-north-nest/> or <https://explore.org/livecams/raptor-resource-project/decorah-eagles-north-nest>

### Egg Laying

Egg #1: February 21, 2020 @ 3:36 PM CT

Egg #2: February 24, 2020 @ 5:13 PM CT

### Egg Hatching

DN11: March 30, 2020 @ 2:36 PM CDT

DN12: March 31st, confirmed at 8:23 AM CDT

*DN11 died at 5:56 AM on April 10. It appeared to have an obstruction in its throat that it could not clear.*

### Fledge

DN12 fledged on June 9, 2020 @ 12:11 PM CDT at just 70 days old!

### Camera/Mic cleaning, replacement, and upgrades

September 15 – October 1

## Xcel Energy Fort St. Vrain Eagles



We weren't able to watch the Fort St. Vrain Eagles this year due to the Covid crisis, but Xcel Energy employee Bill Heston kept everyone up to date with the eagles. Thanks to Bill, we know that three eggs were laid, and two eggs hatched. Unfortunately, one of the eaglets died during very cold overnight temperatures and a snowstorm that brought over a foot of snow to the area on April 16.



## Bald Eagles

Nest life went well for the remaining eaglet, which fledged in late May or early June. However, the nest sustained serious damage following a windstorm in late August. Could we rebuild the nest? RRP Director John Howe had a plan. He designed a brace to support the nest and traveled to Xcel Energy's Fort St. Vrain plant, where he and Bill built and installed it while Tina Lopez and her husband collected branches below the nest for the rebuild. John's plan worked! Tina Lopez sent us a picture of one of the eagles sitting on its new bionic branch on September 14 – just a week or so after the rebuild was completed! Thanks to our latest nest-building project, we are currently three for three on rebuilding bald eagle nests! You can read more about it here: <https://www.raptorresource.org/2020/10/28/fort-saint-vrain-eagle-nest-rebuild-project/>.

We don't have a cam turn-on date yet, but we can tell you that Xcel Energy is very excited about the nest and is looking forward to turning their cameras back on.

### **Egg Laying**

Egg #1: February 14, 2020 @ 5:55 PM MT

Egg #2: February 17, 2020 @ 5:57 PM MT

Egg #3: February 21 @ 6:39 PM MT

### **Egg Hatching**

FSV 41: Confirmed on March 30

FSV 42: Confirmed on March 30

*One of the two eaglets died following an April 16 snowstorm*

### **Fledge**

Fledge happened in late May or early June

### **Nest rebuild and camera cleaning**

September 7 through September 9

## Mississippi Flyway Cam

We installed a cam on the Mississippi River in August of 2018 with the help of volunteers from the Brice Prairie Conservation Association, staff from the US Fish and Wildlife Service, and our friends and family. We watched the wonder of spring and fall migration, improved our duck identification skills, and were awed by the number and diversity of birds on the Flyway. We saw sandhill cranes, bald eagles, tundra swans, mallard ducks, wood ducks, northern pintails, American widgeon, gadwall, northern shovelers, Canada geese, ring-billed ducks, American pelicans, coot, common mergansers, canvasback ducks, golden-eye ducks, Caspian terns, peregrine falcons, and American Avocets – just to name a few!

2020's highlight species included a black-bellied whistling duck that was far north of its range, white-fronted geese, a ruddy turnstone, a Hudsonian godwit, long-billed dowitchers, and a northern harrier. While some of these species aren't rare – white-fronted geese are known to migrate through the area – we love to see the long-distance migrants as they travel from the far north to the far south.

We really appreciate all the help from the Brice Prairie Conservation Association, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, and the boat rental from Schafer's River Rentals.

Watch this site at <https://www.raptorresource.org/birdcams/upper-mississippi-onalaska-cam/> or <https://explore.org/livecams/raptor-resource-project/mississippi-river-flyway-cam>.



*A Black-Bellied Whistling Duck spotted on the Flyway on August 10, 2020*

## Other Projects

### American Kestrel Cam

2020 marked the third year of our American Kestrel Cam with Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Neil Rettig and Laura Johnson. Unfortunately, the female kestrel disappeared on April 28 and the nest failed. Neil and Laura looked for her, but never found her. They saw the male courting another female in early summer, which makes us hopeful for next year.

When the cam is live, you can watch the kestrels here:

<https://www.raptorresource.org/birdcams/american-kestrels/> and here:

<https://www.allaboutbirds.org/cams/american-kestrels/>

### Hawk Hill and Mississippi Ballard Banding Stations

We opened both stations this year, but Covid-19 has proven a formidable obstacle to trapping and banding hawks. We haven't been able to keep up with our standard schedule given student availability, the difficulty of live presentations, and the need to separate everyone by six feet. We'll be releasing a separate banding blind report in early December. If you'd like to see pictures of the birds we trap in the meantime, please follow our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/RaptorResourceProject>.



*Erik releases a juvenile Red-tailed Hawk at our Hawk Hill banding blind in Decorah, Iowa. Photo credit Sophia Landis.*



## **Get in Touch!**

Want to learn more about us and/or get in touch?

### **Our address**

Raptor Resource Project  
119 Winnebago Street  
PO Box 16  
Decorah, IA 52101

### **Our phone**

276-FALCON2 (276-325-2662)

### **Our website**

[www.raptorresource.org](http://www.raptorresource.org)

### **Non-profit ratings**

Guidestar <https://www.guidestar.org/profile/41-1693761>

Great Non-Profits: <http://greatnonprofits.org/org/raptor-resourceproject>

Our email addresses

[john@raptorresource.org](mailto:john@raptorresource.org)

[amy@raptorresource.org](mailto:amy@raptorresource.org)

*Thanks for watching, sharing, learning, and especially for caring!*