

2021 Raptor Resource Project Banding Report



An intern holds a peregrine falcon nestling at Maiden Rock Bluff State Natural Area. Photo credit John Howe.



Please accept a big thank you for your part in helping the Raptor Resource Project to succeed. Whether you are a raptor fan, teacher, landowner, partner, or volunteer, we could not do what we do without your help and support. You have been here right beside us for the short term...and for the long term. Your involvement, dedication, and care are critical to our mission of conserving raptors and igniting a passion for conservation in people around the world.

Short Term Success: I'm very proud of the success of our peregrine falcon monitoring program! Our team banded 80 falcons at 29 sites in 2021, which was a record for us. Each year we scan the bluffs of the Mississippi River for falcon activity. Falcons typically return to the same nesting site each year, but that is not a given. The discovery of new nesting pairs is very exciting and evidence of the population's growth. We also love our urban/industrial nesting sites, where it seems like our partners are constantly rising to the challenge of changing sites and changing times. For example, Great River Energy built an innovative pole-mounted nest box when the turbine building that housed the existing nest box was torn down. It has produced eight peregrine falcons

since 2020 and is being adopted by other companies to help keep the peregrine population strong!

The Raptor Resource Project is especially invested in monitoring the health and productivity of the Midwest peregrine falcon population. Decades of monitoring show that peregrine falcon migration and nesting patterns are shifting along with the climate. Nesting in the Upper Midwest begins earlier than it did several decades ago, and we see impacts on productivity from insect pests that are connected to flooding and warmer weather patterns.

Long Term Success: I think that the amazing re-introduction and come-back of the peregrine falcon is a conservation success story that everyone should hear. It is a story of tremendous dedication and cooperation that played out over decades. In short, we now have a healthy and stable population of peregrine falcons thanks to the care and dedication of many. As a result of that success, we are fortunate to be at a point where our primary job is to monitor the health of the population.

Education: Whether it be second graders following the bald eagle lifecycle in the classroom or college science students learning to trap, monitor, and release Midwest raptors, our program is helping connect the human and animal world. Our falcon monitoring program is an unparalleled opportunity for employees and landowners, along with their friends and families, to participate in the monitoring of the world's fastest animal. How precious is that? Looking back on the past year, I'm pleased with our raptor education program advances. Students young and old have many opportunities to watch our live cams and fall in love with bald eagles, peregrine falcons, American kestrels, and even turkey vultures!

2021 has been a year of new up-and-coming eagle stars! At the fish hatchery nest, Mom and DM2 have been off the movie set except for special appearances. I guess we are OK with them taking a break from thirteen years of our 24/7 eagle reality program. I say that reluctantly, but we've watched Mom Decorah raise 39 eaglets! We can still see her on American Eagle (Nature); The Eagles of Decorah (IPBS); America the Beautiful (NatGeo); and Eagle Power (BBC/PBS Nova) if that is any consolation. The Decorah North Nest has moved into the prime-time spot, and we have been enjoying watching and learning from them.

Our first bald eagle nest cam in partnership with Xcel Energy experienced a good year and a year of recovery. Even though we lost an egg and a newly hatched eaglet, our eagle parents, Ma and Pa Jr. Fort Saint Vrain, adopted the rebuilt nest and fledged a healthy young eagle – FSV44. Little did he know he would be helping the Colorado Parks and Wildlife staff study population trends, habitat use, and impacts of human disturbance on bald eagles along the state’s most densely populated corridor.

I’ll wrap up with our peregrine falcons and kestrels. 2020 was a tough year for both the WI Kestrels and the Great Spirit Bluff Falcons. We lost our female kestrel after she laid five precious eggs, and, at Great Spirit Bluff, we lost two newly banded young to great horned owls. But both nests rebounded remarkably and showed their resilience. In 2021, we got to watch the hustle and bustle of five young kestrels raised and fledged at our nest in Wisconsin. At the bluff, Zoey treated us to never-before-seen footage of a second-year falcon/first time mother laying her first eggs and learning how to care for her young. We are so lucky to have these windows into the raptor world! Here’s to a productive year ahead with more success stories to share!

I need to give a heartfelt thanks to our moderators, especially lead Decorah Eagle mods Tulsa and Glogdog; former lead Decorah North mod BremerBirdFan, Flyway chat lead Izzysamlike eagles, and lead Facebook emeritus Sherri Elliott and current lead Mod V. 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 Camops Spish, Coqui, Tiny Eagle, and Eaglewind, Dave Reynolds, Dave Dlouhy, GABear, Katie G, Eagle Cam, Sandy, TX Ninja, Blossom Holland, Tulsaducati, 70chico1, Mochamama, ginger52, Arlene Beech, Eaglespirit, Chickiedee64, Lori D, and LifeMedia. Your hard work makes sure that no one misses life in and around our nests!

We couldn’t follow our eagles without Brett Mandernack! A very special thanks to Brett, the Eagle Valley staff, and David and Ann Lynch. We have learned so much we would never have known without you.

And finally, a big thanks to Explore.org, especially Charlie Annenberg, Courtney Huq, and Candice Rusch for all their help and support. I’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. Whether it is watching the 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

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Banding Summary

This year, we banded 80 falcons at 29 sites in four states: a record for us! 11 sites were on cliffs, nine were at power plants, four were at grain mills, four were on buildings in the cities of Duluth, MN; La Crosse, WI; Dubuque, IA; and Peoria, IL and one was on a water tower at 3M. We couldn't band at two sites because the falcons were too old, which means the start date for our season will likely be pushed even earlier next year.

Overall production was high, but per-nest production was a little lower than it was last year: an average of 2.75 falcons per nest compared with 3.12 last year. Why so many falcons if per nest production was lower? Almost all of our sites were successful, we added one new site, and two old sites that hadn't been productive in years were active in 2021: two falcons were produced at Greshik's Bluff in Fountain City, WI and three falcons were produced at Guider's Bluff in Lansing. We suspect that the warm, dry weather and lack of blackflies contributed to the success of those two sites and others like them. Hippoboscids were more common and probably caused two falcon deaths: one at Xcel High Bridge and one at Guider's Bluff. While hippoboscids aren't usually fatal, large numbers of them can kill nestlings.

2021's site surveys began in late February and continued through mid-June. Falcons can shift around quite a bit before they lay eggs and their activity level changes dramatically with full-time incubation, hatch, and the end of full-time brooding. Regular observation is the only way to understand where falcons are nesting and what nest chronology looks like. Thanks to Bill Smith, Jon Stravers, Matt and Becky Berg, Mark Blackbourne, Maggie Jones, and David Lintner for their helpful, detailed observations and, in the case of Bill and Jon, their boats! We couldn't see some of our sites without you.

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

Thanks also to landowners, site volunteers, and DNR staff, including Tim Truttman and family, Cynthia Kindlien and Lawrence Underkoffler, Dean Edlin and his crew, Joe and Abbey Krumrie, Myrna Buri, the Noll family, Doug Wood, Stephen and Teaghan Grulkowski, Francis Burt, Paul Owecke, Michael Monehen, Rich King, William and Leann Conrad, the Mississippi River Valley Conservancy, the Guider and Mulholland families, the Howe family, Rodney Rolvang, Brian Preston, Richard Lakin, Jim Hutchinson, Chris Kirkpatrick, Michael Monehen, Bruce Blair, and Elli Lineberg. Another shoutout to the folks at the Bird Banding Lab, the 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.

Captive breeding and releases brought the peregrine falcon back from the brink of extinction. Your good stewardship and enthusiasm have helped it to thrive. Thank you for all that you have done - long may the falcon fly!

Banding Summary

Minnesota

Xcel Energy Prairie Island: Red Wing, Goodhue County MN

Adult Data

Adult female: *Y/*E Freya, a 2008 hatch from the Colonnade Building, Golden Valley, MN
Adult male: Unknown

Nesting Data

Hatch began: 5/14 |
Banding date: 6/03 | Site visits: 6/03

Who's that bird that's diving and striking at us? Frank thought that we might have a new falcon at PI since he was hit a record six times when he went up to check the nest box for us in mid-May. But resident falcon Freya had only gotten bolder! She kept us ducking, diving, and waving the broom as Frank retrieved nestling Bobby Jo Doyle from his nest box on top of the dome.



This year, two of Freya's five eggs hatched and one nestling was left when we arrived on June 3rd. At 13 years of age, Freya is approaching the point where we can see declines in production: older falcons sometimes lay squishy eggs, discolored eggs, and eggs that fail to hatch. But Frank also reported skirmishes with the falcons just across the river at Skidmore Bluff, so perhaps interlopers interrupted early incubation. If Freya nests here again next year, we'll be very curious to see what egg-laying looks like.

Having said that, nestling Bobby Joe Doyle was the sole recipient of his parents' hunting talents and looked great! Prey remains included yellow-billed cuckoo (we find these at a lot of nests), nighthawk, blue jay (another popular food item), and Wilson's snipe. Thanks to falcon caretakers Frank Sperlak and Rich Lockwood for all their help and support for the falcon project...we couldn't do it without you!

Name	Sex	Color Band	BBL Band
Bobby Joe Doyle	Male	35/U bl/blu	1156-23768

Year falcons first nested: 1997 | Total number of young produced (2021): 73

Xcel Energy Allen S. King: Oak Park Heights, Washington County MN

Adult Data

Adult female: C/59 Faye, a 2014 hatch from Horizon Milling in Lake City, MN
Adult male: K/59 Mikey, a 2015 hatch from the Ford Parkway Bridge in Minneapolis, MN

Nesting Data

Hatch began: 5/08
Banding date: 5/26 | Site visits: 5/26

Minnesota

The peregrine utility program started at the Allen S. King plant in 1988, when Paul Simonet, an Xcel Energy employee and falconer, told Bob Anderson that there was a falcon on site. Bob was doubtful – falcons had just returned to nesting in the wild in 1987 – but checked it out. Paul was right! Plant manager Mike Miser gave Bob permission to install a nest box on the 400’ level of the stack catwalk and in 1990, a young falcon named Mae became the first falcon to nest at a power plant. The King plant currently leads Xcel’s falcon production pack with 79 falcons since 1990. It is our second-most productive site by raw numbers and our most productive by descendants.



Falcon caretaker and Xcel employee Doug Peterson joined us to help retrieve and band the falcons. Both young falcons looked great, although we squashed a few hippoboscid flies!

Name	Sex	Color Band	BBL Band
Krill	Male	06/U bl/blu	1156-23759
James	Male	07/U bl/blu	1156-23760

Year falcons first nested: 1990 | Total number of young produced: 79 (2021)

Xcel Energy High Bridge: St. Paul, Ramsey County MN

Adult Data

Adult female: 38/W Miracle, a 2017 hatch from the WPS Weston Power Plant in Rothschild, WI

Adult male: 32/D Monty, a 2017 hatch from the Ford Parkway Bridge in Minneapolis, MN

Nesting Data

Hatch began: 5/14 |

Banding date: 6/04 | Site visits: 6/04

Falcons nested at Xcel Energy’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 on a nearby building for the lofty spaces of St. Paul’s High Bridge. In 2016, MNDOT approached Xcel Energy and the Raptor Resource Project about installing a nestbox on the plant’s turbine building to move the falcons. It was a bit of a gamble – would they really move to a lower spot? – but everyone did a great job and the falcons returned in 2017.

Minnesota

Unfortunately, the High Bridge nestlings were badly parasitized by hippoboscids flies this year. They are a common avian parasite, and most infestations aren't too bad, but hippoboscids can be fatal in large numbers. Four eggs hatched, one nestling died, and John treated the surviving three with Endure. Luke Kusilik, Scott Anton, Scott's niece Jenny, and Ken Ries all helped to band the falcons.

Name	Sex	Color Band	BBL Band
Sarah	Female	H/35 bl/blu	1947-50615
Casey	Male	37/U bl/blu	1156-23770
Wynn	Male	38/U bl/blu	1156-23771

Year falcons first nested: 2000 | Total number of young produced: 30 (2021)

Xcel Energy Monticello: Monticello, Wright County MN

Adult Data

Adults are unknown. Male has a black/red color band.

Nesting Data

Hatch began: 5/11

Banding date: 6/08 | Site visits: 6/08

John Howe and Amy Ries climbed the stack with Xcel employee Kevin Rieland and a rescue team to find four healthy little falcons around 26 days old. We also found prey remains, including blue jays, black-billed cuckoos, and a northern flicker.



In 1993, RRP Board president Rob MacIntyre built the original nest box with help from a North Community High shop class. But 25 years of weather had done its work on the lid and sides of the box, so Monticello replaced it in late 2019. We appreciate Monticello's commitment to their falcons and want to give a special shout-out to Melody Schmidt for all she has done to make this program work! She is an excellent caretaker and advocate for our falcons.

Note that we had a straight run here: all the falcons were the same sex. This can make it a lot harder to sex, since one's mind sometimes exaggerates tiny differences in leg size, overall size, and weight. If we have doubts, we band with a larger 7A band, which we usually use on female falcons. But we were confident that we had four healthy, footy 6B 27-to-28-day-old males here!

Name	Sex	Color Band	BBL Band
Alpha	Male	41/U bl/blu	1156-23774
Beta	Male	42/U bl/blu	1156-23775
Gamma	Male	43/U bl/blu	1156-23776
Delta	Male	44/U bl/blu	1156-23777

Year falcons first nested: 1995 | Total number of young produced: 63 (2021)

Minnesota

Minnesota Power Cohasset: Cohasset, Itasca County, MN

Adult Data

Female: D/51 Lucia, a three-year-old falcon we banded in 2019.

Male: unbanded

Nesting Data

Hatch began: May 19

Banding date: June 11 | Site visits:
June 11

Four falcons hatched, but one died of an unknown cause before we came to band. As usual, mother Lucia was a handful! Amy caught her by hand and held her while John banded, which was safer for the banders and Lucia! Unfortunately, plant staff found Lucia on the ground on September 20th. They got her to the Raptor Center, who determined she had a shoulder injury and rehabilitated her. Amy returned her to Cohasset on November 4th. A huge shout-out the Raptor Center, Jackie Fallon from Midwest Peregrine Society, and Andrew Paul from Minnesota Power for helping Lucia and getting this all to come together.



Falcons are released in or very near to their home territories if another falcon hasn't taken their place. We thought about releasing Lucia down along the Mississippi River since falcons are on migration and not especially territorial this time of the year. But she would be a long way from home, and we have no idea what her typical migration looks like. We wanted to bring her back to Cohasset, where she has nested since 2018, and let her make her own decisions from there.

Name	Sex	Color Band	BBL Band
Stone	Female	H/42 bl/blu	1947-50622
River	Female	H/43 bl/blu	1947-50623
Snow	Female	H/44 bl/blu	1947-50624

Year falcons first nested: 1993 | Total number of young produced (2021): 84

Minnesota

Minnesota Power Hibbard: Duluth, St. Louis County MN

Adult Data

Both adults are unknown but banded:
male is banded black/red

Nesting Data

Hatch began: May 8 |

Banding date: June 1 | Site visit: May 8

It was great to get up to Hibbard again!
John’s daughter Sarah Howe climbed
the stack with John, Josh Garner,
Travis Tammi, and Douglas Braff. We hope she can join us for more work next year – she was a wonderful addition
to the team!



Over the past three 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 disruptions can't be avoided.

Name	Sex	Color Band	BBL Band
Itasca	Female	H/31 bl/blu	1947-50611
Endion	Male	09/U bl/blu	1156-23762

Year falcons first nested: 2008 | Total number of young produced (2021): 31

Great River Energy: Elk River, Sherburne County MN

Adult Data

Female: 31/P Breezy, a 2015 hatch
from Xcel Energy’s Allen S. King plant
in Oak Park Heights, MN

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

Nesting Data

Hatch began: April 30 | Banding date:
May 20 | Site visit: May 20

Great River Energy’s Elk River plant
shut down in 2019. Falcon caretaker
Brenda Geisler, who launched the



Photo credit: Stan Tekiela. Thanks for banding with us, Stan!

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 work bore fruit when resident falcons Breezy and Brooklyn returned to adopt their new

Minnesota

box and produce four young in 2020 – and four more this spring! Thanks so much to Brenda and Great River Energy for keeping our utility peregrine program alive at Elk River! 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 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 more data we have to help identify and protect birds!

Name	Sex	Color Band	BBL Band
Joe'l	Female	H/21 bl/blu	1947-50601
Eleanor	Female	H/22 bl/blu	1947-50602
Sawyer	Male	04/U bl/blu	1156-23757
Todd	Male	05/U bl/blu	1156-23758

Year falcons first nested: 2007 | Total number of young produced (2021): 46

Ardent Milling: Lake City, Wabasha County MN

Adult Data

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

Male: K/93 Hickey, a 2016 hatch from Faith Bluff in John Latsch State Park, MN

Nesting Data

Hatch began: May 12

Banding date: May 28 | Site visits: May 1, May 28

Falcon friend and plant employee Jim Fuchs retired this year, but he was able to join us with grandsons Leonardo and Magellan. We had a wonderful time and I was very happy to finally get a band number on Hickey! Jim has been a wonderful supporter of our falcons and we are going to miss him!

Name	Sex	Color Band	BBL Band
Uncle Jim	Female	80/X bl/blu	1947-50633
Carter	Female	81/X bl/blu	1947-50634
Emma	Female	82/X bl/blu	1947-50635
Blazer	Female	83/X bl/blu	1947-50636

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 a daughter of Project-produced falcon Zeus.

Year falcons first nested: 2002 | Total number of young produced (2021): 59

Minnesota

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

Adult Data

Female: Unbanded

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

Nesting Data

Hatch began: May 8

Banding date: May 28 | Site visits:
May 25, May 28



Amy and Isaac Ries checked the nest box on May 25 and were surprised to find four falcons that were almost old enough to band. How would we fit them into our busy schedule! While John headed to Peoria Illinois, Amy and Ken made the trip north to Duluth.

Amy rappelled over the wall and brought the falcons up to band with the help of Ken, Sarah Howe, and property manager Wendy Hoonstra! Wendy shared banding photos in the building's newsletter and all of the falcons were named after residents. We hope to hold a public banding in 2022 – it will be great to see everyone again!

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).

Name	Sex	Color Band	BBL Band
Carol	Female	84/X bl/blu	1947-50637
Alician	Female	85/X bl/blu	1947-50638
Thomas	Male	A/75 bl/blu	1156-23787
Glen	Male	A/76 bl/blu	1156-23788

Year falcons first nested: 2003 | Total number of young produced (2021): 51 | Sites in complex: 2

Red Wing Grain: Red Wing, Goodhue County MN

Adult Data

Female: Unbanded

Male: E/30 Mac, a 2013 hatch from Dairyland Power Alma in Alma, WI

Nesting Data

Hatch began: May 11

Banding date: June 4 | Site visits: February 5, June 4

Minnesota

We got the Red Wing camera going again in February (brrrrrr!) and it was great to monitor the falcons and get band numbers so easily. John and Ken found a few hippoboscids but the nestlings were otherwise very healthy, well fed, and feisty!

Why did we see more hippoboscids than blackflies this year? Blackflies lay their eggs in cold running water, and it was very dry this spring. Less water = less habitat = fewer flies. But hippoboscids give birth to live young. A single larva develops in the female fly's uterus, molting and feeding on the secretions of a milk gland as it grows. After three instars, the mother gives birth to a white pre-pupa that immediately darkens and forms the pupal shell. This requires an enormous energetic investment by the female fly, so it isn't surprising that a warm, dry year would provide favorable conditions for female flies to survive birth and for more of their young to survive.



You can watch the Red Wing falcons here: <https://www.raptorresource.org/birdcams/additional-falcon-cams/>.

Name	Sex	Color Band	BBL Band
Kassy	Female	H/32 bl/blu	1947-50612
Katherine	Female	H/33 bl/blu	1947-50613
Kandiyohi	Female	H/34 bl/blu	1947-50614
Kylan	Male	36/U bl/blu	1156-23769

Year falcons first nested: 2003 | Total number of young produced (2021): 44

3M: Cottage Grove, Washington County MN

Adult Data

Both adults are unknown

Nesting Data

Hatch began: May 5

Banding date: June 14 | Site visits: June 14

I was sitting at home entering records into the database when I got a call from 3M. Did I want to come band a grounded bird? You bet I did! 3M staff had found the new fledgling Caviion in a parking lot not far from the nest box. He was in good shape, although a little skinny. But since he was alert and otherwise healthy, I banded him and put him in a safe spot in the shade. He fledged successfully!

Name	Sex	Color Band	BBL Band
Caviion	Male	45/U bl/blu	1156-23778

Year falcons first nested: 2008 | Total number of young produced (2021): 28

Minnesota

Great Spirit Bluff: La Crescent, Houston County MN

Adult Data

Female: Zooney, a two-year old unbanded female

Male: Newman, an unbanded male

Nesting Data

Hatch began: May 31

Banding date: June 19 | Site visits: June 10, June 19

Anyone who watches Great Spirit Bluff knows that it was an eventful year! Newman returned on February 24th and immediately began attracting the



interest of female falcons. We saw former resident female Nova, a falcon named Savannah who was also spotted over in La Crosse, and a battle between Nova and a falcon named Nina (https://youtu.be/ynauC40i_a0). Nova and Nina both disappeared after the fight, but a new two-year old falcon quickly took Nova's place. Zooney and Newman copulated (over and over and over) and she eventually laid three eggs, although she laid the first egg ten days before the other two. Would it survive? Zooney didn't start full incubation until the second egg and the temperatures were perfect: cool enough to preserve the egg, but not cold enough to kill the developing embryo.

Hatch started on May 31. One egg hatched on May 31, one hatched on June 1, and one hatched on June 2. Unfortunately, Zooney didn't seem to understand how to feed her young, although she clearly had the desire to do so. We watched her bring in whole birds and drop them in front of her hatchlings like "Here you are! Time to eat!". She tried to feed them, but she didn't understand that she needed to tear up the birds and provide small morsels of flesh instead of whole dead



birds. Her instincts were good, but her knowledge was not. The first two falcons died and the third one didn't seem to be thriving. On June 9, a very hot day in the 90's, we realized it was falling over and turning black, which can be a sign of a bad hippoboscids infestation. Amy and John rappelled down and found hippoboscids all over the place. We squashed as many as we could and treated the little bird with Endure, unsure if it would survive. We were very happy when Chance, as watchers had taken to calling the little falcon, got up and started moving around.

Zooney got better at feeding, although her obsessive brooding and shimmying – not uncommon in first time falcon parents – took some down off Chance, and we noted that her feather development and growth seemed a little

Minnesota

slowed when we came to band on June 19th. Or Amy did – at the time, John was too busy dodging Zooney’s talons to worry about much else. She got in a little close when we rappelled down to treat Chance, but nothing prepared us for her strikes!

Chance benefited greatly from being the sole recipient of her mother’s newly gained feeding skill and fledged perfectly on July 19th. We hope to see Newman and Zooney together again next year! You can watch the falcons online here: <https://www.raptorresource.org/birdcams/qsb-falcons/> and here: <https://explore.org/livecams/raptor-resource-project/falcon-nest-cam>.

Name	Sex	Color Band	BBL Band
Chance	Female	P/46 bl/blu	1947-50644

Year falcons first nested: 2005 | Total number of young produced (2021): 45

Bay State Milling: Winona, Winona County MN

Adult Data

Female: 88/C Jerry, a 2006 hatch from Lee’s Bluff in Lynxville, WI
 Adult male: Unknown

Nesting Data

Hatch began: May 22
 Banding date: June 25 | Site visits: June 25



Most of our sites moved early, but this one moved late! We banded on May 28 in 2020 and on June 25 in 2021. When Sophia and Dave checked the box on May 28, they found five eggs and one hatchling. We came back on June 25 to find one nestling and no eggs. We don’t know whether any of the remaining eggs hatched, but the lone falcon looked good and was quite feisty! Although we can’t know for sure, we suspect that resident female Jerry 88/C probably reclushed or laid her eggs in with those of another falcon. We saw a lot of fighting at Great Spirit Bluff and heard about it at other sites. She might have returned late and had to boot an interloper, or an initial clutch might have been wiped out by cold weather or another falcon. Either way, we were glad to have falcons to band 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! 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. 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.

Name	Sex	Color Band	BBL Band
Ian	Male	48/U bl/blu	1156-23781

Year falcons first nested: 2009 | Total number of young produced (2021): 33

Wisconsin

Xcel Energy Ashland Plant: Ashland, Ashland County WI

Adult Data

Adult female: N/26, an unnamed 2019 hatch from Raven Cliff on the Minnesota shore of Lake Superior
Adult male: 59/C Scottie, a 2016 hatch from the Houghton-Hancock Bridge in Houghton, MI

Nesting Data

Hatch began: May 31
Banding date: June 22 | Site visits: June 22



The Xcel Ashland nest box 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 them from the ore docks just east of the plant. This is a much better location and the plant has done a great deal to make sure the falcons have a safe place to nest. Despite some hippoboscids (this year's number one ectoparasite!) all three 22-23-day-old nestlings were healthy. Plant staff named the falcons and Lynn Hall, Ashland's falcon caretaker, helped us band them. Amy also found and reported a size 3 band that turned out to belong to a common tern from a nearby nest site.

Name	Sex	Color Band	BBL Band
Emma Lou	Female	P/45 bl/blu	1947-50645
Rob	Male	46/U bl/blu	1156-23779
Sloan	Male	47/U bl/blu	1156-23780

Year falcons first nested: 2014 | Total number of young produced: 25

Dairyland Power Alma: Alma, Buffalo County WI

Adult Data

Adult female: 89/H, an unnamed 2015 hatch from Midwest Plaza in Minneapolis, MN
Adult male: Unbanded

Nesting Data

Hatch began: May 10
Banding date: June 4 | Site visits: June 4

Dave Kester and Sophia Landis banded the falcons with the help of Dairyland Power biologist Ben Campbell. The Alma falcons can be watched online at <https://www.raptorresource.org/birdcams/dairyland-power-falcon-cams/>.

Name	Sex	Color Band	BBL Band
Evelyn	Female	H/48 bl/blu	1947-43842
Roger	Male	14/U bl/blu	1266-07905

Wisconsin

Genoa	Male	15/U bl/blu	1266-07906
Decklin	Male	16/U	1266-07907

Dairyland Power's Alma site is quite popular with peregrine falcons! In reviewing the past few years, we found a complete falcon replacement last year, a mate switchover in 2019 (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 is our most productive territory.

Year falcons first nested: 1997 | Total number of young produced (2021): 83 | Sites in complex: 5

Redbird Bluff: Desoto, Vernon County, WI

Adult Data

Adult female: A/47 Lefty (black/red),
a 2015 hatch from US Bank La Crosse
Adult male: unbanded

Nesting Data

Hatch began: May 1
Banding date: May 21 | Site visits:
March 11, March 19, May 21



Ouch! Lefty, stop it! This site is a bushwhacker – and it doesn't help that the falcons choose new holes and ledges almost every year! Amy and

Dave rappelled down to the eyrie. They were safe under the trees, but Lefty pounded both of them mercilessly once they got on the rock. Dave loaded the kennel while Amy fended Lefty off and the two lowered it to the ground roughly 30 feet below. John Howe banded the falcons with the help of the landowners and their grandson.

Name	Sex	Color Band	BBL Band
Righty	Female	H/23 bl/blu	1947-50603
Nyota	Female	H/24 bl/blu	1947-50604
Rocky	Female	H/25 bl/blu	1947-50605

Year falcons first nested: 2017 | Total number of young produced (2021): 12 | Sites in complex: 3

This site moved two weeks earlier last year. Lefty has been nesting here since 2017 and has had a pretty consistent schedule over the years. We're not sure why she suddenly moved so early, but the young falcons were around 21 days old when we came to band. If you'd like to see what RedBird Bluff looks like, watch this video: <https://youtu.be/O7tPERitTFM>.

Wisconsin

Skidmore Bluff: Hagar City, Pierce County WI

Adult Data

Adults are unknown

Nesting Data

Hatch began: May 3

Banding date: May 25 | Site visits:
March 9, May 4, May 25

The falcons advanced their timing by two weeks last year, so we showed up two weeks earlier this year. While we couldn't get adult band numbers, we are quite sure it is the same male – he is unusually aggressive and hit Amy several times on rope and at the eyrie!



The young falcons were around 22 days old and in great health – not surprising in such high-quality habitat hunted by skilled, aggressive parents. We were thrilled to have Stan Tekiela's help. John had connected with Stan, a Minnesota naturalist, photographer, and author, a couple of years back. He was an excellent bander and photographer, and we hope he can come with us next year!

John originally ID'd Chinook as male, but the 6B band was too small. We entered Chinook into the database as indeterminate since Chinook could be a large male or a small female.

We haven't tended to use the indeterminate category in the past, instead assigning every falcon banded with a 7A band to 'female' and every falcon banded with a 6B band to 'male'. We are ending this practice. If we can't determine a falcon's sex, that falcon will be given a 7A band and listed as indeterminate. This is more accurate and we can easily change it if the falcon breeds later in life.

Name	Sex	Color Band	BBL Band
Ida	Female	H/27 bl/blu	1947-50606
Aubrey	Female	H/26 bl/blu	1947-50607
Chinook	Indeterminate	H/28 bl/blu	1947-50608

Year falcons first nested: 2011 | Total number of young produced (2021): 18 | Total sites in complex: 3

Castle Rock: Bluff Siding, Buffalo County, WI

Adult Data

Adults are unknown

Nesting Data

Hatch began: May 10

Banding date: June 2 | Site visits: March 9, April 1, April 6, April 23, June 2

Wisconsin

Landowner Stephen G. kindly gave us a ride out to the cliff, where we harnessed up and went down to retrieve four healthy 22-to-23-day-old 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! Amy and John went down to get the nestling falcons, Dave and Sophia banded on top, and Amy and John returned them. Curious about what the Castle Rock eyrie looks like? Watch this video:



Curious about what the Castle Rock eyrie looks like? Watch this video: <https://youtu.be/mHsbnJ54lll>.

Name	Sex	Color Band	BBL Band
Shep	Male	A/78 bl/blu	1156-23790
Mark	Male	C/90 bl/blu	1156-23791
Manu	Male	A/79 bl/blu	1156-23792
Nora	Female	98/X bl/blu	1947-50641

Year falcons first nested: 2002 | Total number of young produced (2021): 38

Maiden Rock: Maiden Rock State Bluff Natural Area, Pepin County WI

Adult Data

Adults are unknown

Nesting Data

Hatch began: May 9

Banding date: June 3 | Site visits:
March 9, March 28, April 1, April 6,
April 22, April 23, May 4, June 3

It was extremely hot when we came to band on June 3. The falcons had moved upstream roughly 800 feet and we had no ground guidance, but we found the eyrie in just two rappels with help from google maps and some preset markers placed across from the eyrie. Dave Kester rappelled down to the eyrie, Amy rappelled down to a ledge above it, and John Howe banded on top with the help of Dean Edlin, his DNR crew, and Joe and Abbie Krumrie. The production count for this site was four but we only banded two, since the little falcons were old enough to run away and we didn't want to push them towards the end of the ledge.



Wisconsin

The little falcons had no ectoparasites and were healthy and well-fed. Turkey vultures and bald eagles could not get near that end of the bluff without a chase, but fortunately the adults were not nearly so aggressive towards us!

Name	Sex	Color Band	BBL Band
Lorrie	Female	H/73 bl/blu	1947-43839
Nina	Female	H/72 bl/blu	1947-43840

Year falcons first nested: 2001 | Total number of young produced (2021): 46

Twin Bluff Complex: Nelson, Buffalo County WI

Adult Data

Adults are unknown

Nesting Data

Hatch began: May 13

Banding date: June 3 | Site visits:

March 9, April 1, April 6, April 22, May 4, June 3

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. They chose the nest box this year and Amy learned that we can see inside it from the parking lot of the Nelson Fire Department: just be sure to leave plenty of room for emergency vehicles. Dave and John banded and Amy and John rappelled. The male was a footy little monster!

We need to consider rock fall here. There are two dangerous 'noses' that threaten climbers and the nest box.

Name	Sex	Color Band	BBL Band
Charlotte	Female	99/X bl/blu	1947-50642
Ingie	Female	H/47 bl/blu	1947-43841
Stoddard	Male	13/U bl/blu	1156-23793

Year falcons first nested: 2014 | Total number of young produced (2021): 29 | Sites in complex: 3

Wisconsin

Greshik's Bluff: Fountain City, Buffalo County WI

Adult Data

Adults are unknown

Nesting Data

Hatch began: May 13

Banding date: June 6 | Site visits:

March 9, April 22, April 29, June 6

This is the first time in years that this site has been productive! The falcons were around 18 days old and in good health, and the adults were not at all aggressive. Dave Kester and Amy Ries banded, and John and Amy rappelled



down to the nest box. The north side of the nestbox's roof was damaged by a rock strike, so we'll need to consider patching or replacing the entire box at some point.

Name	Sex	Color Band	BBL Band
Rachel	Indeterminate	H/36 bl/blu	1947-50616
Rebecca	Female	H/37 bl/blu	1947-50617

We were really pleased to see this nest box come back online! We've long wondered why it has failed year after year. For a while, we thought it might be heat-related: we've found addled eggs here and this nest box is in the sun almost all day long. But it was very hot this year and the nest box was still productive. There could be a serious blackfly problem in wet years or territorial competition for the site – an on-again, off-again problem at a lot of our nest boxes. We'll be watching this site closely next year.

Year falcons first nested: 2008 | Total number of young produced (2021): 5

US Bank: City of La Crosse, La Crosse County WI

Adult Data

Adult female: 41/P Ostrina (black/blue), a 2016 hatch from the Alliant Lansing Bluff
Adult male: 09/D Riley (black/red), a 2015 hatch from Xcel Energy Blackdog

Nesting Data

Hatch began: May 13

Banding date: June 7 |

Ken and Amy Ries replaced the nest box in December of 2020. The new box is shut with stainless steel hurricane



Wisconsin

hangers and painted with UV-resistant outdoor paint. We'll see how this box ages, but the hurricane hardware was easy to remove and required no additional drilling or box top penetration after we put it in place. The little falcons were 25-27 days old and extremely footy!

We got to hold a public banding this year, which was a ton of fun. Building staff are always excited about the falcons, and the public loves to see them – especially after watching them on grow up on camera. You can watch the US Bank falcons online at <https://www.raptorresource.org/birdcams/additional-falcon-cams/>.

Name	Sex	Color Band	BBL Band
Pikachu	Male	39/U bl/blu	1156-23772
Shadow	Male	40/U bl/blu	1156-23773
Phoenix	Female	H/38 bl/blu	1947-50618

Year falcons first nested: 2006 | Total number of young produced (2021): 45

Hobb's Hollow Bluff: Ferryville, Crawford County WI

Adult Data

Adults are unknown

Nesting Data

Hatch began: May 28

Banding date: June 15 | Site visits:
March 7, March 11, March 19, March 26, April 3, April 5, April 13, April 20, April 27, May 12 June 1, June 15

This was one of two brand new sites in 2021! It took a lot of work and two boats, one crewed by Jon Stravers and one crewed by Bill Smith, for us to find



it. John, Amy, Dave, Sophia, and landowner Richard Lakin went to check it on June 1. Amy rappelled down and found three falcons that were around four days old. When the crew went back on June 15, Amy and John rappelled down and Dave and Sophia banded up top. The eyrie was narrow and very deep, but John was able to round-up all three falcons with the help of an improvised 'falcon grabber' – a long branch with a glove tied to it. My notes say that 'the falcons had some of the biggest crops I've ever seen!' Prey remains included woodpeckers (downy, red-headed, hairy), Baltimore oriole, and blue jay.

The deep pothole – more like a narrow cave! – provided excellent protection from wind, rain, and sunlight, and the soft sandy substrate was excellent for cradling eggs and young falcons. We hope they nest here again!

Name	Sex	Color Band	BBL Band
Smitha	Female	H/45 bl/blu	1947-50652
Maaike	Female	P/37 bl/blu	1947-50625
Lisa	Female	P/35 bl/blu	1947-50643

Year falcons first nested: 2021 | Total number of young produced (2021): 3

Iowa

Bunge America: McGregor, Clayton County IA

Adult Data

Adult female: Bubbles *U/*R, a 2009 hatch from 3M in Cottage Grove, MN
Adult male: K/41, a 2017 hatch from Guider's Bluff in Lansing, Iowa. K/41 appeared in the movie 'Decoding the Driftless'

Nesting Data

Hatch began: April 26
Banding date: May 19 | Site visits:
May 1, May 18, May 19

Dave and Sophia banded the falcons at our first site this year! There were three unhatched eggs and one nestling about 23 days of age. This nest box can easily be watched from Ann's Point in Pike's Peak State Park. Drive around to the back of the bluff, park in the DNR parking lot, and walk up the trail. Follow the signs to Ann's Point and you'll come to the top of the hill. Admire the stunning river scenery or train your binoculars on the nest box and see if you can get a band number!



Name	Sex	Color Band	BBL Band
Asi	Male	10/U bl/blu	1266-07902

Year falcons first nested: 2010 | Total number of young produced (2021): 27

Alliant Lansing Cliff: Lansing, Allamakee County IA

Adult Data

Adults are unknown

Nesting Data

Hatch began: May 7
Banding date: June 1 | Site visits:
March 11, March 19, March 26, June 1, June 16

It was about 100 degrees when we came to band here last year, the place was swarming with blackflies, and for some reason we had scheduled two of our hardest access points on the same day! This year, the weather was cooler, we were careful not to schedule two hard sites back-to-back, and we got permission to drive up to the top, which is a lot easier than coming in from below. All three falcons looked great and, for the first time in years, there were no blackflies! We were thrilled beyond belief to band three healthy falcons.



Iowa

We need to replace one of the two nest boxes on the cliff: a rock knocked part of the top in and the wood is starting to weaken. It also wouldn't hurt to do some trimming on this bluff, which is overgrown with honeysuckle.

Name	Sex	Color Band	BBL Band
Wangari	Female	96/X bl/blu	1947-50639
Winona	Female	97/X bl/blu	1947-50640
Pammel	Male	A/77 bl/blu	1156-23789

Year falcons first nested: 1999 | Total number of young produced (2021): 41

Guider's Bluff: Lansing, Allamakee County Iowa

Adult Data

Adults are unknown

Nesting Data

Hatch began: May 11

Banding date: June 1 | Site visits: March 11, March 19, March 26, June 1, June 16

2021 marked the first year this nest box was successful since 2018. The dry weather greatly reduced blackfly populations, but one of the falcons was badly infested with hippoboscids and died. We treated the remaining three with Endure and Bill Smith reported a falcon on site on June 16.

Name	Sex	Color Band	BBL Band
Ada	Female	H/46 bl/blu	1947-43836
Shimek	Male	11/U bl/blu	1266-07903
Lacey	Male	12/U bl/blu	1266-07904

Year falcons first nested: 2010 | Total number of falcons produced (2021): 11 | Number of sites in complex: 2

Fire Point: Effigy Mounds National Monument, Allamakee County IA

Adult Data

Adults are unknown

Nesting Data

Hatch began: May 15

Banding date: June 2 | Site visits:
April 5, May 12, June 2

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.



Iowa

Once the falcons were ready for fledge, we hacked them from Hanging Rock at Effigy Mounds National Monument, releasing nine falcons a year in 1998 and 1999. In 2000, one of Bob’s releases nested on Queen’s Bluff in southeastern Minnesota and in 2001, one nested on Maiden Rock. Urban/industrial falcons quickly followed. While not all sites are successful every year, we have recorded falcons nesting on well over 20 river cliffs since 2000 and falcons returned to nest at Fire Point in Effigy Mounds National Monument in 2020.

We had a great time banding the 17-to-18-day-old falcons this year and were really pleased that park staff could join us for the event. The young falcons were feisty, but they charmed everyone who saw them!

Name	Sex	Color Band	BBL Band
Iowa	Female	H/75 bl/blu	1947-43837
Omaha	Female	H/74 bl/blu	1947-43838
Ponca	Male	13/U bl/blu	1266-08000

Year falcons first nested: 2020 | Total number of young produced (2021): 5

Dubuque Courthouse, Dubuque, Dubuque County IA

Adult Data

Adult female: She-Beast bl/blu D/20, a falcon that Dave Kester banded as an adult here in 2019

Adult male: Jeff bl/r 58/N, a 2013 hatch from the Savanna Silo in Savanna IL

Nesting Data

Hatch began: May 19

Banding date: June 10 | Site visits: June 10



This is an interesting site to reach.

You climb a ladder up to the nest tray, where She-Beast is waiting to run at your face. If you can’t catch She-Beast, you’ll be dealing with her as you try to stay on the ladder, load falcons, and lower the kennel – which is exactly what Dave had to deal with this year! It was interesting to see prey remains on the balcony. Although pigeon is a common bird in urban nest boxes, we were surprised to find a red-winged blackbird, a meadowlark, several yellow-billed cuckoos, and a downy woodpecker.

You can watch the Dubuque Courthouse nest box here: <https://www.dubuquecountyiowa.gov/385/Courthouse-Falcons>. Thank you to Dubuque County Conservation and the courthouse for allowing us to band this year!

Name	Sex	Color Band	BBL Band
Anna	Female	H/39 bl/blu	1947-50619
Windsong	Female	H/40 bl/blu	1947-50620
Greta	Female	H/41 bl/blu	1947-50621

Year falcons first nested: 2017 | Total number of young produced (2021): 12

Illinois

411 Hamilton Building: Peoria, Peoria County IL

Adult Data

Adults are unknown

Nesting Data

Hatch began: April 23, 2021 | Site visits: May 26, May 29

RRP founder Bob Anderson and Board member Jim Robison installed a nest on the 411 back in 2004.

Unfortunately the local falcons nested on a bridge instead, which increased the chance that fledgling birds would end up in the water and drown. We

were thrilled when they finally moved to the 411 Building back in 2016. While Peoria is a little out of our normal stomping grounds, we have to make the trip! We split into teams and RRP director John Howe made the long drive to band falcons with Jim. We had two healthy females and a rather independent male, newly named Charlie, that took charge and watched us banding his sisters.

Note the early hatch date on these falcons. While all of our falcons are spring nesters, the southern tier of Midwestern states tends to be a little earlier than the norther tier – and lay and hatch dates have been creeping earlier since 1987. You can learn more about that here:

<https://www.raptorresource.org/raptorresource/pdf/AverageNesting.pdf>.



Name	Sex	Color Band	BBL Band
Sheri	Female	H/29 bl/blu	1947-50609
Holly	Female	H/30 bl/blu	1947-50610
Charlie	Male	08/U bl/blu	1156-23761

Year falcons first nested: 2016 | Total number of young produced (2021): 8

Failed and Unbanded Sites

Alma Marina: Alma, Buffalo County WI

Amy found this site occupied on April 1, 6, 22, May 4, May 26, and June 6. We think the female went into full incubation sometime in mid-April. However, she was never able to pinpoint the eyrie and never saw or heard young. Landowner Mark Noll took her out to the top of the bluff on June 6th and she checked three possible locations that we had pinpointed from below with no luck.

Did this site fail? There were at least three nestling GHO in a pothole on the north end of the cliff. On May 26, Amy saw the adult female falcon swooping at the pothole, although she did not enter it and the GHO stayed well back from the entrance.

Fountain City: Hole in the Wall, Buffalo County WI

Amy found peregrine(s) present here on April 1 and Bill Smith found falcons present on April 29. We did not see falcons here after April 29, but this is a very difficult site to monitor from the road.

Goose Island Bluff: Goose Island County Park, La Crosse County WI

John found a peregrine present at this site on May 5, although we don't know whether they attempted to nest. We will watch this site more closely next year.

Monehen's Bluff: Lynxville, Crawford County WI

Several observers saw falcons at this site between March 19 and April 20, but we did not see falcons here after about April 20th. We think they might have gone upstream to Hobb's Hollow, since observers never saw both sites occupied at the same time. However, Hobb's Hollow is more than two miles north of this location, so we could presumably have falcons at both. I sometimes wonder if territorial fighting doesn't limit the number of falcons in this highly desirable territory. Every year, we see falcons at three or four large cliffs in March and April, but only one pair seems to end up nesting here.



Wyalusing Quarry: Wyalusing, Grant County WI

Once again, this site failed. John and Sophia rappelled down and found two eggs. The eggs were pale, but the reddish-brown markings were quite vivid and did not look rolled or sun-faded. We kept an eye on the box since the female had been incubating the eggs, but we saw no further signs of nesting and the quarry appeared abandoned by mid-July.

Glen Haven on the Dugway Road: Glen Haven, Grant County WI

Bill and Mark Blackbourn found a pair of falcons present here on May 1 and Bill found an adult male on June 10. We do not know whether this site was successful, although we think it was not based on Bill and Brett Mandernack's observations.

De Soto Bay Bluff: De Soto, Vernon County WI

Bill found this site occupied by a pair of adults on March 11 & 26 & June 16. However, we were not able to connect with the landowners and don't know what happened here.

Failed and Unbanded Sites



Maassen's Bluff, Buffalo County WI

The falcons here were too old to band, but we were able to get some good video of three healthy young falcons from the highway below. This was a bit of a surprise since we banded here on June 8 last year. We're not sure why, but the falcons advanced their schedule by two weeks here. We're adding this site to the early list for sure!

Bellevue State Park, Bellevue, Jackson County IA

The female was a brown immature falcon. Although a male had been feeding her, she didn't lay eggs. We hope she returns next year!

Leo's Bluff III: Yellow River State Forest, Allamakee County IA

It took quite a few trips to find the eyrie this year! The falcons were nesting upriver of their usual cliff. The cliff was about 370 feet high and the falcons appeared to be nesting as far down as 200 feet, but we thought we would give it a try. Even the approach was formidable – if

we ever try to band here again, we need to pack a rope just for that! Amy and Dave had got into place to start the rappel when Bill called. The young falcons were 38/40 days old – far too old for us to band!

This must have been our earliest northern nest this year. These falcons would have to have begun hatching on or around April 23rd! We could easily have banded here on May 13. We'll put this whole area on the early list for next year's monitoring and banding work.

Rose Spur Quarry, Dubuque County IA

This new site was reported by Bill Smith and Mark Blackbourne. We verified that peregrines were on site and incubating eggs, but when Amy went to check the site, there were no young. The eyrie was in a precarious spot on a narrow ledge below a crack. The site may have failed following a storm or raccoon predation. Thanks to Tom Mercer and River City Stone for allowing us access to the site!

Eagle Point Bluff, Dubuque County: failed

Staff at CR Boats told us that great horned owls had, in their words "chased the falcons away". Falcons are spotted almost every season, but the site has never been successful that we know. We hope they choose another spot.

Aggie's Bluff, Allamakee County: failed

We did not see or hear falcons at Aggie's Bluff during six observation periods from April through early June.

Xcel Riverside: Minneapolis, Hennepin County MN

We haven't seen falcons in the nest box for the past two years, but a local watcher reported an adult and fledgling falcon on plant grounds in mid-to-late June. The two were spending a lot of time there and the adult brought food in at least once. Are they nesting somewhere on a plant roof, or did they switch to another building? We'll see if they turn up here next year!

Bald Eagles

Decorah Eagles



After at least 17 years of nesting within 700 feet of the retention pond, the Decorah eagles built a nest in a dead tree located about 1.7 miles away from the fish hatchery. Eagle watchers Sue and Benny Bruhling found the new nest in early December of 2020 and we confirmed their find in January. We didn't have time to install new cameras, but Robin Brumm and Scott Iverson kept us well-informed with regular trips to the nest.

Do we plan to install cameras at N3 now? We don't. The landowner was not interested and the nest tree is dead, so we would not climb it to install cameras even if we had access. We talked about getting a permit to remove the dead tree but decided against it. As much as we miss Mom and DM2, it seems wrong to remove their nest tree just to try to get them to move. We'll do our best to keep reporting from the ground and keep our fingers crossed!

If you'd like to read Robin's boots-on-the-ground reports, go to <https://www.raptorresource.org/tag/day-trip/>. To see where the eaglets go after they disperse, visit our interactive maps at <https://www.raptorresource.org/learning-tools/eagle-map/>.

Egg Laying Egg-laying began on February 24th or 25th.	Fledging Fledge began on or around June 20.
Hatching Hatch began on April 4th or April 5th. Robin Brumm confirmed three nestlings on April 16.	Camera Work Camera work began on September 8 and concluded on September 25.

39 eaglets have been produced in four nests since we began counting in 2008

Bald Eagles

Decorah North Eagles



2021 marked DNF's third year as a mother that we are aware of. Back in 2019, she was clearly learning as she went about instinctual activities like nest building, brooding, incubating, and caring for young. By 2021, she was an old hand! Watchers enjoyed seeing her devoted, skillful care and all of us appreciated the first blackfly-free year since at least 2018. While we saw a tiny bit of headshaking and scratching, it was nothing compared to the swarms of blackflies in 2020 and 2019. DN13 and DN14 had strong, successful fledges and it was fun to watch them learn about life above and beyond the North Nest for a good part of the summer!

As of this report, Mr. North and DNF are busy with nestorations for the 2021/2022 season! You can watch them live here: <https://www.raptorresource.org/birdcams/decorah-north-nest/> and here: <https://explore.org/livecams/raptor-resource-project/decorah-eagles-north-nest>.

Egg Laying Egg #1: February 16, 2021 @ 1:44 PM CT Egg #2: February 19, 2021 @ 1:05 PM CT	Fledge DN13 fledged @ 9:18 AM on June 11, 2021 (78 days) DN14 fledged @ 5:02 PM on June 18, 2021 (83 days)
Egg Hatching DN13 hatched @ 7:21 AM CT on March 25, 2021 We saw DN14 for the first time on March 27, 2021 @ 7:21 AM	Camera Work Camera work began on September 8 and concluded on September 25.

14 eaglets have been produced in two nests since we began counting in 2016

Bald Eagles

Xcel Energy Fort St. Vrain Eagles



Pa FSV was replaced by a new male between the 2019 season and the 2021 season. Since both eagles were banded, we thought we had the same male. But some sharp-eyed watchers noticed that his band had switched from his left leg to his right. The presence of a new male explained so much, including Ma's later schedule. She typically began laying eggs right around Valentine's Day but didn't start this year until March 4th. Ma laid three eggs, but one of them was crushed by falling ice on March 15 and FSV43 died of unknown causes not long after hatch.

Like many first-time mates, Pa Jr. was learning this year. Fortunately, Ma FSV is an experienced, excellent teacher, and Pa Jr. was a good learner. FSV44 thrived under their care and fledged on July 6. He was trapped by Colorado Parks and Wildlife and fitted with a transmitter: part of a larger study to help understand population trends, habitat use, and impacts of human disturbance on bald eagles along the state's most densely populated corridor. As of their last post, FSV44 had dispersed north to Wyoming with three other juveniles that COPW was tracking.

<p>Egg Laying Egg #1: March 4, 2021 @ 5:17 PM. Egg #2: March 7, 2021 @ 5:10 PM. Egg #3: March 10, 2021 @ 6:30 PM. <i>One of the eggs was crushed by ice on March 15.</i></p> <p>Egg Hatching April 14, 2021: FSV43 hatched at 6:17 AM April 17, 2021: FSV44 hatched, time unknown <i>FSV43 died of unknown causes on April 16</i></p>	<p>Fledge FSV44 fledged on July 6 (80 days)</p> <p>Camera Work Camera work began on August 24 and concluded on August 26</p>
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26 eaglets have been fledged since we began counting in 2006

American Kestrels

American Kestrels: Wisconsin



2021 marked the fourth year of our American Kestrel Cam with Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Neil Rettig, and Laura Johnson. Watchers might remember that this nest failed last year when the female disappeared. Would it be successful this year? It was! Neil and Laura attracted a pair of kestrels into the nest box located on their barn. It was a great year for the birds: almost no blackflies, excellent weather, and perfect fledges! The kestrels laid five eggs, five kestrels hatched, and five kestrels fledged!

Watch this cam live here: <https://www.raptorresource.org/birdcams/american-kestrels/> and here: <https://www.allaboutbirds.org/cams/american-kestrels/>.

Get In Touch!

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

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