

Peregrine Falcon Fact Sheet for...



- Peregrine falcons returned to Cape Meares NWR in 1984.
- Peregrines have nested at Cape Meares NWR yearly since 1987.
- Wildlife monitoring system and viewing deck built in 2003 will aid in viewing and interpretation opportunities related to peregrine falcons.

Breeding/nesting

- Peregrines regularly use cliff ledges—safe from predators—for nesting sites, or aeries. They scrape a small depression in the rocky soil. In cities, they use skyscrapers. Peregrines hatch 3-4 fuzzy white chicks.
- January: courtship begins with diving displays
- mid-April: female incubates eggs
- Mid-May: eggs hatch after 34 days of incubation
- End of June: chicks leave nest after 5-6 weeks

Conservation

- In 1970 less than 100 peregrine falcons were left in the country due to DDT. The eastern US population vanished. There were very few peregrines in OR and WA.
- DDT was a widely used pesticide that accumulated in the food chain, harming top predators like peregrines. Females laid eggs with thin shells that were easily broken. DDT was banned in the US in 1972.
- The Peregrine Fund began a captive breeding program in 1970 and has released 4,000 peregrine chicks to the wild.
- As of 1998, there were 1650 peregrine pairs in the US. Peregrines were de-listed from Endangered Species status in 1999. They continue to be monitored closely.

Feeding

- As part of the falcon family, peregrines strike prey with talons.
- Dives to attack prey at speeds of up to 200 mph, making it the fastest animal in the world.
- Peregrines feed on other birds, often striking in flight and then following fallen prey to ground.