



CONSERVE WILDLIFE
FOUNDATION OF NEW JERSEY

2010 Peregrine Updates from Nestbox News

In cooperation with NJ Division of Fish and Wildlife, Endangered and Nongame Species Program

7/27/2010

The live camera is offline since the peregrine young have fledged. The camera will be back online next year in March.

6/16/2010

The birds have flown the coop! We presume that the chicks took their first flights late last week and over the weekend. One of them ended up on the road on Friday morning and was quickly transported to the The Raptor Trust in Millington, NJ. The bird has a fractured clavicle but is doing reasonably well. They will x-ray her wing again this weekend and it is hopeful that she will be returned to her Jersey City birthplace.



At this time of the year, we must rely on volunteer nestbox watchers to provide information about the newly fledged chicks. Volunteer peregrine watcher Mike Girone filed this report:

I visited Jersey City today (Tuesday, June 15) from 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. on the corner of Washington St. & Columbus Ave.

As soon as I set-up, I saw a juvenile flying around the western side of 101 Hudson (probably the one that fledged on Sunday). She did a lot of flapping but also some fairly controlled glides and even a brief hover above the box. She then landed on the 41st floor roof in the area of the box. Both adults were on parapets next to and just west of the box, looking down at the 2 roof areas. Both adults at times flew north on the hunt, but came back empty-taloned.

From 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. I occasionally saw a juvenile hopping up to the 41st floor ledge east of the box. I don't know if it was the flier each time, or if it was one of the other juveniles. I never saw more than one bird at any one time. The adults were keeping



an eye on the roof area where all 3 were perched on Saturday, so I think at least one was on that roof and just out of view while I was there. The adults did swoop by that area a few times in what looked like an attempt to get someone up and flying.

At noon, both adults took off and began soaring over and north of 101 Hudson. While watching them, I spotted a 3rd peregrine very high up and flying from east to west steadily and without stopping. The adults stayed in the air for several minutes but didn't attempt to go up to the intruder. After a few minutes they settled down and landed back on 101.

The Sunday fledgling seems to be doing quite well and quickly learning how to use her wings. Wish I had seen all 3, but the parents were watching the 2 roof areas, so I think they were just not visible from the street (or it could've been different juveniles hopping up on the ledge). I will be back down Thursday morning.

It is a bittersweet time of year for us PeregrineCam watchers. With the birds taking to the skies, the active nestbox season is coming to a close. We will still catch glimpses of the chicks as they stop to rest and seek shelter in the nestbox but the activity in the nest and the excitement that it brings has nearly come to an end. But we can find joy in knowing that these birds are just beginning their journey to become top hunters of the sky.

6/10/2010

The chicks are now mobile, exploring the rooftop. At five weeks of age, they exercise their wings and legs and watch their parents move across the sky. All the chicks are roughly the same size and can expect to fledge around the same time, which should be around six or seven weeks of age. Also notice that they are beginning to grow their adult feathers and lose their downy white plumage. The chicks are growing fast and soon they will be taking to the skies of Jersey City and beyond!

5/27/2010

Tuesday was banding day at 101 Hudson Street and some CWF staffers were lucky enough to attend. CWF staff, Kathy Clark, Principal Zoologist with the NJ Endangered Species Program, and a couple of dedicated volunteers arrived at the building at 9:30 and were escorted up to the 41st floor by building management staff. Kathy got busy setting up the banding materials. Then she headed to the rooftop to collect the four chicks. From

another door, the rest of us watched the scene unfold. As soon as the door was opened, the adults were aggressively defending the nest and chicks. Kathy, and volunteer Mike, used an open umbrella to shield themselves from the attacks and quickly collected the chicks and moved them inside.

All four chicks were given a quick health check, their bills and talons were measured, and each bird was outfitted with 2 leg bands. Kathy placed a black federal leg band on the left leg of each chick. These bands have a unique code that can be used to identify the bird if ever recaptured in the future. On the right leg, Kathy fitted a green over black band with large numbers that will be easier to read from a distance. Green over Black signifies that it is a bird that was banded in New Jersey. These bands are like birth certificates and can help biologists to identify how far these birds travel once they leave the nest.

Just recently, we learned that a 101 Hudson Street offspring is nesting in Connecticut. In [June, 2005](#), three peregrine chicks were banded at 101 Hudson Street. One of them was a female with color band with the code V/5. Recently, this bird was resighted nesting on a cliff in New Haven, CT. The nest is located in [East Rock Park](#), a city park with an interesting rocky ridge. A river and reservoir system lie at the base of the cliff where V/5 is nesting, so she and her mate have an excellent territory for roosting, foraging, and breeding: an inaccessible cliff face, extensive open space, nearby bodies of water, and abundant food sources – especially pigeons. Park staff and volunteers are monitoring our Jersey City alumni and its mate. She has been nesting there since 2009.

All 4 chicks in the nest this year are believed to be females. They are all similar in size, indicating that they are all well fed and no one chick is particularly dominant at feeding time. Keep watching – the chicks are growing quickly and they will become increasingly more mobile in the coming weeks.

5/12/2010

Biologist Kathy visited the nestbox early this week to give the nestlings a health check.

All four of the hatchlings are in good health and close in size. Each chick was given a dose of medicine to prevent Trichomoniasis, a pigeon-borne disease that can kill young peregrines. They will get a second and final dose in two weeks at banding time.

We were able to verify that the adults are the same two birds that have nested here in recent years. The male is banded with a bicolor band that reads *2/*6 (black over green), banded in 2003 at Riverside Church in New York City. The female wears only a silver band (no color band) and we have not been able to



read her band to know her origin. She is fiercely protective of her nest and her chicks, divebombing Kathy and volunteers who helped with the health check. The female continues to own the sky in and around 101 Hudson Street in Jersey City!

Within minutes of the chicks' return to the nest box, the female was back in the nest brooding her young. During the frequent feedings viewers can see that the four chicks love to eat, and will keep the adults busy hunting pigeons and other birds in the neighborhood.



Notice the size of the peregrine falcons legs and feet. They are disproportionately large in relation to the size of their bodies. Their large feet help them to capture prey, primarily other birds such as pigeons, starling, and sparrows.

5/10/2010

All four chicks have hatched. Peregrine falcon chicks are altricial, meaning they are born in a relatively underdeveloped state. With only a first coat of down for protection, newborn hatchlings are not able to regulate their own body temperature. One of the adults will be brooding them at all times, and the best chance of catching a glimpse will occur when the adults change places on the nest, or when feeding occurs.

At 12:30 today, I witnessed an adult (most likely the female) bring in some food and proceed to tear it up and feed it to the chicks. The male does most of the hunting and then delivers the food to the female. Peregrines eat other birds and in Jersey City their diet consists mostly of pigeons, with the occasional starling or songbird. Feedings are frequent but brief, since the small chicks cannot eat much at a single feeding.

The adults are very careful around the young, both in feeding and brooding them, and the hatchlings are small but they grow fast. Activity in the nestbox will get more interesting as the chicks develop quickly, reaching adult size in approximately 7 to 8 weeks.

5/4/2010

This morning two eggs have hatched. We expect the other two to hatch in the next 24 hours.

5/3/2010

The technical issues have been resolved. The Live Feed is restored.

4/27/2010

There are technical issues with the live video feed. The still pictures are still transmitting and you can view them at the NJ Division of Fish & Wildlife's website. We hope to have the live feed up soon.

In the meantime, the adults are patiently incubating the eggs which should begin hatching in about a week. The hours and days spent incubating the eggs seem endless, but this period is vital for the survival of the eggs. The peregrines must maintain the eggs at a temperature of approximately 96 degrees, allowing proper development of the embryos inside. You may notice that they turn the eggs a couple time of day to evenly incubate the eggs (and make sure that the contents don't stick to the sides of the eggshell). During the incubation period, the eggs are not left alone; on a warm day we may catch a glimpse of the eggs for a minute or two, but those breaks are few and far between and an adult usually returns quickly to continue caring for the eggs.

4/14/2010

Incubation of the four eggs began on or around April 1st. The eggs are cream colored but are heavily spotted and streaked reddish-brown. Peregrines are synchronous hatchers, meaning all the eggs hatch at about the same time. The chicks are roughly the same size and develop at the same rate.

Incubation lasts between 32 and 34 days. The female does the majority of the incubation but the male will take over when the female needs to stretch her wings and eat.

When do you think the eggs will hatch? Email your classroom's guess to Maria Grace. The class who guesses the closest will receive a special prize.

4/7/2010

The female has laid a full clutch of eggs. The eggs will now be incubated for 32-33 days. The eggs are kept at a temperature of 98 degrees. Females do the majority of incubation. She may occasionally take breaks. The male will take her place when she temporarily leaves the nestbox. Hatching should occur in early May.