



STILLMAN NATURE CENTER

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PEREGRINE FALCON (*Falco peregrinus*)

Identifying Marks: Wingspan 3.5 feet; length 15-21 inches. Has slate-blue back and wings, and a dark barred tail. A dark moustache-like stripe runs down the side of the face. Feathers on the belly are lighter in color.

Habitat: Cliff-dwelling birds that can be found worldwide in regions as diverse as desert canyons, temperate zones, and the arctic tundra.

Nest: Scrapes out a nest on cliff ledges, usually overlooking a river, lake, or coastline. Will use the ledges of tall city buildings.

Diet: Feeds almost exclusively on live birds.

Voice: Alarm call a slow, rising, raucous *cack, cack, cack, cack, cack*.

URBAN PEREGRINE FALCON TIMELINE: Decades to Recovery

Before 1940

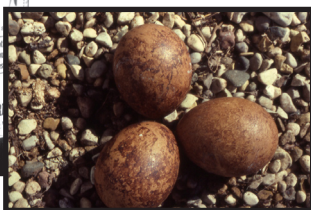
350 pairs of peregrine falcons nest east of the Mississippi River.

1951 — 1964

Peregrines disappear from the eastern United States due to widespread use of the insecticide DDT. In Illinois, peregrines last nest in 1951.

1972 — 1973

Most uses of DDT are banned in the United States. The peregrine falcon is placed on the Endangered Species List.



Peregrine eggs. DDT inhibits calcium metabolism leading to thin, easily broken eggshells. DDT was once a commonly used household chemical.

1975 — 1980

More than 250 captive-bred falcons are released at 20 locations, including cities, in nine eastern states. In 1980, first successful breeding of released falcons takes place.



Outside mural on Chicago's near West Side.

1986

Under the leadership of Mark Spreyer (Stillman's Executive Director), Chicago starts its peregrine release program.

1988

Chicago hosts the first nest of peregrines anywhere in Illinois in 37 years. Across the country over the preceding three years, 21 pairs of urban falcons raise approximately 45 fledglings.

1993

More than 100 peregrine falcon nests are counted east of the Mississippi River.

1999

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service removes the peregrine falcon from the Endangered Species List. About 1,600 pairs are breeding in the U.S. and Canada.

Today

Unfortunately, all of the raptors kept at Stillman, including the peregrine, have been permanently injured and can't be released back to nature.

However, you would be unable to see any peregrines were it not for the nationwide effort to save this once-endangered species.



Female feeding chicks at Chicago's first nest located on a building's ledge at Adams and Wacker.