

Peregrine Falcon

Falco peregrinus

Guidelines for Landowners Using Conservation Practices

Missouri Department of
Conservation

Common name ▪ Peregrine Falcon
Scientific name ▪ *Falco peregrinus*
State status ▪ Endangered
Federal status ▪ None

Ecology

Peregrine falcons are found on every continent except Antarctica. They breed in the arctic tundra through Europe and North America, and south into Africa, South America, the Pacific Islands and Australia. During the winter, North American peregrines migrate from breeding grounds in the north to as far south as the tip of South America. Peregrines inhabit open areas usually associated with high cliffs and bluffs over rivers and coasts. In Missouri, these falcons are observed most often during spring and fall migration, especially in areas with high concentrations of shorebirds and waterfowl. Currently, the only known nesting pairs are using buildings, bridges or power plants near Kansas City and St. Louis. Adults lay two to six eggs per clutch. Eggs are incubated for 30 to 32 days, and young fly from the nest after about five to six weeks. Peregrine falcons are aerial predators that mostly prey on birds, but they will also eat amphibians, insects, and mammals.

Reasons for Decline

In the eastern United States, declines of peregrine falcons began in the 1940s when environmental contaminants were introduced. By 1970, peregrine falcon numbers had decreased to the point that there were no known nesting pairs in the eastern United States. Contaminants, such as DDT, built up in the fatty tissue of the birds that preyed on contaminated prey species, causing the birds to lay thin-shelled eggs that often broke under the incubating parent before chicks hatched. Once DDT was banned in 1972, peregrine falcon populations

began to increase with the help of captive rearing and release programs. Current threats to the populations include human disturbance of nesting birds, alteration of nesting and wintering habitat, and continued use of environmental contaminants.



Recommendations

While many peregrine falcons have begun nesting on tall buildings and power plant exhaust towers in urban areas throughout the United States, it is important to maintain natural open areas, especially near streams, rivers and wetlands for these birds. Avoid human disturbances around known nest sites.

Refer to Management Recommendations for Construction Projects Affecting Missouri Wetlands and Management Recommendations for Construction Projects Affecting Missouri Streams and Rivers for additional guidelines.

Consider the balance between adverse and beneficial practices when determining the overall effect of a conservation practice.

Beneficial Practices

- Maintain and/or restore open wetland habitats where appropriate.
- Maintain the availability of food sources for falcons by promoting feeding and roosting sites for waterfowl and shorebirds.

Adverse Practices

- Construction and clearing activities occurring within 5,000 feet of areas where peregrine falcons are reproducing (April 15 to July 15).
- Unmanaged application of pesticides, animal waste or fertilizers that destroy or degrade habitats that support populations of this species.
- Destruction or degradation of wetland and riparian communities.

Information Contacts

Missouri Department of Conservation
Policy Coordination Section
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2901 W. Truman Blvd
Jefferson City, MO 65102-0180
Telephone: 573-751-4115

<http://www.mdc.mo.gov/nathis/endangered/>

Missouri Department of Natural Resources
Division of Environmental Quality
P.O. Box 176
Jefferson City, MO 65102-0176
Telephone: 800-361-4827 / 573-751-1300

<http://www.dnr.mo.gov/env/index.html>

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Regulatory Branch
700 Federal Building
601 E. 12th Street
Kansas City, MO 64106-2896
Telephone: 816-389-3990

<http://www.nwk.usace.army.mil/>

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Water, Wetlands, and Pesticides Division
901 North 5th Street
Kansas City, KS 66101
Telephone: 913-551-7003 / 800-223-0425

<http://www.epa.gov/region7/>

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Ecological Services Field Office
101 Park DeVille Dr., Suite A
Columbia, MO 65203
Telephone: 573-234-2132

<http://www.fws.gov/midwest/partners/missouri.html>

Legal

The Missouri Department of Conservation prepared these guidelines for conservation practices with assistance from other state agencies, contractors,

and others to provide guidance to those people who wish to voluntarily act to protect wildlife and habitat.

Compliance with these management guidelines is not required by the Missouri wildlife and forestry law or by any regulation of the Missouri Conservation Commission. Other federal, state or local laws may affect construction practices.

“State Endangered Status” is determined by the Missouri Conservation Commission under constitutional authority, and specific requirements for impacts to such species are expressed in the Missouri Wildlife Code, rule 3 CSR 10-4.111.