

2000 Summary

As I sit down to compile this summer's banding information, I find myself extremely elated to report that Peregrine falcons are reclaiming their historic nest sites on the bluffs of the Mississippi River. This spring, Peregrine falcons were observed on no less than eight cliffs along the big river. Three pairs - at Queen's Bluff, Minnesota; Lansing, Iowa; and John Latsch State Park, Minnesota - produced young. This is in no small part due to the peregrine-utility program started by the Raptor Resource Project and Northern States Power Company in 1989. Since that time, a total of 169 young falcons have fledged from twelve utilities along the Mississippi River. These power plants have created a core population that is an activity center for falcons and we are now witnessing power plant-produced falcons crossing over to the cliffs. Who would have ever guessed that a marriage of industry and conservation would prove to be the key for success to returning the falcon to the Mississippi river? The Iowa DNR has also initiated their own series of successful cliff releases from the Dubuque area of Iowa, which should begin yielding nesting falcons in the spring of 2001. May the next eleven years be as productive as the last!

- Bob Anderson, Director, Raptor Resource Project

Queens Bluff, MN

If ever there was a nest site that is special to me it is this one. This cliff is a historic nest site for the Peregrine and to have two adult falcons that I produced claim this large cliff overlooking the river is very rewarding for me. Two of my mentors in falconry were the biologists that banded the young falcons produced at this cliff prior to their extirpation from this area. I hope these two year-old falcons are productive this spring and we can celebrate the return of the Peregrine to its historic place.

One chick fledged here, sex unknown. Was not banded.



John Latsch State Park

Two adult falcons have claimed the nest box high on the vertical wall of the cliff. Several people have been following the comings and goings of the adult falcons, which produced three young.

Three chicks fledged here, sex unknown. None were banded.

Cargill Redwing, MN

We mounted a nest box on the vertical wall of this stack house eight years ago. Finally this spring it attracted two adult falcons that have just recently hatched young. Ken Mueller has been helping keep an eye on this site. For a while it appeared that this site might fail as they seemed to take far too long to hatch their eggs. Ken Mueller confirmed

at least one young falcon in the nest on Friday 6/9/00. To band the young falcons at this plant we will have to repel down a 250' vertical wall.

SEX

Male Was not banded

Cargill Lake City, MN / Maiden Rock, WI

We mounted a nest box at this stack house about seven years ago. This spring an adult male peregrine paired with an immature falcon were often observed at the nest box. When they were not present at the stack house, they could be found across the river at Maiden Rock. The pair was disturbed at the plant nest box early in breeding behavior and they moved off to the Maiden Rock cliff but did not lay eggs.



Northern States Power King Plant: 5/15/00

This is the power plant where it all started. Mae, the resident adult female, has been nesting at this plant for 11 years, producing 28 young. We do not know who the male is this year.

SEX	USFWS #	C Band	Name
Male	2206-28963	U/N	Zack
Female	1807-77605	4/*7	Dot
Female	1807-77606	9/*1	Cassie

First nesting, 1990.

Northern States Power Highbridge: 05/26/00

This is the first year for this plant, located in downtown St. Paul on the Mississippi River. On 05/26/00, Scott Anton, Jon Kerr and I climbed the stack to band three young falcons that hatched at this first-time nesting site. The adult female is a bird named Sophia *3/G (from Monticello) paired with a twelve-year old male named Spanky 04T (a released bird). Spanky and Sophia nested last year under the nearby High Bridge. On 06/27/00, Irvine was found dead on the plant property. He must have been injured shortly after fledging.

Male	2206-28964	L/N	Irvine
Male	2206-28965	G/X	Cherokee
Female	1807-77659	I/*L	Lily

First nesting, 2000.

Minnesota Power Cohasset Facility: 2000

Four young falcons were produced at this plant this spring. However, due to severe weather and the advanced age of the young falcons, I was not able to safely band them. One of the falcons was found injured at the plant and was shipped to a rehab project. This site has produced 24 peregrines in eight years. 1993s Peregrine chicks were the first falcons hatched in Itasca County in over 25 years (first nesting, 1993).

Northern States Power Sherco Facility: 2000

This plant was the second power plant to establish nesting falcons in the mid-west. 36R, the resident female, has been very productive over the years and (as we have witnessed at other sites) has had several mates. However, last fall and throughout the winter, an immature falcon was observed at the plant. This spring the remains of 36R were found below the nest box. The young falcon, "Julie" who hatched at the NSP King plant in 1999, killed 36R. It is interesting to note that she did not migrate to warmer climates this last year. Her famous mother, Mae, also remains on territory at her King plant nest throughout the year. As Dan Orr said, "Evidently the lack of migratory urge evident in Mae is hereditary." To complicate matters even worse, the adult male, D/C, from this plant was killed in an auto collision early this spring. However, Dan reports that Julie is now paired with an adult and this power plant nest site will very probably come back on line next spring. We will very probably see this repeated at other plants over the years. First nesting: 1992. 22 young have been produced here in nine years.

Dairyland Alma: 6/07/00

On 06/07/00, John Thiel and I were joined by Rick Carlton of EPRI to band four healthy young falcons. The nest box at this plant is mounted to the sill of a strobe light about 500' up the stack wall. The adult female at this plant, Alma, was produced by RRP and released at the Holnam Cement Company outside Mason City, Iowa. This falcon is a half sister to MF-1, who was the first returned falcon to successfully fledge young in the mid-continent. Last year, Alma successfully hatched and fledged five young. This spring her mate, 4/*G, was injured in territorial dispute with another falcon named Gamma, who fledged from the NSP Prairie Island plant in 1997. The new male won the battle and claimed both the site and the adult female. The injured male was treated by Laura Johnson and released outside La Crosse. Several people were watching the Alma nest box to determine if the old male would return to do battle, but he did not. A few days after the release, Tim Ellestad observed an adult male in Madison and speculated that this could

Male	2206-28973	G/R	Rick
Male	2206-28974	G/C	Alimak
Male	2206-28975	P/T	Scotty
Female	1807-77667	8/*1	Kim

In 1997, this pair became the first wild pair to produce a Peregrine chick in Western Wisconsin in at least twenty-five years. Sixteen young have been produced here in four years (first nesting, 1997).

Dairyland Genoa: 6/14/00

On 06/14/00 Brad Foss and I banded four young falcons. The adult female is U/W, hatched at the Pulliam Power plant in Green Bay Wisconsin in 1996. The adult male at this plant is V/W, a captive-bred falcon that RRP produced and released at the Consumers Power plant in West Olive, Michigan in 1995.

Male	2206-28976	K/R	JT
Male	2206-28977	H/X	JC
Male	2206-28978	K/U	Gretch
Female	1807-77668	6/*1	Angela

Ten young have been produced here in three years (first nesting, 1998).

Northern States Power Blackdog: 5/19/00

On 05/19/00, Chuck Huske, Mark Danberg and I climbed the stack to check the status of the nest box located just below the top of this stack. We were pleased to find three healthy young falcons that were just old enough to band. The adult female, Nora G/*V (daughter of Chicago-land falcon Franklin), was extremely aggressive. It was very difficult to remove the young falcons for banding without getting struck. She was so aggressive in defending her eyrie that she struck the ladder cage during her stoops to drive us away, and so reckless that I feared for her safety. Mark Danberg suggested that perhaps we could move the nest box over a few feet to provide some protection from defending adults. However, this might not prevent Nora from injuring herself. We will assess the situation next spring.

Female 1807-77656 0/*1 Amanda

Female 1807-77657 0/*E Abby

Female 1807-77658 0/*X Julie

This site has been home to a number of falcons since 1993. A total of 20 young have been produced here (first nesting, 1993).

Alliant Lansing Facility: 6/15/00

This is perhaps our most interesting power plant nest site. The adult female at this plant is *6/V, and the adult male is *T/M, from the NSP Prairie Island plant. Last year the falcons nested in a nest box we had mounted to the cat-walk of the stack at this plant. Early this last spring, we mounted another nest box high on the wall of a nearby cliff. When the adult falcons returned this spring, they were observed bouncing back and forth between both nest boxes. Fortunately, they ended up choosing the cliff nest box. What makes this nest site even more interesting is that there is an active Great Horned Owl nest on the very next cliff to the north. In spite of the presence of this predator, the pair succeeded in fledging four young falcons. However, yesterday I was notified that one of the young falcons, the only female in the clutch, was found dead inside the bottom of the stack. It appears as though the young falcon became trapped, could not escape, and starved. The remaining three young falcons can still be observed on the cliff face. This site is very probably the first cliff site from which young falcons have fledged since the mid-1960s. On June 15th, Pete Olson and I rappelled down the cliff face, removed the four young falcons, and brought them to the bottom of the cliff for banding and blood sampling. We then returned to the cliff top, rappelled back down, and safely returned them to the nest box. I have patiently waited many years to rappel down to an active Peregrine falcon eyrie on a cliff. It was both thrilling and rewarding! I have taken the liberty to name the first cliff-fledged falcons. One is named after Dana Struthers, who recently passed away. Dana was very active in studying the pre-DDT population and over the years gave us hope that we could survive. Another male is named on behalf of Dan Berger, who banded many of young falcons on Mississippi cliffs prior to their extirpation. I've named the third young male Dingleyi on behalf of John Dingley who, over the years, has supported all of our efforts to return the Peregrine falcon back to the cliffs where they belong. Male 2206-28979 K/D named: Dana

Male 2206-28980 G/D named: Berger

Male 2206-28981 M/C named: Dingleyi

Female 1807-77669 3/*7 un-named died post fledging

**Northern States Power Riverside
Facility: 6/06/00**

On 06/06/00 John Tradewell and I climbed the VERY tall ladder at this stack to band the three young hatched at this power plant nest box. Early last spring John installed a state of the art camera with remote control and telephoto capabilities. These features quickly allowed John to confirm the identities of both adults. Female K/*V, produced at the NSP Monticello plant in 1996, paired with adult male *3/*A, who fledged from the NSP Sherco plant in 1998. The images from this camera provided a new nest site for the NSP Bird Cam Internet postings.



Male	2206-28971	L/M	Rocket
Male	2206-28972	G/U	Speedy
Female	1807-77666	2/*2	Spirit

Seven chicks have been produced here in three years (first nesting, 1998).



**Northern States Power Prairie Island:
6/02/00**

On 06/02/00, Dan Orr and I rappelled down from the top of the containment dome to the nest box located on the vertical wall of the dome, where we were pleased to discover four healthy young falcons.

Male	2206-28968	N/G	Kody
Male	2206-28969	K/Y	Quark
Male	2206-28970	L/P	Mew
Female	1807-77665	3/*X	Cleo

We were able to read a partial band number on the adult female and are confident that it is the same bird, 7/1, which has nested at this plant since 1996. The adult male was very elusive and made only a brief appearance before drifting away.

Northern States Power Monticello: 6/02/00

On 06/02/00 Dan Orr and I climbed the off gas stack at this plant and banded four healthy young falcons. Neither of the adult falcons landed to allow us to see or read bands.

Male	2206-28966	G/M	Buzz
Male	2206-28967	M/M	Neil
Female	1807-77660	0/*G	Amelia
Female	1807-77664	3/*U	Doolittle

20 young have been produced here in six years (first nesting, 1995).