

Raptor Resource Project 2010 Annual Banding Report

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2010 Productive Nest Sites

5/25/10: Horizon Milling Lake City, MN Wabasha County.....	4
5/27/10: US Bank Building La Crosse, WI La Crosse County.....	5
5/27/10: Dairyland Power Cooperative Genoa, WI Vernon County	6
5/29/10: P17 (Great Spirit Bluff) La Crescent, MN Houston County	6
6/03/10: Alliant Energy Nelson Dewey Plant Cassville, WI Grant County	7
6/03/10: Lee’s Bluff (P5) Lynxville, WI Crawford County	8
6/05/10: 12-Mile Bluff Alma, Wisconsin Buffalo County	8
6/07/10: Bay State Milling Winona, Minnesota Winona County.....	9
6/07/10: Xcel Energy SHERCO Plant Becker, MN Sherburne County	9
6/07/10: Great River Energy Plant Elk River, MN Sherburne County.....	10
6/08/10 Xcel Energy King Plant Oak Park Heights, MN Washington County	11
6/09/10: Red Wing Grain Stack House Red Wing, MN Goodhue County.....	12
6/09/10: Xcel Energy Prairie Island Plant Goodhue County	13
6/09/10: 3M Facility Cottage Grove, MN Washington County.....	14
6/10/10: Xcel Energy Blackdog Plant Eagan, MN Dakota County	15
6/10/10: Xcel Energy Monticello Plant Monticello, MN Wright County	16
6/11/10: Agri-Bunge Stackhouse MacGregor, IA Allamakee County	17
6/15/10: Minnesota Power and Light Cohasset, MN Itasca County	18
6/15/10: Greysolon Plaza Duluth, MN St. Louis County	19
6/19/10: Riverview Terrace Minneapolis, MN Hennepin County.....	20
6/20/10: P15 (Lansing Bluff) Lansing, IA Allamakee County	21

Unusual Incidents and Unproductive Sites

Maiden Rock, Pepin County, WI.....	23
West Bluff, Pepin County, WI.....	23
P19 (Leo’s Bluff), Waukon Junction, Allamakee County, IA	23
Dead Cow Bluff, Lansing, IA.....	23
Minnesota Power Hibbard Plant, Duluth, MN	23
Falcon Sightings	23

Other Birds

Ospreys	25
Xcel Energy King Plant Oak Park Heights, MN	25
Eagles.....	25
Xcel Energy Fort St. Vrain Plant Platteville, CO	25
Decorah Fish Hatchery Nest Decorah, IA	26
Owls.....	26
Kestrels	27
Xcel Energy Pawnee Station Brush, CO.....	27

Web-Based Resources	28
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2010 Raptor Resource Project Banding Report

2010 was another difficult year for the Mississippi River cliffs. We lost one cliff with adults and a baby, one with eggs, and two where adults were seen copulating or defending cliffs, but failed to lay eggs. In addition to these failures, falcons were never seen, despite intensive monitoring, at three regularly successful nest sites – Homer Bluff, Maassen’s Bluff, and Castle Rock Bluff. In 2008, we banded at nine bluffs. In 2009, we banded at six bluffs. This year, we are down to four bluffs.



We’re not sure what happened. Was it the weather? We had a cold, rainy period during incubation. This could have impacted nest success at Maiden Rock, West Bluff, and Leo’s Bluff. But weather doesn’t explain the disappearance of young and adult falcons at Dead Cow Bluff, or the failure of falcons to appear at Castle Rock, Maassen’s Bluff, or the Homer cliff. Are urban nest boxes acting as a drain, or is something else going on? We don’t know. We would like to call a peregrine symposium this fall to discuss what others are observing and if the data base can help us determine if one population is causing for a decline in another.

Despite the difficulties, we had some great successes. We banded at two new locations: Riverview Terrace in Minneapolis and the Agri-Bunge stackhouse in McGregor, IA. We identified several nest boxes that are old enough to need replacement, installed a new cliff nest box in Nelson, WI, and are hoping to add at least two more falcon cams by next season. We banded 60 young falcons this year: 12 on milling stackhouses (four sites), 8 on buildings (three sites), 10 on cliffs (three sites), and 30 at power plants (nine sites). Six young – three on 12-Mile Bluff and three at 3M – were too old to band.

2010 was also a big year for the Decorah eaglecam. The Raptor Resource Project received a grant from Iowa Audubon to install new color and infrared cameras. Once those were in place, we partnered with Luther College to broadcast the nest online. It was an immediate success! Over 370,000 unique visitors from 125 countries followed the Decorah Bald Eagle family. We confirmed that eagles are active at night, flying to and from the nest and hunting and feeding after dark, and witnessed many other animals using the eagles’ nest for food and shelter, including squirrels, mice, and sparrows. As of late July, all three eaglets were on the wing.

Although banding season is over, our work isn’t done. We intend to install three new cliff nest boxes, rewire the Decorah eaglecam, add two new falcon cams, and redesign the website, which always seems to get lost in the shuffle. Bob, who has learned a great deal about deploying cameras and transmitters over the past year, has begun experimenting with using a remote-controlled glider to film birds in the air. I look forward to seeing that footage!

We wrote the Raptor Resource Project’s 2010 Banding Report with two purposes in mind: firstly, to provide formal banding data for collection and study; and secondly, to share our observations of the falcons and their nests with our members and friends. I would like to thank the many people who helped us this year by humping heavy and awkward gear to the tops of the cliffs, identifying falcons, tracking hatch dates, emailing pictures and observations, and helping with banding. We need more eyes looking for new sites and watching existing ones. You are a crucial part of what we do.

2010 Raptor Resource Project Banding Report

This year, we welcomed back Joan Schnabel, Nora Walkosz, Gary Grunwald, Tim Jacobsen, George Howe and his family, John Thiel, Dan Orr, Brenda Hoskyns, Brett Mandernack, Darryl Councilman, Jeremy Anderson, and Julie O'Conner. We'd also like to give a special hello to teacher Joyce Heille and her fourth grade class, and Rob MacIntyre and everyone else involved in the new Riverview Terrace site. We really appreciate the staff at power plants, stackhouses, and other industrial sites that help us get it all done: Jim Fuchs, Jim Hill, Frank Sperlak, Chuck Bremer, Jim Larson, Jim Carlson, Bill Wardell, and many others.

Bob's new intern, David Hecht, did everything with a smile, including his first rappel. Rhoni Hartsock, an FWS employee, joined us at Lansing bluff, where she helped band and took her first trip down a wall. I hope to see both of them later on this year, when we begin installing cliff nest boxes.

Amy Ries would like to recognize the people on the forum, who are an invaluable source of information. Nora, Dot, Diane, PeggyJean aka GreenCashew, AlisonL, LindaM, King Plant operator, grandmacarol, maple, joe, kittenface, gmabird, and the rest of you, thank you so much for your postings, comments, and contacts. You keep me on my toes and help document behavior at our nests.

Our climbing team this year was comprised of Bob Anderson, Amy Ries, David Hecht, Dave Kester, Brett Mandernack, Ben Ogden, and Neil Rettig, who helped install the new eagle cams and nest box on Twin Bluffs in Nelson, WI. We tackled loose rock, rain, poison ivy, wasps, and Amy the falcon...and everyone is still looking forward to next year!

We hope you enjoy reading our report.

2010 Productive Nest Sites

5/25/10: Horizon Milling | Lake City, MN | Wabasha County

Lat/Long

N 44 26' 30.5"

W092 16' 18.0"

Adult Data

Adult female: b/g 29/A Lolo

Adult male: unknown

Nesting Data

4 eggs laid | 4 young hatched

First egg laid: 3/23/2010

First hatch: 4/29/2010

Female:	1687-30500	50/S	b/r	Sodie
Male:	1126-14174	98/C	b/r	Roger
Male:	1126-14173	97/C	b/r	Bobbie
Male:	1126-14172	96/C	b/r	Adam F



This young falcon is around 26 days old.

Comments

Bob Anderson, David Hecht, Amy Ries, and two plant employees (Jim Fuchs and another whose name I didn't catch) went up to band. Mother Lolo, a granddaughter of Mae, was unbelievably aggressive, bouncing off David's helmet and hitting Bob's hand. We moved quickly to get the young falcons, fearing that Lolo might hurt herself defending them.

To get the young falcons at this site, we remove a panel from the back of the nestbox. We got three of them easily, but the fourth moved to the front and hopped up onto the box's lip – a dangerous place for a young baby that can't fly yet. We backed away and Bob got a broom from one of the guys to wave in front of the box. The baby jumped back in the nestbox, and we got it. That was too close for comfort, although I wouldn't necessarily have expected a 26-day old baby to get that close to the drop. We are going to replace this nestbox with one that closes the front when the top is opened.



Lolo flies up into the sun and stoops, making it very hard to track her in a dive.

Year falcons first nested here: 2002 | Total young fledged from this location (2010): 31

2010 Productive Nest Sites

5/27/10: US Bank Building | La Crosse, WI | La Crosse County

Lat/Long

N 43 48' 48.6"

W 091 15' 10.0"

Adult Data

Adult female: unknown

Adult male: unknown

Nesting Data

Number of eggs laid: unknown | 1 young hatched

First egg laid: unknown

First hatch: 5/06/2010

Male: 1126-14171 95/C b/r David

Comments

This is a fun site, since you enter via a US Bank lobby and take a regular passenger elevator to gain roof access. The nestbox is mounted on the outside of the building, right below the roofline, and is reached by ladder from the inside wall. The falcons can be easily watched from the top of LaCrosse City Parking Garage right next door.

Bob, Amy, and David banded at this site. In the picture at left, Bob is on the left and I am on the right. He held a wire mesh in front of the box while I used a drill to take the top off the box. Once the top was off, he scooped up baby and we went down the ladder to the roof. On the right, David Hecht is holding the baby while I prepare to take blood.

Channel 8, a LaCrosse news affiliate, published the story to youtube.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IYnkFKRhDOI&playnext_from=TL&videos=b27rDBWoGwU



Year falcons first nested here: 2006 | Total young fledged from this location (2010):12

2010 Productive Nest Sites

5/27/10: Dairyland Power Cooperative | Genoa, WI | Vernon County

Lat/Long

N 43 33' 33.8"
W 091 13' 56.3"

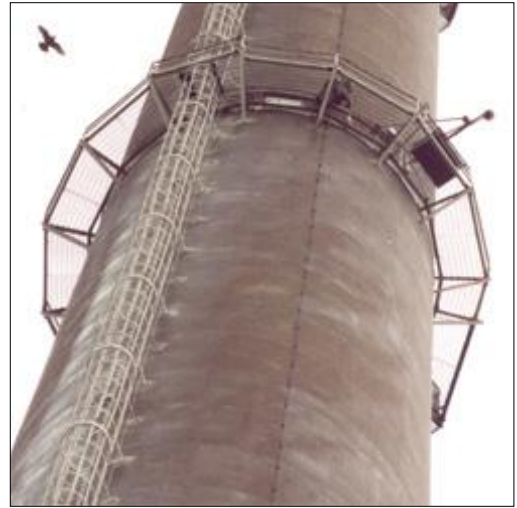
Adult Data

Adult female: b/g S/72
Adult male: unknown

Nesting Data

4 eggs laid | 4 young hatched
First egg laid: 4/30/2010
First hatch: 5/08/2010

Female:	1687-30501	61/S	b/r	Ostria
Female:	1687-30502	62/S	b/r	Oria
Male:	1126-14136	94/C	b/r	Sirocco
Male:	1126-14137	93/C	b/r	Mistral



Comments

This site failed last year when female S/72, a 2007 hatch from American Republic in Des Moines, IA, killed territorial female Scooter and her young. We worried that she might be very aggressive, given her behavior, but she was not.

The banding went quick. Bob and David got the babies and Amy and David retrieved them. This is a nice age to band - old enough to sex easily, but not so old they are like little monsters. All of the little falcons had very full crops and were somewhat sleepy.

Year falcons first nested here: 1998 | Total young fledged from this location (2010): 41

5/29/10: P17 (Great Spirit Bluff) | La Crescent, MN | Houston County

Lat/Long

N N43 52 15.2
W091 19 12.2

Adult Data

Adult female: unknown
Adult male: unknown

Nesting Data

4 eggs laid | 4 young hatched
First egg laid: unknown
First hatch: 5/6/2010

Female:	1687-30503	63/S	b/r	Almos
Female:	1687-30504	64/S	b/r	Solyom
Female:	1687-30505	65/S	b/r	Turuk
Male:	1126-14175	60/C	b/r	Samador



2010 Productive Nest Sites

Comments

Mississippi River Valley Conservancy member Tom Howe owns this bluff. He and his family are great supporters of our work and truly enjoy watching the falcons. They put on a very nice dinner to celebrate the banding. In addition to the regular banding team, we were joined by the Mississippi River Valley Conservancy, Joan Schnabel, the Howe family, and several Howe family members and friends.

David Hecht went down a wall for the first time here. The little falcons were about 23 days of age – a good age for banding.

Year falcons first nested here: 2005 | Total young fledged from this location (2010): 22

6/03/10: Alliant Energy Nelson Dewey Plant | Cassville, WI | Grant County

Lat/Long

N 42 43' 22.6"

W091 00' 29.6"

Adult Data

Adult female: unknown

Adult male: unknown

Nesting Data

4 eggs laid | 4 young hatched

First egg laid: unknown

First hatch (estimated): 5/9/2010

Male:	1126-14140	63/C	b/r	Faster
Female:	1687-30507	67/S	b/r	Feather
Female:	1687-30508	68/S	b/r	PF Flyer
Male:	1126-14141	64/C	b/r	Flapper

Comments

The elevator ride was more memorable than usual, since it required an electrician to slither out the emergency hatch and do something to the main door to make it open. Bob and David brought the babies down the stack this year, since a number of employees gathered to watch the banding, and Amy and Brett Mandernack put them back. The babies were roughly 25 days of age, and a real handful! Bob got footed a few times before I volunteered to replace him. Brett's intern Ryan also joined us at this site.

Year falcons first nested here: 2001 | Total young fledged from this location (2010): 27

2010 Productive Nest Sites

6/03/10: Lee's Bluff (P5) | Lynxville, WI | Crawford County

Lat/Long

N 43 17" 08.8

W 091 02' 58.4"

Adult Data

Adult female: unknown

Adult male: unknown

Nesting Data

Unknown number of eggs laid | 3 eyasses in nest

First egg laid: unknown

First hatch: unknown

Female:	1687-30509	69/S	b/r	Vedfolnir
Female:	1687-30510	70/S	b/r	Szkíta
Female:	1687-30511	71/S	b/r	PeggyJean



Comments

Bob, Brett, David, and Amy banded here. The falcons nested on a nice wide ledge that made it very easy to get them. Judging from the feathers, they were eating well. After we were finished banding, David, Brett, and Amy rappelled all the way down the wall. This site is tricky to go down from, since you run out of a rope a bit before you run out of cliff, and the talus is steep and rocky.

This cliff is recorded as P5 in Dan Berger's notes of the historical nesting population in J. Hickey's book, *Peregrine Falcon Populations*. Young falcons were confirmed in 1952 and adult falcons present in 1953, 1954, and 1956.

Year falcons first nested here: 2003 | Total chicks fledged from this location (2010): 14

6/05/10: 12-Mile Bluff | Alma, Wisconsin | Buffalo County

Lat/Long

N 44 18' 32.8"

W 091 54' 24.4"

Adult Data

Adults unknown

Nesting Data

3 young hatched

Comments

June 5th was rainy and disappointing. After failing to find falcons at Maiden Rock and West Bluff, we headed to 12-Mile bluff. It was raining very hard when we got there, and we didn't see falcons anywhere. Dairyland Power biologist John Thiel later verified that there were three young here, but by the time he spotted them, they were too old to band. The falcons moved to a new eyrie this year, right below the old nestbox in a pothole on this cliff.

Year falcons first nested here: 1997 | Total chicks fledged from this location – plant + bluff (2010): 47

2010 Productive Nest Sites

6/07/10: Bay State Milling | Winona, Minnesota | Winona County

Lat/Long

N 44 03' 09.4"

W 091 37' 47.5"

Adult Data

Adult female: 43/D Chicklet

Adult male: unknown

Nesting Data

4 eggs laid | 3 young hatched

1st egg laid: unknown

1st hatch: 5/06/2010

Male:	1126-14138	61/C	b/r	Brent
Male:	1126-14139	62/C	b/r	Colton
Female:	1687-30506	66/S	b/r	Caidance

Comments

About 11 years ago, a girl named Maggie Lubinski put a nestbox on the roof of Bay State Milling, where her father works, as part of a 4-H project. The box sat mostly empty until last year, when two falcons nested there. The adult female is Chicklet, a 2005 hatch from Dairyland Power Genoa. We don't know who the male is. Bob and John Dingley banded three young falcons at this site.

Year falcons first nested here: 2009 | Total chicks fledged from this location (2010): 6.

6/07/10: Xcel Energy SHERCO Plant | Becker, MN | Sherburne County

Lat/Long

N 45 22' 84.0"

W 093 53' 87.1"

Adult Data

Adult female: bg 30/B

Adult male: banded but unknown

Nesting Data

4 eggs laid | 4 young hatched

First egg laid: 4/5/2010

First hatch: 5/14/2010

Male:	1126-14126	00/M	b/r	D.J.
Male:	1126-14127	01/M	b/r	Blaster
Female:	1687-30536	51/S	b/r	Snowy
Female:	1687-30537	52/S	b/r	Dash



Comments

On 6/7/10 Dan Orr, Brenda Hoskyns, and Kristy Ahlbrecht banded 4 healthy eyasses. They were joined by students from the Becker Intermediate School fifth grade science class. The students asked many good questions and really enjoyed being able to touch and name the young falcons.

2010 Productive Nest Sites

Year falcons first nested here: 1992 | Total chicks fledged from this location (2010): 49

6/07/10: Great River Energy Plant | Elk River, MN | Sherburne County

Lat/Long

N 45 17' 46.4"

W 093 33' 28.8"

Adult Data

Adult female: unknown

Adult male: unknown

Nesting Data

4 eggs laid | 4 young hatched

First egg laid: 4/5/2010

First hatch: 5/14/2010

Male	1126-14128	02/M	b/r	Henry
Female	1687-30538	53/S	b/r	Journey
Female	1687-30539	54/S	b/r	Falco
Female	1687-30540	55/S	b/r	Brooke

Comments

Brenda Hoskyns and Dan Orr banded here. Brenda observed:

We started out the year with the mounting of a new nest box made out of marine grade wood; it was constructed by Mike & Elliot Cornelius as a 4 – H project. This was a very smooth, uneventful great year, we had 4 healthy eyasses hatch and fledge. Students from the Journey Home School Coop in Elk River, MN followed the web cam as a school project and documented the growth of the eyasses. Brenda gave a presentation to the students about what to look forward to in the nest box this season with the peregrine family. Bob also came up and spoke to the students on the near extinction and the remarkable recovery of the peregrine falcon.

On 6/7/10 Dan Orr and Brenda Hoskyns banded the 4 healthy eyasses, with the students from the Journey Home School Coop watching very closely, and naming the eyasses.

WCCO did a story on the banding here:

<http://wcco.com/local/peregrine.falcon.banding.2.1737824.html>

Year falcons first nested here: 2007 | Total young fledged from this location (2009): 13



2010 Productive Nest Sites

6/08/10 Xcel Energy King Plant | Oak Park Heights, MN | Washington County

Lat/Long

N 45 01' 47.8"

W092 46' 38.1"

Adult Data

Adult female: b/g W/E Belinda

Adult male: b/g W/36 Brent

Nesting Data

6 eggs laid | 3 young hatched

First egg laid: 4/05/2010

First hatch: 5/22/2010

Female:	1687-30512	72/S	b/r	Sandy
Female:	1687-30513	73/S	b/r	Soarer
Male:	1126-14142	65/C	b/r	Windan



A sign in the stack elevator.



Belinda in a stoop.



This sort of thing never happened to Dan Berger.

2010 Productive Nest Sites

Comments

The nestbox here is mounted to a platform on a cat-walk 400' up the stack. Adult falcon W/E appeared to over-winter at this plant. Brent, a 2006 hatch from Faith Bluff, Winona, returned in the spring. The peregrine-utility program started at Xcel Energy's King Plant in 1988, when Xcel employee John Migglar spotted a falcon and called in the Raptor Resource Project to confirm it. We installed a nest box. In 1989 Mae, a daughter of project-bred and released falcon MF-1, adopted it. She bred at the King plant until Belinda replaced her in 2004. The King plant, which is part of a monitoring project to determine the health of the peregrine falcon population following delisting, has an excellent history of producing young falcons.

We were joined by Bob's sister Joyce Heille, a 4th grade teacher at Falcon Heights Elementary school, her class (they had a wonderful time at the banding and subsequent plant tour), and Paul Simonet. A special thanks to Xcel employee Bill Wardell, who ran the elevator and helped keep Belinda away! The three babies were healthy and loud but, at around 17 days old, a nice age for banding. Bob went up the stack to get the babies, and I returned them. It was raining and blowing when we got up the stack, and Belinda was sitting in the box. I foolishly decided to return babies before flushing her. She nailed me in the arm on the way out.

Year falcons first nested here: 1989 | Total young fledged from this location (2010): 53

6/09/10: Red Wing Grain Stack House | Red Wing, MN | Goodhue County

Lat/Long

N 44 33 92 8

W 092 32 43 9

Adult Data

Adult female b/r unknown, but not Husker

Adult male: b/g

Nesting Data

4 eggs laid | 2 young hatched

First egg laid: 4/04/2010

First hatch: 5/14/2010

Female: 1687-30514 74/S b/r Malibu

Female: 1687-30515 75/S b/r Skylar



Comments

Husker appears to have been replaced by a new female – black/green bands were spotted a few times on camera and by observers. However, the new adult female has a black/red band, just like Husker did. Is this a new bird or is it Husker? We aren't sure.

Chuck Bremer, a plant employee who usually joins us for banding, did a wonderful job protecting us. Ken Mueller, a retired Xcel Energy manager, met us to try to read band numbers. We banded under the roof, since it was very hot.

Year falcons first nested here: 2001 | Total young fledged from this location (2010): 23

2010 Productive Nest Sites

6/09/10: Xcel Energy Prairie Island Plant | Goodhue County

Lat/Long

N 44 37' 17.6"

W 092 37' 58.2"

Adult Data

Adult female: new, but unidentified

Adult male: unknown.

Nesting Data

First hatch (est.): 5/16/2010

Female:	1687-30516	76/S	b/r	Melody
Female:	1687-30517	77/S	b/r	BobbiK
Male:	1126-14143	66/C	b/r	Donmarte



Comments

The wind was really blowing on the dome the afternoon we came to band! This complicates things, since you need to get just one thing out a time to make sure nothing rolls or blows away. Despite the wind, Bob, Amy, Frank Sperlak, Jim Hill, Brian Schmidt, and Jason Haugen got the job done. After finding a grounded pigeon with Frounce, a problem we saw at several sites last year, we checked the babies for Frounce lesions. We didn't find any, and the three of them seemed to be in very good shape. Frank Sperlak, our contact at Xcel, had this to say about the banding...

Bob Anderson and Amy Ries from the Raptor Resource Project, based in Decorah, Iowa, came to Prairie Island to band our baby Peregrine falcons. Assisting site contact Frank Sperlak this year was Jim Hill, one of the individuals initially responsible for the PI Peregrine Program, Brian Schmidt, Xcel Biologist, and Jason Haugen, EMT, to assist with rope safety.

Bob and Amy rappelled down U-1 Containment to the nest box. As you can see from the photos there are two ropes attached to each of them. The second rope is an independent one used as a safety backup. Mom Peregrine was very vocal with the intruders, but remained non-aggressive throughout the evolution. It is not uncommon for the parent peregrines to strike the banding team with their talons.

Three healthy babies were found in the nest box. They were loaded in a pet carrier and transported up to the top of the dome for banding. Since the mom is new to us and still unknown, a blood sample was also taken from one of the babies. Their estimated age was approx 25 days old. They were named after several individuals who were instrumental in the very precarious installation of the original PI nest box in the early 90's. Mel McCarty, Bob Kieffer and Don Marte. Mel and Bob have since retired, but Don is still here at PI in the Maintenance Department. After banding, the babies were loaded back in the carrier for the trip down to the nest box.

A new nest box was installed at the very top of the U-1 containment structure last fall, but was not used by our new parents this season. The original plan was for the babies to be transferred to the new box, but Bob was worried that the parents might be so upset by this move that they might neglect the babies for a few days. He had a similar case where this happened after moving some only a short distance

2010 Productive Nest Sites

and since our babies were so healthy he did not want to take the chance. So plans were made for Bob to return this fall to close off the old box.



Bob and Amy banding a falcon.



Frank and Brian with a falcon.

Year falcons first nested here: 1997 | Total young fledged from this location (2010): 38

6/9/10: 3M Facility | Cottage Grove, MN | Washington County

Lat/Long

N 44 47" 24.1

W 092 54' 45.4"

Adult Data

Adult female: unknown

Adult male: unknown

Nesting Data

Unknown number of eggs laid | 3 hatched

First egg laid: unknown

First hatch: unknown

Comments

We got here late in the afternoon, but decided to scope the box to see how old the babies were before going up the water tower. It is a good thing we did! We spotted three little brown heads in the box. The babies were much too old to band.



Year falcons first nested here: 2008

Total young fledged from this location (2010): 8 (3 unbanded)

2010 Productive Nest Sites

6/10/10: Xcel Energy Blackdog Plant | Eagan, MN | Dakota County

Lat/Long

N 44 48' 38.8"

W093 14' 57.3"

Adult Data

Adult female: b/g 30D Mandy Rose

Adult male: unknown

Nesting Data

4 eggs laid | 4 young hatched

First egg laid: 4/07/2010

First hatch: 5/18/2010

Female: 1687-30518 78/S b/r Joyce

Female: 1687-30519 79/S b/r Rose

Male: 1126-14144 67/C b/r Bill



Installing the screen. The small yellow 'box' contains two men who will weld the screen (at right) once it is placed on the top.

Comments

Like the King and Lansing sites, Blackdog is part of a monitoring project to determine the health of the peregrine falcon population following delisting. Last year, the plant made an unfortunate discovery. Some dead falcons were found in the natural gas stack immediately adjacent to the coal stack on which the nestbox is placed.

Xcel Energy tried placing deterrent spikes up on the stack, since we thought that the falcons might be perching on the gas stack and falling in the hole. Unfortunately, this didn't seem to be the case. After mulling it over, Bob concluded that the falcons might be chasing other birds, especially chimney swifts, into the stack. A chimney swift could dip into the stack and escape, but a falcon could not. We were going to remove the box, but Xcel Energy has put a grating over the stack to prevent birds from flying in. We really appreciate the work they have put into making this nest box safe.

This year, four babies hatched but only three were there when we came to band. We don't know what happened to the missing baby, although we did check the three that were left for frounce. All three young were healthy. We didn't take blood here because a storm was coming and we needed to get off the stack. Storms have been a regular hazard this year!

Mother Mandy Rose is a 2004 hatch from Xcel Energy Monticello.

Year falcons first nested here: 1993 | Total young fledged from this location (2010): 49

2010 Productive Nest Sites

6/10/10: Xcel Energy Monticello Plant | Monticello, MN | Wright County

Lat/Long

N 45 19' 98.0"

W 093 50' 84.8"

Adult Data

Adult female: b/r E/B Camilla

Adult male: unknown

Nesting Data

Unknown number of eggs laid | 2 young hatched

First egg laid: unknown

Female: 1687-30541 56/S b/r

Greenwood

Male: 1126-14129 03/M b/r

Hoskins



Comments

Dan Orr and Brian Schmidt banded the young falcons here. Mother Camilla has nested here since 1996, which makes her one of the older falcons at the sites we band.

Year falcons first nested here: 1995 | Total chicks fledged from this location (2010): 48

2010 Productive Nest Sites

6/11/10: Agri-Bunge Stackhouse | MacGregor, IA | Allamakee County

Lat/Long

N 43 01' 24. 1"

W 9110' 23.5"

Adult Data

Adult female: unknown

Adult male: unknown

Nesting Data

First egg laid: unknown

First hatch: unknown

Male:	1126-14145	68/C	b/r	Bugsey
Male:	1126-14146	69/C	b/r	Babyface
Male:	1126-14147	70/C	b/r	Publicenemy



Comments

This nestbox is located on top of the Agri-Bunge stackhouse in MacGregor, IA. Although the falcons incubated eggs here last year, none of them hatched. We were very happy to have young this year. Bob and David banded three biting and footing young falcons while Nora took pictures. The photograph above shows Bob and David taking young falcons from the nestbox. David is holding a screen to prevent them from jumping out.

- More of Nora's Agri-Bunge photos can be seen at:
http://s172.photobucket.com/albums/w40/CountryLass_photos/2010-McGregor%20Iowa%20Banding/?albumview=slideshow
- The Globe Gazette published a story here:
http://www.globegazette.com/news/local/article_d3a77df4-80e7-11df-b494-001cc4c03286.html

Year falcons first nested here: 2009 | Total young fledged from this location (2010): 3

2010 Productive Nest Sites

6/15/10: Minnesota Power and Light | Cohasset, MN | Itasca County

Lat/Long

N 47 15 35 8

W 093 39 12 2

Adult Data

Adult female and male are both unbanded.

Nesting Data

4 eggs laid | 3 young hatched

First egg laid: 4/11/2010

First hatch: 5/18/2010

Female:	1687-30520	80/S	b/r	DebraO
Male:	1126-14148	71/C	b/r	Jokwn
Male:	1126-14149	72/C	b/r	Ripper



Comments

Bob and Amy climbed the stack to band three young falcons here. The female was very aggressive – she had this way of climbing up 50 or so feet, looking you in the eye and diving straight for you. At the last second, she'd flip over and peel away. We had a white sheet with us, which we usually use for taking blood. We ended up waving it around to scare her off so we could safely get the babies from the box. The watchers on the ground said it was quite a show! We banded under the shelter of a satellite dish and came down just as a rainstorm rolled in.

Thanks to Minnesota Power employees Doug Braff and Jim "Swede" Carlson, and Darryl Councilman. Jim and Darryl have been very active in the peregrine program here and elsewhere at Minnesota Power.

Northland News Center published a story about the banding here:

- <http://www.northlandsnewscenter.com/news/local/96428409.html>

Year falcons first nested here: 1993 | Total chicks fledged from this location (2010): 52

2010 Productive Nest Sites

6/15/10: Greysolon Plaza | Duluth, MN | St. Louis County

Lat/Long

N 46 47' 23.0"

W 092 05' 43.0"

Adult Data

Adult female: b/g 82/C Amy

Adult male: unknown

Nesting Data

4 eggs laid | 4 young hatched

Male:	1126-14150	73/C	b/r	Evan
Male:	1126-14151	74/C	b/r	Tobias
Male:	1126-14152	75/C	b/r	Mickey
Female:	1687-30521	81/S	b/r	Darla

Comments

Mother Amy and the babies were a handful! Amy the person went over the edge - a little weird here, since you have to rig backwards on a window washing rig while a falcon attacks you. I think Amy thumped me five times and landed on my back once. I would have paid more attention, but the 30-day old babies were a real handful. When I got in front of the box, I got one, and another one tried to skitter out the side. I stopped that one, and then another one tried to skitter away. I kind of threw my elbows up in the box, which finally stopped them. We had to time getting the babies in the box in between Amy's swipes, since we were worried she might accidentally snag a baby. I have never been so relieved as when we got them all safely in the box. I actually got my hands all bloody, which is pretty rare. Also, it was raining, which made it very hard to get back on the roof, since everything was wet and slippery.

Evan and Mickey are named after Julie O'Conner's sons. Tobias is a nephew of Miriam, a big supporter of the box and resident of Greysolon. Tobias and Miriam both attended the banding. Darla is named after the property manager, who also came with us.



The Northland News Center published a story about the peregrines here:

- <http://www.northlandsnewscenter.com/news/local/97541894.html>

2010 Productive Nest Sites

Hawk Ridge operates Peregrine Watch, a program that offers educational programs and an informal interpretation of the peregrine family's activities. Go to the Hawk Ridge website for more information or check out the Peregrine Watch website.

Hawk Ridge: <http://www.hawkridge.org/>

PeregrineWatch: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/peregrinewatch/>

Year falcons first nested here: 2003 / Total young fledged from this location (2010): 23

6/19/10: Riverview Terrace | Minneapolis, MN | Hennepin County

Lat/Long

N 44 58" 33.3"

W 093 14' 41.0"

Adult Data

Adult female: b/g N/53 No name – a 2005 hatch from the Sartell paper mill

Adult male: b/g K/13 Frisco – a 2006 hatch from Lock and Dam #1, Minneapolis

Nesting Data

4 eggs laid | 3 young hatched

Female: 1687-30522 82/S b/r (This falcon may have died in box before fledging)

Male: 1126-14153 76/C b/r Anderson

Male: 1126-14154 77/C b/r MacIntyre

This is a new nest site. Rob MacIntyre installed the nestbox at the request of the building's owners, who wanted effective organic pigeon control. They have been very pleased with the results.

Bob, his son Jeremy, Rob, and some of Rob's neighbors met to band falcons here on 6/19/2010. The banding went wonderfully and we hope to have a new cam site by next spring – Rob and Randy Mata have developed a great high resolution PTZ color camera at the nest.

2010 Productive Nest Sites

6/20/2010: P15 (Lansing Bluff) | Lansing, IA | Allamakee County

Lat/Long

N 43 20" 04.5

W 091 09' 51.0"

Adult Data

Adult female: *Y/*W

Adult male: banded

Nesting Data

Unknown number of eggs laid | 3 hatched

Female: 1687-30523 83/S b/r Rhondi

Female: 1687-30524 84/S b/r Yokut

Comments

Like the King plant, Lansing is part of a monitoring project to determine the health of the peregrine falcon population following delisting.



We first attracted falcons to a nest box on the stack catwalk. After two successful seasons, we mounted a nest box on a nearby cliff, also owned by Alliant Energy, and removed the stack nest box. The falcons succeeded in producing young for two seasons in the cliff nest box but, in 2003 and 2004, they moved off to a nearby ledge, laid eggs and hatched young, which they lost to raccoon predation. In 2005, we mounted a nest box back on the stack catwalk and the falcons fledged five young. In 2006, they moved back on to the cliff and once again, due to raccoon predation, failed to produce young. In early 2007, we installed another nest box on the cliff and closed access to the stack nest box. Unfortunately, the cliff site failed again. Alliant Energy gave us permission to re-open the stack box for 2008 and the falcons produced three young. Bob removed the nestbox once the season was over, and we waited to see what the falcons would do. In 2009 they chose an old box that we had installed on the cliff over ten years ago. This year, they chose a box we installed in early 2007.

We had intended to band here on Sunday, June 6th. Bob, David, Brett Mandernack, Nora, and Amy all hiked to the top of the cliff. We were a little nervous when we got to the top and didn't flush any falcons. As I roped up and rappelled down to locate the nestbox, the silence seemed ominous. I was just ten feet from the box. Where was Mom? I went back up, repositioned, and Brett and I went back down.

It turned out that Mom was sitting tight on a just-hatched baby. She flushed out of the box when I was maybe two feet above it, and turned a tight circle, kekking at me. I got a look at the baby and got out of there asap – it couldn't have been more than 12 hours old. Mom was back in the box before I was more than five feet above it. Whew! We had babies! We decided to return on Sunday, June 20th. Dave Kester was going to get to join us after all. Given the way most of the team reacts to poison ivy, I was glad that this nestbox, unlike the first, didn't require a descent through poison ivy.

Unlike much of the rest of banding season, Sunday was warm and bright. Bob, Dave Kester, David, Amy, and Rhoni Hartsock, an USFWS employee, all hiked to the top of the bluff. Dave Kester and I went over and got the babies. We quickly banded them and returned them, but when we got to the top, Bob announced that he and Rhoni would be rappelling all the way down. Lansing is a great bluff – very

2010 Productive Nest Sites

nice to cast off from – and Rhoni took to it like a pro. Once the two of them were down, the rest of us gathered up the gear and hiked back to meet them. What a great day!

In 2000, peregrine falcons returned to the cliffs of the Mississippi river after an absence of over 35 years absence. Alliant Lansing was one of two cliffs to host returning pairs. Over the years, Alliant Energy has always supported our efforts to make this site productive. We appreciate their cooperation.

Year falcons first nested here: 2001 | Total young fledged from this location (2010): 23



Rhoni and Bob on rope



Amy points the way to the nestbox.



Dave was happy to be back on rope



David was happy to work with us

Unusual Incidents and Non-Productive Nest Sites

Maiden Rock, Pepin County, WI

This cliff hasn't failed since falcons began nesting here in 2001. At different times, we spotted two mature adults and a mature female with an immature male. But we never spotted adults bringing food into the eyrie, or baby falcons on the wing. There was a period of cold wet weather here during incubation that could have caused the failure of the nest.

West Bluff, Pepin County, WI

Again, adults were seen here very regularly, but they were never spotted going into an eyrie. Ben Ogden found two whole eggs and one cracked shell in an eyrie not far downstream from last year's overhung falcon; however, we did not find a baby and no one has seen young on the wing.

P19 (Leo's Bluff), Waukon Junction, Allamakee County, IA

Dave Kester watched this cliff closely. He spotted two adults, but no young or food transfers.



David at West Bluff

Dead Cow Bluff, Lansing, IA

We visited this cliff on 6/6/2010 to band falcons. Amy rappelled down to the nest, where she spotted a very young falcon, approximately three days old, and Mom. However, when we returned on June 20 to band, there were no adults and no babies. We found plenty of down, indicating that a growing baby had recently been present, but nothing else – no feathers and no signs of struggle. We think that maybe something happened to the adult or adults, and the baby starved to death. This would explain the complete lack of birds at a site that should have been successful. On 6/03/10 Bob Anderson and Jon Wilde visited this site and were surprised to see a large group of vultures flying all over the face of this cliff without being challenged. After a while an adult female falcon exited the nest box and hammered the vultures. She then returned to the nest box. No male falcon was observed on 6/3/10 or on 6/6/10.

Minnesota Power Hibbard Plant, Duluth, MN

This site attracted a mature male and immature female this year that failed to lay eggs. We expect to band young falcons here next year.

Falcon Sightings

- Falcons were frequently spotted at the new nestbox on Twin Bluffs in Nelson, WI. We hope to band young here next year.
- Maggie Jones spotted a falcon at Lock and Dam #9.
- Falcons were periodically spotted at the Fountain City nestbox on Greshik's bluff. The front perch on this box needs replacing.
- Falcons were spotted once at Goose Island bluff, very early in the spring.
- Falcons were spotted defending Shellhorn bluff in early April.
- Falcons were spotted on a small, wedge-shaped bluff just south of Homer's bluff.

Unusual Incidents and Non-Productive Nest Sites

There were several sites this year where falcons were completely absent. Some of them had been successful nest sites in previous years, and others are sites where we've commonly spotted falcons in the past. The sites include:

- Castle Rock Cliff, Trempealeau County, WI. Previously successful nest site.
- Maassen's Bluff, Buffalo County, WI. Previously successful nest site.
- P-4 (Homer Bluff), Winona County, MN. Previously successful nest site.
- Pepin Heights Bluff, MN. No falcons spotted this year.
- Indian Head Bluff, Fountain City, WI. No falcons spotted this year.
- Trempeleau Bluff, Trempeleau, WI. No falcons spotted this year.

We also monitor a few sites where falcons have not yet been seen, although they provide likely habitat. These sites include:

- Bay City Bluff, Bay City, WI
- Diamond Head Bluff, WI
- ADM Stack House, St. Paul, MN. This nestbox replaced the nestbox on the old High Bridge stack.

Ospreys, Eagles, Owls, and Kestrels

The Raptor Resource Project is also involved in managing osprey, eagle, owl, and kestrel nests in Minnesota and Colorado.

Ospreys

Xcel Energy King Plant | Oak Park Heights, MN

The Ospreys are nesting on the barge unloader at Xcel Energy's King plant, not far from the falcons' stack. This nest has produced 47 young since Bob Anderson installed it on Earth Day of 1993, making it the most productive metro-area nest. Diane Gulbrandson reports that TT, a 2005 alumnus, is nesting along the Mississippi river.

Bob Anderson and Judy Englund banded four babies here on July 2nd. This is the third time that this nest had four baby ospreys.

Year ospreys first nested here: 1993 | Total young fledged from this location (2010): 47



Eagles

This year, the Raptor Resource Project monitored eagles at two sites – one in Colorado and one in Decorah, Iowa.

Xcel Energy Fort St. Vrain Plant | Platteville, CO

The Bald Eagles are nesting in a large cottonwood tree on the grounds of Xcel's Fort St. Vrain plant, near the juncture of the South Platte and St. Vrain rivers.

The eagle laid her first egg on February 14, and the first of two eaglets hatched on March 26. The picture at right shows the two young eaglets testing their wings.

Total young fledged in 2010: 2.



Ospreys, Eagles, Owls, and Kestrels

Decorah Fish Hatchery Nest | Decorah, IA

This year, we worked with Luther College and Xcel Energy to provide the stream online. The Decorah eaglecam was our most popular site: over 370,000 unique visitors from 125 countries followed the Decorah Bald Eagle family.

We documented some interesting behavior at the nest this year, including night flights, night hunting (fishing, actually), and use of the nest by other animals and birds. We lost the IR and main cam during the spring (most likely because of squirrel damage), but will be replacing them this year.



The eagle laid her first egg on Valentine's Day, February 14th. The first eaglet hatched on April 3rd.

Total young fledged in 2010: 3 (6 since 2009)

Owls

Xcel Energy added a new owl nestbox this year at the Fort St. Vrain plant. Jesse Brungardt manages this new owl nest. Like the Valmont nest, this box was home to a family of Great Horned Owls. Dave Madonna, of Xcel Energy, takes care of the Valmont nest box and camera.

The season at Valmont began well. The owls laid their first egg on February 10th, but the nest failed on February 25 when a third owl showed up. There was a territorial dispute, and the owls stopped incubation. It has been a rough couple of years for this site. I hope next year is better.



The Fort St. Vrain owls, shown at right, hatched two young. Both jumped from the nest, scaring viewers, but they survived the experience and fledged successfully.

Ospreys, Eagles, Owls, and Kestrels

Kestrels

Xcel Energy Pawnee Station | Brush, CO

Bob Anderson provided a nestbox here in 2005. It was quickly adopted by a pair of kestrels. This year, they laid five eggs, five of which hatched beginning on May 19

Ken Weisser maintains the kestrel camera and nest box. He has to clean both the box and camera after each nesting season, since the young kestrels squirt hawk chalk in all directions. We really appreciate all of Ken's work – he is cleaning up a real mess!

Total young fledged in 2010: 5



The 'eye' spots are on the back of the female's head – a defense mechanism that helps fool would-be predators.

Web-Based Resources

Web-Based Resources

A number of people put together falcon videos or photo albums. Following are some links.

You Tube

- [Raptor Resource Project](#)
- [GreenCashew](#): Decorah eagles and many other raptors
- [Fort St. Vrain](#): GRE falcons, Fort St. Vrain eagles, ospreys
- [Diane](#): Ospreys

Photo Albums

- [Nora's Photobucket](#)

Our Website

Many, many pictures may also be viewed in our forum and our What's New section:

- [Raptor Resource Project Forum](#)
- [What's New](#)

Nesting and hatch dates are posted in our calendar:

- <http://www.raptorresource.org/calendar/>