

Raptor Resource Project 2011 Annual Banding Report

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2011 was a year of incredible ups and downs. Our Decorah Eaglecam became the most watched live video on the internet, with over 210 million viewers from 184 countries checking in to watch the eagles raise their family. So far, two books have been published about the Decorah eagles and two more that we know of are in development. Board President Rob MacIntyre suffered a cardiac arrest on May 22, following the North Minneapolis tornado, and died. His loss was deeply felt, especially as we went through the year and had time to reflect on how he impacted what we are doing now. Rob died as he lived, helping others. We wish he were here today to see the difference he made. The Project expanded its education efforts: adding web cams, working with Boy Scouts to replace old nest boxes, and expanding into online conversation. Although we are still learning the ins and outs of online communication, in 2011 our cameras, chat and chat moderators, Facebook page and Facebook moderators, and forum together provided the biggest wildlife education program in the world.



This year proved to be yet another difficult year for the Mississippi cliffs. Although we added two new locations - Diamond Bluff and Trempealeau - several highly productive cliffs failed to produce birds this year. Maiden Rock, West Bluff, Lansing Bluff, and the Fountain City Bluff all appeared likely to produce young based on their history and cliff surveys in March and April. However, only one of these sites produced babies and all of those babies died. We are not sure what happened, but we suspect that weather and the disappearance of male falcons at two sites might have played a role. We had a freak snowstorm in April and rainy weather throughout the spring. Two of the five successful cliff sites have cliff-mounted nest boxes and the other three are very well protected by overhangs or vegetation, which might moderate the effects of weather. Iowa had an exceptionally terrible year, with every site we normally band at failing, from Lansing Bluff in Lansing through Agri-Bunge in McGregor. Weather and the loss of males does seem to be a persistent theme in determining the success or failure of a given nest, and cliff nests seem more susceptible than nest boxes to weather.

Despite the difficulties, we had some great successes. We worked with biologist Brett Mandernack and his assistant Ryan Schmitz to attach a transmitter to one of the Decorah eagles - D1 - and are following her online, again with Brett and Ryan's assistance. We banded at two new cliffs, Diamond Bluff and Trempealeau, and were happy to see falcons back at Castle Rock and Minnesota Power's Hibbard plant in Duluth. We identified a new territorial pair at a quarry in Wyalusing, WI. The female, an immature bird, didn't lay eggs, but this site looks hopeful for next year. We worked with John, Susan, and Jonathan Howe to replace four nest boxes as part of Jonathan's Eagle Scout project, installed two new cams and are in the process of installing at least two more, replaced the Decorah Eagle cameras, helped rescue an injured eagle, and installed a cliff nest box in Clinton, Iowa. We hired our first paid staff member and may expand further as needed. We also banded 64 falcons: 16 on buildings (4 sites), 16 on cliffs (5 sites), 25 on smokestacks (8 sites), 4 on a stackhouse, and 3 on a water tower. Falcons produced young for the first time at the Xcel Energy plant in Granite Falls, MN, although we were unable to band them because the plant, which is closed, is inaccessible. We were also unable to band one young falcon in Lynxville, WI.

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Banding season is long over, but our work isn't done. We intend to add nest boxes and possibly a new cam at Xcel's Riverside plant in Minneapolis, MN, explore habitat at 3M's prairie in Cottage Grove, install two new cliff nest boxes, redesign the website, plan for next year's season, and look at new ways to connect with teachers and students. How can we include more people and keep the conversation positive and focused largely on birds? We are still learning.

We wrote the Raptor Resource Project's 2011 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 birds and their nests with our members and friends. We would like to thank our Board of Directors: Randy Christman (our new Board President), John Dingley, Ken Mueller, and Jim Robison. Thanks is also due to the 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, helping with banding, and gifting us with donations. We need more eyes looking for new sites and watching existing ones. You are a crucial part of what we do.

This year, we welcomed back Gary Grunwald, Doug Wood, the entire Howe family, John Thiel, Dan Orr, Brian Schmidt, Brenda Hoskyns, Brett Mandernack, Ryan Schmitz, Darryl Councilman, Dot Karlsen, John Dingley, Chuck Sindelar, Julie O'Conner, Judy Englund, and Nora - in spirit at least, since she broke her leg right before banding season and was unable to join us. New friends included Jim and Linda Jenkins from Trempealeau, Kris Johansen from the Wisconsin DNR, Randy Mata and his son from Riverview Terrace, the Castle Rock landowner (thanks for giving us access from the top), Linda Peterson, and Elizabeth and Rebekah Ries. We would like to give a big thanks to Amber Burnette and Greg Hansen from the Raptor Center at the University of Minnesota for their updates on injured birds and information on band numbers. If we have left anyone off the list, we apologize. Let us know!

A special thanks to the technical support staff at Ustream and Simms Electronics in Decorah, especially Ruby Tugade and Kris Cantu from Ustream, and Kenny from Simms. The popularity of the Decorah eaglecam was a learning experience for everyone, but it was never too late nor too early for Ruby, Kris, and Kenny. We wouldn't have a Decorah eaglecam without them. A big thanks to Ustream in general for their support of our work.

We would also like to give a special thanks to the moderators on the RRP Ustream chat and RRP Facebook page. They include the 2011 head moderators Elfruler and RRMod1 (moderated chat and Facebook), and team members ThinkingWoman, bell nurse1, birdsohio, bremerbirdfan, FinnBMD, gandpengelking, GoldenEagle4444, hummingbird2011, ILbirder, jollygiantredwood, lgb1126, luvsbirds, nature27, nwsonshine, ocalagaltomsriver, Pagent, Pegg22, RaptorGal, RedBird51, spice1217, tekonsmichigan, ThinkingWoman, ToolesboroTom, Totenzweg, and the RRP Facebook mods. They are an invaluable source of information, education, and inspiration for people worldwide. A big thanks to forum members and the people who capture and post video and photographs to youtube, photobucket, kodak, and many other places. All of you are crucial to sharing, observing, and documenting the birds we watch.

The birdcam program began in 1998 at Xcel Energy's Allen S. King plant. 'Mae's Internest' was a huge success and quickly led to many other cams at Xcel Energy and elsewhere. We would like to thank Xcel Energy and Dairyland Power Cooperative for their ongoing support. Both companies have invested a lot of time and resources to house and protect the birds nesting at their facilities and elsewhere. We really

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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, Ken Weisser, Dan Myer, and many others.

Finally, we owe a big thanks to the Decorah Police and Fire Departments and the Winneshiek County Sheriff's Department. Thank you for your patience, and for all of the calls you fielded about the eagles and the eagle nest.

Our climbing team this year was comprised of Bob Anderson, Dave Kester, Amy Ries, David Hecht, Neil Rettig, and Laura Rettig, who helped install the new eagle cams in Decorah. We tackled overhangs, poison ivy, 100 degree days, raccoon poop, feral goats, and the wilds of Iowa...and everyone is still looking forward to next year!

We hope you enjoy reading our report.

2011 Productive Nest Sites

5/27/11: 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 Jezebel

Adult male: b/g 23/M Mark

Nesting Data

3 eggs laid | 3 young hatched

First egg laid: 03/29/2011

First hatch: 5/07/2011

Female: 1687-30496 85/S b/r Six Cents

Female: 1687-30497 86/S b/r Miso

Male: 1126-14155 78/C b/r Edwiki

Comments

Dairyland Power Genoa was the first site we banded at this year. Bob Anderson, Dave Kester, Amy Ries, and Dairyland Power biologist John Thiel banded the young falcons in Dairyland's lunchroom, where they were joined by a number of plant staff.

The Genoa falcons nest on the 400' level of a power plant stack, which is reached via elevator. There were a number of interesting prey items cached by the falcon nestbox, including a little green heron and a yellow-billed cuckoo. The three babies were eating well and looked healthy, although Edwiki died before fledging. Frounce is suspected.

Year falcons first nested here: 1998 | Total young fledged from this location (2011): 43



The nest box. We lean over the railing and reach in to get the babies. They are put into a kennel and taken down the stack in an elevator.



The kennel, with babies. This keeps them contained and fairly cool while we band them.

5/27/11: 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 | 3 young hatched

2011 Productive Nest Sites

First egg laid: 03/25/2011

First hatch: 05/05/2011

Female:	1687-30498	87/S	b/r	Cass
Female:	1687-30499	88/S	b/r	Rocket
Male:	1126-14156	79/C	b/r	Hunter

Comments

Brett Mandernack, Dave Kester, and Paul Lassance took the elevator up to band this year. They banded the young falcons on the stack, toward the elevator. Although we have banded on plenty of catwalks, a solid floor is nice because, unlike catwalk grating, it provides a safe place to put tools and bands. The three young falcons were in good health and a very nice age to band.

Year falcons first nested here: 2001 | Total young fledged from this location (2011): 30

5/28/11: 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: (estimated) 5/6/2011

Female:	1687-30525	89/S	b/r	Laura Lou
Female:	1687-30526	90/S	b/r	Sara Jane
Female:	1687-30527	91/S	b/r	Cari
Female:	1687-30528	92/S	b/r	Lolly



Comments

Tom and Alice Howe own 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 (George Howe is the conservation director), several Howe family members and friends, and Dave Kester's family. The children especially enjoyed seeing and briefly holding the young falcons after they were banded, and were very curious about 'their' falcons.

This was the first cliff site we banded at in 2011. Thanks to our supporters, we had new ropes and rope bags. Dave Kester, David Hecht, and Amy Ries got and returned the falcons to the cliff nest box. This is a very nice spot to rappel - easily accessible, solid rock, and excellent footing. We are beginning to look at replacing some of our nest boxes, but this one is still in very solid shape.

Year falcons first nested here: 2005 | Total young fledged from this location (2011): 26

2011 Productive Nest Sites

5/31/11: 3M Facility | Cottage Grove, MN | Washington County

Lat/Long

N 44 47" 24.1

W 092 54' 45.4"

Adult Data

Adult female: unbanded

Adult male: b/g 64/P Charlie

Nesting Data

Unknown number of eggs laid | 3 hatched

First egg laid: unknown

First hatch: (estimated) 5/13/11

Male:	1126-14157	80/C	b/r	Mac
Male:	1126-14158	81/C	b/r	Russ
Male:	1126-14159	82/C	b/r	Harmon

Comments

We were joined by Jon Avise and Mary Devine from the Washington County Bulletin. Jon, a photographer, accompanied us on the climb to the top of 3M's 166' water tower, which provides a spectacular view of the surrounding area. Rob MacIntyre, Bob, and Amy installed the nest box here in the fall of 2006. Hauling the box up the side of the water tower destroyed a rope, but provided a wonderful home for falcons, which first nested here in 2008. The babies were quite a bit younger than last year (when we were unable to band), had full crops, and handled very nicely. Reporter Mary Devine's story about the nest box can be found here:

<http://www.swcbulletin.com/event/article/id/18414/>

3M employees named the birds. Mac was named after RRP's late president Rob MacIntyre, Russ was named after Russ Edmonds, a 3M employee who helped get the nest box constructed and installed, and Harmon was named for the late Minnesota Twin Harmon Killebrew.

Year falcons first nested here: 2008. Total young fledged from this location (2011): 11



2011 Productive Nest Sites

5/31/11: Horizon Milling | Lake City, MN | Wabasha County

Lat/Long

N 44 26' 30.5"

W 092 16' 18.0"

Adult Data

Adult female: b/g *Y/*P Charlette

Adult male: unknown

Nesting Data

4 eggs laid | 4 young hatched

First egg laid: unknown

First hatch: (estimated) 5/15/2011

Female:	1687-30529	93/S	b/r	Rebekah
Female:	1687-30530	94/S	b/r	Cielo
Female:	1687-30531	95/S	b/r	Cyclone
Male:	1126-14160	83/C	b/r	Harris

Comments

Bob Anderson, Amy Ries, Elizabeth Ries, and Rebekah Ries first stopped here on 5/26/11, since this is normally one of the earliest sites we band. Not this year! While Rebekah trained Bob's scope on the female, Bob, Amy, Elizabeth, and several plant employees went up to the rooftop. Unfortunately, the young falcons were too little to band. Rebekah did get the new female's band number, however: Mom is Charlette, a 2008 hatch from Wells Fargo Bank in Bloomington, MN. She is much less aggressive than Lolo, who drove us under the roof for banding last year!

We came back on 5/31, when the falcons were just old enough to band. We also took nest box measurements, since this box is slated for replacement. The young falcon Rebekah was named after Rebekah Ries, since she id'd Mom. Harris was named after Stephen Harris, a supporter and avid watcher of the Decorah Eaglecam, who died this spring. Stephen did not live long enough to see the Decorah eaglets fledge. We hope this one flies long in his honor.

Year falcons first nested here: 2002 | Total young fledged from this location (2011): 35

2011 Productive Nest Sites

6/01/11: 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: b/g 43/C Majestic
Adult male: unknown

Nesting Data

Number of eggs laid: unknown | 3 young hatched
First egg laid: unknown
First hatch: unknown

Female:	1687-30532	96/S	b/r	Evangeline
Male:	1126-14161	85/C	b/r	Danger
Male:	1126-14162	84/C	b/r	Striker

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 La Crosse City Parking Garage right next door.

Year falcons first nested here: 2006 | Total young fledged from this location (2011):15



To watch this nest, go to the top of the La Crosse City Parking Garage. The falcons can also be seen on a monitor in the lobby of the bank building.

6/03/11: Diamond Bluff | Diamond Bluff, WI | Pierce County

Lat/Long

N 44 37' 45.5"
W 092 35' 01.4"

Adult Data

Adult female: unknown
Adult male: unknown

Nesting Data

Unknown number of eggs laid | 2 eyasses in nest
First egg laid: unknown
First hatch: unknown

Female:	1687-30533	97/S	b/r	Jan
Male:	1126-14163	86/C	b/r	Rob

Comments

This nest box was installed over 20 years ago by Bob Anderson, Rob MacIntyre, Pete Olson, and Randy Peterson. Bob took a fairly serious fall hauling gear, which didn't stop him from helping to install the box. It was one of the first cliff nest boxes installed in the



Dave Kester at the box. We use a tool called a grigri, which you can see in the center of the photo. The box is mounted in a bracket, which is screwed and (in this case) webbed to the cliff. The babies are put into a kennel and lifted to the top.

2011 Productive Nest Sites

midwest and, unlike most of our boxes, includes webbing and anchors. The box is in reasonably good shape for its age, although it is on our list of replacements.

We had a pretty big crew join us for this box. Besides the regular banding crew, we were joined by Dot Karlsen, Brian Schmidt, Brenda Hoskyns, John Dingley, and several others. We trudged up a long, gentle rise and located the box after some searching. Amy and Dave roped up and went down. This is a long rappel, and we had easily 100 feet in rope out at the top. Rappelling to the bottom was not an option.

We got the babies out of the box and into the kennel. While Bob banded up top, Dave and I waited for them to come back. Cliff falcons don't usually get too close to us, but the female here was quite bold. She circled past the bluff, caught the breeze that whipped around it, and shot by us so close we could hear the whoosh of her wings. It got cloudier and breezier as we waited. What were they doing up there? While we waited, Dave inspected the box and made sure the bottom was sound, since we had earlier heard a rumor (thankfully false) that the bottom had fallen out. Once we got the babies back, we wasted no time in getting them in their box and getting up rope.

The babies were named after our late president Rob MacIntyre and his wife Jan.

Year falcons first nested here: 2011 / Total chicks fledged from this location (2011): 2

2011 Productive Nest Sites

6/06/11: Xcel Energy Blackdog Plant | Eagan, MN | Dakota County

Lat/Long

N 44 48' 38.8"

W 093 14' 57.3"

Adult Data

Adult female: b/g 30D Mandy Rose

Adult male: unknown

Nesting Data

4 eggs laid | 3 young hatched

First egg laid: 4/06/2011

First hatch: (estimated) 5/17/2011

Female: 1687-30535 98/S b/r Erin

Female: 1687-30534 99/S b/r Ruby

Male: 1126-14164 87/C b/r McDonald

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. During inspection of the HRSG stack, some dead falcons were found in the natural gas stack immediately adjacent to the coal stack on which the nest box is placed. After trying a number of falcon deterrents, Xcel Energy 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 - it was very expensive and labor intensive, and no more dead falcons have been found in the stack since.

This nest box is on the 600' level of the Blackdog stack. It is reached by a combination of elevator and ladders - 300' of ladders! The climb is long and very, very hot. It is a real pleasure to reach the top.

Although the Blackdog young are doing fine, plant workers found another juvenile falcon, 43/X, that was not. The falcon was in respiratory distress and starving. It was taken to the Raptor Center for treatment, but had to be euthanized. We do not know where 43/X came from, since it is not one of the falcons we banded this year and is not in the midwest peregrine falcon database yet. Frounce is suspected.

Year falcons first nested here: 1993 | Total young fledged from this location (2011): 52



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



Thanks to Diane Gulbrandson for this picture of the Blackdog young, taken on August 12.

2011 Productive Nest Sites

6/06/11: Riverview Tower | Minneapolis, MN | Hennepin County

Lat/Long

N 44 58' 33.3"

W 093 14' 41.3"

Adult Data

Adult female: b/g N/53 Gypsy

Adult male: b/g K/13 Frisco

Nesting Data

unknown number of eggs laid | 3 eggs hatched

First egg laid: unknown

First hatch: 5/16/11

Male: 1126-14165 88/C b/r MacIntyre

Male: 1126-14166 89/C b/r Bach

Female: 1907-02708 61/W b/r Leone

Comments

Riverview Tower is a beautiful apartment building located near the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis, MN. Rob MacIntyre installed the nest box here at the request of the building's owners, who wanted effective organic pigeon control. They have been very pleased with the results.

We were joined for banding by building supervisor Randy Mata and his son, who helped us band the falcons. Gypsy is a magnificent and frightening female - she sat on the nestbox as we approached and did not move until Bob tried to catch her. I was glad we were able to take the young falcons into the maintenance building - otherwise, we would have been doing a lot of ducking!

The nest box here will be replaced with a nest box built by Jonathan Howe as part of his Eagle Scout project. It has a flip top that covers the front of the box when it is open, which keeps the young falcons inside and means that banders no longer have to lean out over the edge of the roof. We are grateful to Jonathan and his parents for working with us: Jonathan did a wonderful job on the nest boxes, which will help keep both young falcons and human banders safe. A video of the box in operation can be seen on our youtube channel at <http://youtu.be/COMoWGq36dw>.

Year falcons first nested here: 2010 | Total chicks fledged from this location (2011): 6



2011 Productive Nest Sites

6/07/11: 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

4 young hatched

First egg laid: unknown

First hatch: estimated 5/07/11



A young falcon in the 'holding pen' - Chuck's hat.

Female: 1907-02709	62/W	b/r	Lynnley
Female: 1907-02710	63/W	b/r	Ava
Female: 1907-02711	64/W	b/r	Char
Female: 1907-02712	65/W	b/r	Elizabeth

Comments

This is always an interesting place to band. Although we can drive to the top of the bluff, it is very overgrown and we tend to spend some time trying to find the right bluff top - it is amazing how different bluffs look from the top. The falcons were in the same spot they nested last year, a small ledge on a small but very steep face below an old nest box. It is fortunate the face is steep, since the nest box ledge is covered with raccoon poop. We were very happy to be joined here by Dairyland Power biologist John Thiel and our friend Chuck Sindelar, who launched Wisconsin's bald eagle banding and monitoring efforts in 1973.



Chuck Sindelar with a juvenile bald eagle, date unknown.

In late June, Lynnley grounded at the Alma power plant. Power plant staff took her to the roof, where she was able to take off and make her way back to the ledge. She is doing well. Thanks to Dairyland Power staff for watching and caring for the young falcons, and for donating a large case of water bottles while we were banding. It was slightly over 100 degrees outside on 6/07, and we drank all of it.

Year falcons first nested here: 1997 | Total chicks fledged from this location – plant + bluff (2011): 51

2011 Productive Nest Sites

6/07/11: Castle Rock Cliff | Trempealeau County, WI

Lat/Long

N 44 04' 73.3"

W 091 33' 53.2"

Adult Data

Adult female: unknown

Adult male: unknown

Nesting Data

4 eggs hatched

First egg laid: unknown

First hatch: estimated 5/15/11

Female:	1907-02713	66/W	b/r	Teghan
Male:	1126-14167	90/C	b/r	Roman
Male:	1126-14168	91/C	b/r	Brody
Male:	1126-14169	92/C	b/r	Solomon



Grandpa Chuck

Comments

This site had not been home to nesting falcons since 2008, so we were very happy to see them back this year! Steve G, who owns access to the top of the bluff, iced the cake when he not only allowed us to cross his land but gave us a ride out to the site. We were accompanied by Steve, his daughter, Chuck Sindelar, our friend Dot, and Chuck's friends Don and Sherry. It was 100 degrees out, but nice and cool on rope.

This is an interesting site. The eyrie is huge and slightly overhung - a small cave - which protects the young falcons but makes it challenging to get to. Dave wedged himself into the cave once we got the young falcons out, but Amy preferred to hang in the breeze. It is a wonderful place to enjoy sun and scenery.



Year falcons first nested here: 2002 | Total chicks fledged from this location (2011): 28

2011 Productive Nest Sites

6/09/11: Xcel Energy Prairie Island Nuclear Plant | Goodhue County

Lat/Long

N 44 37' 17.6"

W 092 37' 58.2"

Adult Data

Adult female: unidentified

Adult male: unknown

Nesting Data

Female:	1907-02700	53/W	b/r	Sal
Male:	1126-14343	60/N	b/r	Knobby
Male:	1126-14344	61/N	b/r	Maurer
Male:	1126-14345	62/N	b/r	Scharr



Comments

RRP provided a new nest box for this location since the old nest box, which was located at the lip of the dome, had deteriorated enough that it needed replacing. When PI staff installed it, they took the opportunity to place the new nest box in a higher, more accessible place that still overlooked the river. We will miss rappelling down the dome to get the young falcons for banding - it was quite an experience, and not one we are likely to ever repeat! However, we are glad the falcons took to the new nest box, raising four healthy babies this spring.

Xcel employees Frank Sperlak and Brian Schmidt banded here this year.

Year falcons first nested here: 1997 | Total young fledged from this location (2011): 42

2011 Productive Nest Sites

6/10/11: 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 | 3 young hatched

First egg laid: 4/3/11

First hatch: 5/12/11

Male: 1126-14346 63/N b/r Ray
Female: 1907-02701 54/W b/r Ruby Begonia
Female: 1907-02702 55/W b/r Ginger



Comments

On 6/10/11, six fourth grade students from Becker Intermediate School who are part of an accelerated reading challenge project joined Dan Orr, Kristi Albrecht, Brian Schmidt, and Brenda Hoskyns for the banding of three eyasses at the Sherco Power Plant. The students had been following the progress of the eyasses on the falcon cam while reading books about peregrine falcons. On 7/1/11, an injured Ruby Begonia was found by Dan Orr and brought to the Raptor Center for medical attention and recovery.

Year falcons first nested here: 1992 | Total chicks fledged from this location (2011): 52

6/13/11: Minnesota Power and Light | Cohasset, MN | Itasca County

Lat/Long

N 47 15 35 8

W 093 39 12 2

Adult Data

Adults unknown

Nesting Data

4 eggs laid | 4 young hatched

First egg laid: 4/15/2011

First hatch: 5/23/2011

Female: 1907-02714 67/W b/r Volt
Female: 1907-02715 68/W b/r Amber
Female: 1907-02716 69/W b/r Kris
Male: 1126-14351 68/N b/r Eddie



2011 Productive Nest Sites

Comments

Bob, Amy, and a safety team climbed the stack to band four young falcons here. It was a good thing we were wearing helmets, since one of the safety team had a fanny pack unlock. It fell down the ladder, hitting Amy square on the head. Although we couldn't identify the mother, we don't think she was the same falcon as last year - that falcon was extremely aggressive and this one was not aggressive at all. It is a little challenging to band here regardless, since we band directly on the catwalk grating and you have to be quite careful that nothing falls through.

Year falcons first nested here: 1993 | Total chicks fledged from this location (2011): 56

6/13/11: 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 *B/8 no name

Adult male: unknown

Nesting Data

unknown number of eggs laid | 2 young hatched

First egg laid: unknown

First hatch: estimated 5/19

Female: 1907-02717 70/W b/r Laura

Female: 1907-02718 71/W b/r Waters



Comments

Amy the falcon was replaced by a new female this year - *B/8, a bird from Ontario, Canada. Amy the person was hoping that she would be less aggressive, but she really was not. What is it about the falcons here? Amy did learn her lesson on rigging - she rigged at the foot of the ladder instead of on top, thereby reducing the distraction of a falcon attack. This was much safer. The babies were only a little younger than last year, but they were much more docile.

We were accompanied by Julie O'Conner from Hawk Ridge, who runs their PeregrineWatch program.

Laura is named after Laura Erickson, a Duluth birder and author, and Waters is named after Debbie Waters, who runs Hawk Ridge. Thanks very much to Darla, the property manager, for allowing us to band here.

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/>



2011 Productive Nest Sites

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

Year falcons first nested here: 2003 / Total young fledged from this location (2011): 25

6/13/11: Minnesota Power Hibbard Plant | Duluth, MN | St. Louis County

Lat/Long

N 46 44' 08.6"

W 092 09' 06.7"

Adult Data

Adult female: unknown

Adult male: unknown

Nesting Data

3 eggs laid | 3 young hatched

First egg laid: 04/17/11

First hatch: 05/24/11

Male: 1126-14352 69/N b/r Ellert

Male: 1126-14353 70/N b/r Alden

Female: 1907-02719 72/W b/r Wanderer



This young falcon has a full crop.

Comments

This site failed last year. The resident adult female was replaced by an immature bird who failed to lay eggs. Since we were unable to get a band number, we don't know if last year's immature bird was this year's adult. Amy, Bob, and the safety team went up the stack to band. This is kind of an interesting site - it has fall protection, but there is no ladder cage. The wind coming off Duluth harbor can make a climber feel much like a kite at the end of a string. The babies were healthy and, as the photo illustrates, well-fed!

Year falcons first nested here: 2008 / Total young fledged from this location (2011): 8

2011 Productive Nest Sites

6/14/11 Xcel Energy Allen S. King Plant | Oak Park Heights, MN | Washington County

Lat/Long

N 45 01' 47.8"

W 092 46' 38.1"

Adult Data

Adult female: b/g W/E Belinda

Adult male: b/g W/36 Brent

Nesting Data

5 eggs laid | 5 young hatched

First egg laid: 04/12/11

First hatch: 05/23/11

Female: 1907-02720 73/W b/r Fritche

Female: 1907-02721 74/W b/r

Wortham-Wortham

Male: 1126-14354 71/N b/r Hansen

Male: 1126-14355 72/N b/r Barry

Male: 1126-14356 73/N b/r Axel

Comments

The King plant is a special place for us. The utility-peregrine program started here in 1988, when Paul Simonet, a falconer and Xcel employee, 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.

This year, the falcons were named by the plant's union, who won the right to name them in a charitable auction organized by Xcel to benefit the United Way. In addition to plant staff, we were joined by Linda Peterson, a project friend who was also involved in the Bluebird Recovery Program. Belinda has laid a lot of eggs before - in 2010, she laid 6 - but she has never hatched all of them. This year was an exception! We banded five very healthy young peregrine falcons. Belinda was extremely aggressive and Bob ended up catching and holding her to prevent damage to her, the babies, or anyone else.

Year falcons first nested here: 1989 | Total young fledged from this location (2011): 58



2011 Productive Nest Sites

6/16/11 Trempealeau Bluff | Trempealeau, WI | Trempealeau County

Lat/Long

N 44 00' 34.3"

W 091 27' 13.6"

Adult Data

Adult female: unknown

Adult male: unknown

Nesting Data

unknown number of eggs laid | 2 young hatched

First egg laid: unknown

First hatch: unknown

Female: 1907-02722 75/W b/r Anneo

Female: 1907-02723 76/W b/r LindaJ

Comments

Bob has been watching this site for years and was thrilled to finally find falcons nesting here. We were accompanied by Jim and Linda Jenkins (two local falcon enthusiasts and land owners) and Kris Johansen from the Wisconsin DNR.

All of us but Kris, who is a marathon runner, struggled up a steep, damp slope to reach the top of the bluff, which opened into a beautiful vista high above the river. The top was very accessible and the rock was solid - a real treat after some of the crumbling messes we've gingerly rappelled through. Dave and Bob rappelled down to get the falcons, and Dave and Amy brought them back.

The falcons were nesting under an overhang that proved very difficult to reach. It might be worth setting a bolt anchor here if they continue to nest - it was next to impossible to reach the babies and safely handle the kennel. A bolt anchor drilled into the rock would make staying at the eyrie a hands-free task.



2011 Productive Nest Sites

6/24/11: Xcel Energy Monticello Plant | Monticello, MN | Wright County

Lat/Long

N 45 19' 98.0"

W093 50' 84.8"

Adult Data

Adult female: b/r E/B Camilla

Adult male: unknown

Nesting Data

Unknown number of eggs laid | 1 young hatched

First egg laid: unknown

Female: 1907-02703 56/W b/r Stormy

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. Dan Orr commented that this falcon was older than we usually band. She was named Stormy because storms delayed her banding three times.

Year falcons first nested here: 1995 / Total chicks fledged from this location (2011): 49



7/08/11: Great River Energy Plant | Elk River, MN | Sherburne County

Lat/Long

N 45 17' 46.4"

W093 33' 28.8"

Adult Data

Adult female: unknown

Adult male: unknown

Nesting Data

4 eggs laid | 4 young hatched

First egg laid: 05/11/11 (2nd clutch)

First hatch: 06/19/11

Male	1126-14357	74/N	b/r	Wayne
Male	1126-14358	75/N	b/r	Hanson
Female	1907-02724	77/W	b/r	Elizabeth
Female	1907-02725	78/W	b/r	Skye



Brenda Hoskyns with Wayne

Comments

This year at Great River Energy – Elk River Energy Recovery Station, the season started out with a

2011 Productive Nest Sites

tragedy. The resident unbanded female disappeared on 4/22/11. She left in the am and never returned to the nest. On 4/29/11, female M/56 (Dot), a 2007 Blackdog hatch, arrived at the nest box. She laid a clutch of eggs, all of which hatched. Two of the young falcons were named in memory of Wayne Hanson, the Director of MN Generation, who lost his life to cancer this spring. Wayne was very instrumental in assisting Brenda Hoskyns in the mounting of the nest box on the Elk River Energy Recovery Station. He will be missed by all who knew him.

On 7/8/11 Bob Anderson, Brenda Hoskyns, Amy Ries, and Dot Karlson (the female falcon's namesake) banded at this site. They were joined by many GRE employees and some students from Salk Middle School's 7th grade science class. Earlier this year, Brenda visited the Salk Middle School and spoke about the GRE falcon program with the 7th grade science class students, who followed the progress of the GRE falcon family online. They were fascinated to see them in real life.

Although the eggs were late, all four young fledged on 7/25/11.

P5 (Lynxville Bluff), Lynxville, Crawford County, WI

Bob, Dave, Brett, and Ryan spent a great deal of time surveying this cliff. At one point, we thought there were no falcons here, although Dave finally located two on a wall north of the site where they usually nest. However, no one observed food transfers here on subsequent trips, so we thought the nest had failed. We were pleasantly surprised when Maggie Jones spotted a young falcon here on June 14th. She wrote: "We found a single chick this morning, fully feathered, out perched at ledge, preening, but primaries still have one or 2 days to go before fledging...No other chicks observed between 8:30 and 9AM. The female brought food at 9 and left pretty quickly." Maggie named the unbanded young falcon after her mother, Peggy.

Non-Productive Nest Sites and Falcon Sightings

Red Wing Grain, Red Wing, MN

Falcons were spotted here a few times, but never took to the nest. We believe they may have been scared off by the presence of flags that were added to the roof prior to the spring. There was some speculation that the falcons which usually nest here went to Diamond Bluff instead.

Maiden Rock, Pepin County, WI

Maiden Rock failed for the second time in a row this spring. It originally looked promising - we spotted two peregrines in March and at one time thought they might be incubating eggs. However, activity eventually dropped off. By the time we came to band in early June, no falcons appeared to be inhabiting the cliff. Gary Grunewald, who spent hours watching Maiden Rock, reported only an occasional falcon and no young on the wing. The spring was cold and wet, which could have caused failure of the nest.

West Bluff, Pepin County, WI

There appeared to be a productive eyrie here - adults were spotted here multiple times flying, defending the cliff, and going in and out of a pothole on its southern side. The pothole, a previous eyrie, was well-marked with whitewash and raccoon-safe. However, when Dave and Amy went to band here, there were no babies or eggshells in the eyrie or surrounding area. Gary Grunewald, who also watches this cliff, did not spot adults after mid-June.

Fountain City Bluff, Fountain City, WI

When Bob and Dave began their rappel, they spotted an unusual number of flies rising from the nest box. Once they arrived at the box, they discovered three dead young. The falcons were too badly decomposed to collect for necropsy, so Bob and Dave removed them from the box and replaced the broken perch as planned.

Bob speculated that the babies starved because something happened to the male. Although we saw the female, who weakly defended the bluff, he never showed up.

Wyalusing Quarry, Wyalusing, WI

An immature female and adult male occupied this small cliff in a quarry near the Mississippi river, but did not lay eggs this year.

Lansing Bluff, Lansing, IA

This site appeared to be successful - it has a good history and Bob spotted two falcons here early this spring at the southernmost nest box on the cliff. Unfortunately, when we came to band there were no eggs or babies - just a lone female defending the nest box. Bob speculated that something happened to the male, causing the nest to fail.

Agri-Bunge Stackhouse, McGregor, IA

Based on falcon activity here, we thought this site would be successful. We were shocked when it failed.

Non-Productive Nest Sites and Falcon Sightings

Leo's Bluff

We came to this site confident that we would be banding young falcons. However, although Amy and Dave went down the cliff in several places, they were unable to find young falcons, eggs, eggshells, or an obvious eyrie.

Falcon Sightings

- Falcons were spotted at the new nestbox on Twin Bluffs in Nelson, WI, and in a nearby pothole. We hope to band young here next year.
- Falcons were spotted on a small, wedge-shaped bluff just south of Homer's bluff.

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:

- Shellhorn Bluff, Brownsville, MN. Previously successful nest site.
- Maassen's Bluff, Buffalo County, WI. Previously successful nest site.
- Guider's Bluff, Lansing, IA. Previously successful nest site.
- P-4 (Homer Bluff), Winona County, MN. Previously successful nest site.
- Indian Head Bluff, Fountain City, WI.
- Alma Marina Bluff, Alma, WI
- Lock and Dam #9, WI. Previously successful nest site.

Ospreys, Eagles, Owls, and Kestrels

The Raptor Resource Project is also involved in managing osprey, eagle, owl, and kestrel nests in Minnesota, Iowa, 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 49 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 three young here on July 8.

Year ospreys first nested here: 1993

Total young fledged from this location (2011): 49



Eagles

The Raptor Resource Project monitors 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. Bob Anderson and Rob MacIntyre installed the first solar powered wireless camera system in 2003, which has now been improved upon by Joe Pinner.

The eagle laid her first egg on February 16, and the first of two eaglets hatched on March 28. The picture at right shows one of the young eaglets testing its wings.



Total number of eggs laid in 2011: 3

Total young fledged in 2011: 2

Ospreys, Eagles, Owls, and Kestrels

Decorah Fish Hatchery Nest | Decorah, IA

This year, we worked with Ustream and Xcel Energy to provide the Decorah eagles site. It surpassed every expectation we had for it: as of this writing, over 210 million people from 184 countries have watched the Decorah eagles build a nest, lay eggs, struggle with bad weather and other animals, and care for their young, who grew from downy babies to juvenile predators on the wing. We captured some interesting footage at the nest this year, including egg laying and hatching, young feeding and exploring the nest, a near mishap with one of the babies, and first flight. It was an incredible year.



One of the cams took 'damage' from the young eagles shooting poop. When we replaced the cam in early October, we took care to put it higher - hopefully, out of poop range!

The eagle laid her first egg on February 23. The first eaglet hatched on April 2nd.

Total young fledged in 2011: 3 (11 since 2008)

Owls

I am very happy to report that the Valmont Owls successfully fledged young this year, despite an early scare with what appeared to be crows in the nest box.

The owl laid her first egg on February 21. The first baby hatched March 26.

Total young fledged in 2011: 2



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, four of which hatched beginning on May 23

Ken Weisser maintains the kestrel camera and nest box. He has to clean the box and camera and replace the gravel after each nesting season. Bob Anderson and Ken worked out a new camera mount where the camera is mounted in an inverted plastic funnel and soiling of the lens has been eliminated.

Total young fledged in 2011: 4



This year's crop, shortly before fledging.



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

Web-Based Resources

UStream

Watch birds online:

- [Decorah Eagles](#)
- [Eaglecrest Hawks](#)
- Great Spirit Bluff Falcons

You Tube Videos

- [Raptor Resource Project](#)
- [Jim's Videos](#)
- [Mick's Videos](#)
- [Elfruler's Videos](#)
- [Travis's Videos](#)
- [Kittenface's Videos](#)
- Chico's Videos

Photo Albums

- [Raptor Resource Project Flickr](#)
- [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/>