

The Raptor Resource Project's **Banding Report**

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July 24, 2003



Jared and falcon chick Jay. Jay was named after Jared's father, a Gulf War I veteran who died shortly before this picture was taken.

What an incredible year! The Project banded 58 falcon chicks at nine power plants, two stackhouses, one building, one bridge, and four cliffs. We also banded four Osprey chicks at the Xcel King Plant, wrote a manual on Peregrine falcon management at electrical utilities, worked with Xcel Energy to develop the new OwlCam, expanded our website to include a forum, and received our very own banding permit.

We have ordered our banding report chronologically. We hope you enjoy it. Please contact us with any questions or comments. A copy of this report may also be downloaded from our website at <http://www.raptorresource.org>

Banding Summary

May 28, 2003

Xcel King Plant, Oak Park Heights, MN:
3 chicks

Xcel Highbridge Plant, Saint Paul, MN:
4 chicks

May 30, 2003

Alliant Energy Nelson Dewey Plant,
Cassville, WI: 4 chicks

June 2, 2003

Cargill Horizon Milling, Lake City, MN:
3 chicks
Red Wing Grain Stack House, Red Wing,
MN: 4 chicks

June 3, 2003

Xcel Energy Blackdog Plant, Eagan, MN:
0 chicks

June 4, 2003

Xcel Energy Riverside Plant, Minneapolis,
MN: 3 chicks

June 5, 2003

Dairyland Power Genoa, Genoa, WI:
4 chicks
Centennial Bridge Rescue, Davenport, IA:
4 chicks

June 6, 2003

Alliant Energy Lansing Power Plant Cliff,
Lansing, IA: 0 chicks

June 9, 2003

Minnesota Power Clay Boswell Power Plant,
Cohasset, MN: 2 chicks
Duluth Hotel, Duluth, MN: 1 chick

June 10, 2003

Xcel Energy Sherco Plant, Becker, MN:
3 chicks
Xcel Energy Monticello Plant, Monticello,
MN: 4 chicks

June 16, 2003

Maiden Rock Cliff, Maiden Rock, WI:
3 chicks

June 17, 2003

Castle Rock Bluff, WI: 4 chicks

June 19, 2003

Unnamed Cliff, Lynxville, WI: 4 chicks

June 20, 2003

Dairyland Power Alma, Alma, WI: 4 chicks
Maasen's Bluff, WI: 4 chicks

May 28, 2003

May 28th was a special day for us. We kicked off this year's banding season by banding the grandchildren and great-grandchildren of MF-1. MF1, who was captively bred and raised by the Project, was the first falcon to produce and fledge young in the Midwest after the Peregrine's decades-long absence from the area.

Xcel Energy King Plant in Bayport, Minnesota.

The adult female at this plant is Mae (31V), a daughter of the famous falcon MF1. Mae, a pioneer like her mother, was the first falcon to adopt a power plant stack as a nest site. The nest at this plant is located above the cat-walk at the 400' level of the 800' stack – a perfect home for nesting falcons.

Mae's mate this year is Doug (0/*L). Last year only a single falcon hatched from the three eggs that Mae laid. We were concerned that Mae was nearing the end of her productive years and were surprised and happy when three young hatched this year.

The names of the young falcons were chosen by Mrs. Fischer's second grade class from North Branch Elementary in North Branch, Minnesota. One of the young students had very recently lost his father to cancer and the class voted to name one the falcons *Jay* in honor of the boy's dad. The students also attended the banding and had a very good time meeting the falcon chicks they had followed on line.

Chick names

Female:	1807-62146	b/g	30/E	named: Speedy
Male:	2206-69861	b/g	57/P	named: Jay
Male:	2206-69862	b/g	58/P	named: George

Total number of eggs laid and hatched

4 laid, 3 hatched.

Total number of falcons fledged from this site

37 falcons have fledged from the King Plant since 1989.

Xcel Energy Highbridge plant in St. Paul, Minnesota.

The adult female at this plant is Sophia (*3/G). Her mate Smoke is a son of Mae. Smoke was born in 1998 and is one of the first two BirdCam chicks. His brother Prescott is believed to be nesting in Red Wing, Minnesota. The nest at this plant is located below a strobe light sill at the 400' level.

The young falcons at this nest site were all named by students of Twin Cities Academy in St. Paul, Minnesota. Four eggs were laid and all four hatched.

Chick names

Female:	1807-62147	b/g	31/E	named: Faith
Male:	2206-69863	b/g	59/P	named: Hope
Male:	2206-69864	b/g	60/P	named: Liberty
Male:	2206-69865	b/g	61/P	named: Warren

Total number of eggs laid and hatched

4 laid, 4 hatched.

Total number of falcons fledged from this site

16 falcons have fledged from the Highbridge plant since 2000.

May 30, 2003

Alliant Energy Nelson Dewey plant Cassville, Wisconsin.

The adult male at this plant is a captive bred falcon released in Iowa. We were not able to obtain the band number on the adult female. Alliant Energy mounted a camera on this nest, which is located on the catwalk at the 300' level of the stack; however, technical difficulties prevented the camera from going live. The camera will be live next spring.

Sadly, Marty was found killed on the highway near the plant on July 9th, 2003.

Chick names

Female:	1807-62148	b/g	32/E	named: Marty
Female:	1807-62149	b/g	33/E	named: Gretta
Female:	1807-62150	b/g	34/E	named: Judy
Female:	1807-62151	b/g	35/E	named: Eileen

Total number of eggs laid and hatched

4 laid, 4 hatched.

Total number of falcons fledged from this site

11 falcons have fledged from the Nelson Dewey plant since 2001.

June 2, 2003

Cargill Horizon Milling Lake City, Minnesota.

Although this nest box was installed at the top of Horizon’s milling stack house over a decade ago, it was not until 2002 that the site attracted its first nesting pair of falcons. The adult male at this nest fledged from our nest box at the Dairyland Power stack across the river and downstream. His name is Gretch. The adult female is a falcon named Lolo who fledged from the Xcel Highbridge nest in St. Paul, Minnesota. A camera was installed this spring before the onset of the nesting season and Horizon Milling offered their “Bird Cam” for the first time this year.

Chick names

Female:	1807-62152 b/g	36/E	named: Isabel
Male:	2206-69866 b/g	62/P	named: Hunter
Male:	2206-69867 b/g	63/P	4named: Romeo

Total number of eggs laid and hatched

3 laid, 3 hatched.

Total number of falcons fledged from this site

Seven falcons have fledged from Horizon Milling since 2002.

Red Wing Grain milling stack house in Red Wing, Minnesota.

The adult female at this plant fledged from the Woodman Tower in Omaha, Nebraska. She is the daughter of a falcon the Project bred and released in Rochester, New York, in 1994. We were not able to get the male’s band number but believe that he is Prescott, who nested here last year. Prescott, Smoke’s brother, fledged from the King plant in 1998.

Just as in Lake City, this site took over ten years to attract and create a nesting pair of falcons.

Chick names

Female	1807-62153 b/g	37/E	named: Miss
Female	1807-62154 b/g	38/E	named: Allie
Male	2206-69868 b/g	64/P	named: Charlie
Male	2206-69869 b/g	65/P	named: Anton

Total number of eggs laid and hatched

4 laid, 4 hatched.

Total number of falcons fledged from this site

12 falcons have fledged from Red Wing since 2000.

June 3, 2003

Xcel Energy Blackdog plant Eagan, Minnesota.

The nest at this power plant is located on a small landing about 20 feet beneath the top of the 600' stack. We know that four eggs were laid and that all four hatched. We were therefore shocked to find all four chicks missing from the nest when we climbed the stack to band them. Both adult falcons were still very defensive of their nest, but all the chicks were gone.

This nest site has been productive each and every year since 1992 and we are at a complete loss to explain just what happened. We were able to locate two of the chicks cached near the top of the stack. Although they were too decomposed to necropsy or test for disease, we know from their age and size that they perished at or around May 18th, 2003. Since West Nile Virus was found to have caused the death of three young falcons on the east coast this spring, we must be prepared to monitor sick or dead falcon chicks at our nest sites.

27 falcons have fledged from the Blackdog plant since 1992.

June 4, 2003

Xcel Energy Riverside plant Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Kate (6/*5), the adult female at this site, fledged from the Market Tower in Indianapolis, Indiana in 2001. Malik, the adult male, fledged from the North Central Life building in St. Paul, Minnesota in 2000. We are very fortunate to have John Tradewell at this plant. John has done an incredible job monitoring the Riverside falcons and maintaining Riverside's camera.

The nest at this plant is located on a ledge about 15 feet below the top of a 400' stack. It can only be reached by climbing a ladder on the inside of the stack. Every year it gets harder for me to make this climb!

Chick names

Female	1807-62155	b/g	39/E	named: Fast Track
Female	1807-62156	b/g	40/E	named: Zippidy
Male	2206-69870	b/g	66/P	named: Putnam

Total number of eggs laid and hatched

3 laid, 3 hatched.

Total number of falcons fledged from this site

15 falcons have fledged from the Riverside plant since 1997.

June 5, 2003

Dairyland Power Cooperative Genoa, Wisconsin.

Scooter (U/W), the adult female, fledged from the WPS Pulliam Power Plant in Green Bay, Wisconsin in 1996. The adult male (02/H) is a captive bred falcon released in Iowa in 2000.

The nest at this plant is located on a cat-walk 300' above the ground.

Chick names

Female:	1807-62157	b/g	41/E	named: Delene
Female:	1807-62158	b/g	42/E	named: Krista
Male:	2206-69871	b/g	67/P	named: Jacob
Male:	2206-69872	b/g	68/P	named: Spider

Total number of eggs laid and hatched

4 laid, 4 hatched.

Total number of falcons fledged from this site

18 falcons have fledged from the Genoa plant since 1998.

Centennial Bridge

The Director of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources asked us to help save four young falcons hatched under the Centennial Bridge in Davenport, Iowa. Although falcons have nested here in previous years, the parents have never successfully fledged any young. The nest is located in the middle of the bridge over the Mississippi. Any young falcons attempting to fly would first have had to jump ten feet out and then soar a ½-mile to land.

Pat Schlarbaum from the Iowa DNR and Raptor Biologist Jon Stravers were positioned in a boat below in case any chicks jumped – or to recover my lifeless body in case my rope broke. Dave Kester and I got a small rope over a large I-beam under the bridge, pulled the climbing rope up and over the beam, and secured it. I rigged with my ascending gear and took a step into space, 200' over the water.

I was able to ascend to the area where the nest was located and was surprised to find four very old and ready-to-fly young falcons. We were able to net all four and place them in a kennel. Our hopes had been to foster the falcons to other nest sites along the Mississippi River, but they were much older than any falcon chicks we knew of. Also, any site with falcons this old would be difficult to approach, since it could cause the young falcons at the site to fly prematurely. We had little choice but to bring the young falcons back to the Project and prepare a release site on the cliffs nearby Upper Iowa River.

Thanks to a great deal of help from Maggie Jones, David Linton, Dave Kester and Helen Harvey, we were on very short notice able to mount a hack box on a chimney rock and place the falcons in the box. The young falcons were placed in the hack box on June 6th and released on June 12th. The day of their release proved most interesting and shocking. A few hours after the young

falcons emerged from the box, they began feeding on quail we put out on the cliff. Suddenly, an adult Great Horned Owl flew directly to the group of young falcons and began feeding on the quail with them. The young falcons took fright and scattered along the cliff wall.

At first I was in complete shock. However, it soon became apparent that the owl was only interested in the quail we set out for the young falcons. Dave Kester suggested that we return to the hack site after dark to place additional quail for the falcons and the owls. It worked! For many days, we set out eight quail each day, and each day all of the quail was gone. After a few days on wing, the young falcons began defending their hack site and soon the owls stopped stealing the falcons' food.

As of July 22, all four young falcons reached independence. Only one or two come for food at the hack site each evening. What first appeared to be a catastrophe turned into a stunningly successful falcon release!

Chick names

Female	1807-62159	b/g	43/E	named: Maggie
Female	1807-62160	b/g	44/E	named: Sue
Female	1807-62161	b/g	45/E	named: MissPam
Male	2206-69873	b/g	69/P	named: Linton

June 9, 2003

Minnesota Power Clay Boswell power plant Cohasset, Minnesota.

Male Bandit has nested here since the nest box was mounted in the early spring of 1993. Each year since, he and his mate have successfully fledged young falcons from this plant near the head waters of the Mississippi River. Female WindSong is the second falcon to nest here: Bandit's original mate, Skydancer, failed to return in 2001.

Minnesota Power launched its own falcon cam in the spring of 2003. The nest box is mounted on a cat-walk on a stack about 300' above the ground.

Chick names

Female:	1807-62162	b/g	46/E	named Lightning
Male:	2206-69874	b/g	70/P	named: Swoop

Total number of eggs laid and hatched

4 laid, 2 hatched.

Total number of falcons fledged from this site

33 falcons have fledged from the Cohasset plant since 1993.

Greysolon Plaza Duluth, Minnesota.

This nest box, installed on the Duluth Hotel back in 1991, attracted a pair of nesting falcons for the very first time this spring. The nest box installation was overseen by Rob McIntyre of the Raptor Resource Project, with the help of two experienced climbers. We had hoped to attract falcons from bridges in the Duluth harbor, where they have a history of poor nesting success. It only took a dozen years for our plan to work!

Rob McIntyre and I descended from the top of the building. We were pleased to find a single young male falcon in the nest box along with an addled egg, which we collected.

Chick names

Male 2206-69875 b/g 71/P named Ed

Total number of eggs laid and hatched

2 laid, 1 hatched.

Total number of falcons fledged from this site

1 falcons have fledged from the Duluth Hotel since 2003.

June 10, 2003

2003 Xcel Energy SHERCO plant Becker, Minnesota.

The adult male here this year is named Marshall (*3/*C), who fledged from Xcel Energy's Riverside plant in 1998. Female Seminole (W/A) fledged from Xcel Energy's Prairie Island power plant in 1999.

Xcel Energy Biologist Dan Orr helped to install this nest box in 1991, when it was just the second nest box to be installed at a power plant in the Midwest. Dan and John Thiel, a Biologist at Dairyland Power, have been the driving force behind our unique Peregrine-Power Plant program. It would not have come so far, so fast, without their unflagging help and support.

This nest box is mounted above the cat-walk at the 400' level of the stack.

Chick names

Female: 1807-62163 b/g 47/E named: Crystal
Male: 2206-69876 b/g 00/N named: Ben
Male: 2206-69877 b/g 01/N named: Ryu

Total number of eggs laid and hatched

4 laid, 3 hatched. The addled egg was collected at banding time.

Total number of falcons fledged from this site

29 falcons have fledged from the Sherco plant since 1992.

Xcel Energy Monticello nuclear plant Monticello, Minnesota.

The adult female at this plant could not be identified for sure due to the extreme fading of her band. The adult male, Grewe (*B/*1) is named in honor of Dr. Al Grewe, who taught ornithology at St. Cloud University and was one of Dan Orr's professors.

The nest box is mounted on a cat-walk about 275' above the ground on the off gas stack at this plant.

Chick names

Female	1807-62164 b/g	48/E	named: Lora
Female	1807-62165 b/g	49/E	named: Loree
Male	2206-69878 b/g	02/N	named: Hippie
Male	2206-69879 b/g	03/N	named: Bor

Total number of eggs laid and hatched

4 laid, 4 hatched.

Total number of falcons fledged from this site

31 falcons have fledged from the Monticello plant since 1995.

June 12, 2003

Lansing power plant cliff Lansing, Iowa.

This nest site is one of our most interesting. In 1999, we attracted a pair of falcons to a nest box mounted on a cat-walk 250' up the stack. The following winter, we mounted a nest box on a large cliff wall directly behind the power plant.

When the falcons returned in the spring of 2000, they were observed on both the stack and the cliff. I bothered the falcons at the stack, moving them over to the nest box on the cliff's wall. They successfully fledged four young from that location.

The falcons moved from the nest box to a nearby rock ledge in the spring of 2003. On May 19th, Dave Kester and I confirmed the adult female feeding at least two chicks. However, when we rappelled down to the eyrie on June 12, the young falcons were missing! We discovered raccoon tracks on a nearby ledge and will see what can be done to harden the eyrie against mammalian predation in future years.

9 young falcons have fledged from this site since 1999, as follows:

1999: 3 young fledged from stack.

2000: 4 young fledged from cliff nest box

2001: 0 young

2002: 2 young fledged from cliff nest box

We set aside the entire week starting June 16th to band young falcons on the Wisconsin cliffs. Once again this year we were privileged to have several of the Gaboons return to join us at these historic nesting sites. Dan Berger drove from South Pasadena, California, Jack and Connie Oar arrived from their S.E. Idaho ranch, and Chuck Sindelar and Jon Wilde joined us from Wisconsin. A more colorful group of people could not be put together. We enjoyed lots of laughter and stories of the old days each evening.

June 16, 2003

We began our work on the Wisconsin cliffs at the Matriarch of cliffs, Maiden Rock

This cliff is one of the largest cliffs on the entire upper Mississippi River, overlooking beautiful Lake Pepin. The adult male, Gunner, is a falcon we bred and released at Effigy Mounds National Monument in 1999. The adult female is un-banded and her origination unknown.

There were more people than ropes to rappel on so all of us took turns going down the rock face. We were very pleased to find three young falcons about 21 days of age. They were absolutely striking and in perfect condition.

Chick names

Female	1807-62166	b/g	50/E	named: Sarah
Female	1807-62167	b/g	51/E	named: Jackie
Male	2206-69880	b/g	04/N	named: Younger

June 17, 2003

Castle Rock

This cliff is located directly across the river from Winona, Minnesota. The adult female was not banded. The adult male was banded, but never landed so we could read his bands. Even with three scopes – two below the cliff and one above – we were unable to read the male's band.

There is only one way to reach the top of this cliff and that is a strenuous hike up the back. After rappelling down the cliff face we were very pleased to find four young falcons about 21 days old.

Chick names

Female	1807-62168	b/g	52/E	named: Kali
Female	1807-62169	b/g	53/E	named: Manthey
Female	1807-62170	b/g	54/E	named: Fran
Male	2206-69881	b/g	05/N	named: Hickey

June 18, 2003

Xcel Energy Prairie Island nuclear plant

In the very early spring of 2003, we decided there were no breeding falcons at Prairie Island this year. The falcons proved us wrong. Biologist Ken Mueller noticed three young falcons in the nest box early this summer. We planned to band them on June 18 but had to call the banding off since the chicks were too old for us to safely approach the nest.

This nest box is located on a ledge on the vertical wall of the containment dome.

Total number of falcons fledged from this site

21 falcons have now fledged from the Prairie Island plant since 1997.

June 19, 2003

Un-named cliff 2.5 miles north of Lynxville, Wisconsin

Can this cliff nest site be called new? In 1953, Dan Berger banded a single male falcon here. It was very rewarding to have Dan rappel down the same cliff 50 years later to band four healthy young falcons: two males and two females. Once again, we had trouble reading the adult falcons' bands. We can no longer count on telescopes and plan to develop tiny nest cameras and safe trapping methods to identify the adults in future years.

Falcon chick Travis was named in honor of a young man who committed suicide by jumping off the cliff earlier this year.

Chick names

Female	1807-62171	b/g	55/E	named: VernaMae
Female	1807-62172	b/g	56/E	named: Gloria
Male	2206-69882	b/g	06/N	named: Travis
Male	2206-69883	b/g	07/N	named: Michael

June 20, 2003

Dairyland Power Cooperative plant Alma, Wisconsin

Last year at Alma, a sub-adult male killed the adult male and severely injured the adult female during a territorial battle. The pair's four young had to be pulled from the nest and transferred to one of our hack sites in Palo, Iowa. All four fledged successfully. This spring two different females were observed in the nest box but a third falcon, R/A, ended up claiming the territory. We believe that her mate Zak (78/H) is the same falcon who last year so severely disrupted this nest.

We've been able to closely follow the comings and goings of the falcons here since John Thiel installed a fancy tilt/pan and zoom camera. This camera enlarges the bands, making falcon identification easy.

The nest box at this plant is mounted on the outside of the stack below a strobe light opening at about 500' above the ground

Chick names

Female	1807-62173 b/g	57/E	named: Jessy
Female	1807-62174 b/g	58/E	named: Andrea
Female	1807-62175 b/g	59/E	named: katraka
Male	2206-69884 b/g	08/N	named: Red Ed

June 20, 2003

Maassen's Bluff four miles north of Alma, Wisconsin.

This site is closely monitored by Gary Grunwald, who lives near the cliff's base. Although the site seems sound, not many falcons have hatched here. In 2001, two young falcons were hatched. In 2002, only a single baby was produced.

We noticed in the spring of 2002 that there was little or no substrate to provide for drainage at the eyrie. John Thiel, Brad Foss, Dave Kester, and I returned to the cliff and added 80 pounds of pea gravel over the winter. This was no easy undertaking! John Thiel, at the cliff's base, directed Dave Kester and me down to the eyrie. Once we had rappelled down, Brad Foss very carefully lowered the gravel down to Dave, who handed it off to me at the eyrie. When we were finished, we all believed that this modification would increase falcon production in future years. We were very pleased this summer to rappel down the cliff and discover four healthy young falcons! More young were produced at Maassen's Bluff this year than in both of the previous nesting seasons added together.

We were able to see a b/g band on the adult female but could not read the numbers. The adult male never landed once to offer his bands to view.

Chick names

Female:	1807-91982 b/g	51/B	named: Barbara
Female:	1807-91983 b/g	52.B	named: Pamella
Female:	1807-91984 b/g	53/B	named: Harmony
Female:	1807-91985 b/g	54/B	named: Mica

July 1, 2003

On July 1st, a large group of Osprey enthusiasts met at the Xcel Energy King plant in Bayport, Minnesota to band the four young ospreys produced at this nest. I installed this nest on Earth Day in 1993, on an unused barge unloader located behind the plant on the St. Croix River. It is about 160 feet over the water and has been home to Ospreys every year since it was mounted. However, it has not been without challenges.

This year, a giant Canada Goose was determined to take over the nest. We had no choice but to drive her away each time she returned. Multiple trips were needed to chase her away. However, our hard

work paid off once the ospreys settled. This site must be monitored every year to ensure that geese do not displace the ospreys.

While at the plant on July 1st, I was pleased to see two of the young falcons perched on cat-walks of the stack. There are many people who have closely followed Mae and her babies and have asked if they are alive and accounted for. There was an incredible anthropomorphic interest with George, the last falcon to hatch at Mae's nest this year. I can assure everyone that all fledging went well just as it has in the past years.

Other Information of Interest

Owl Cam

This last spring we were able to watch a pair of nesting Great Horned Owls at the Xcel Energy Valmont power plant in Boulder, Colorado. Although the nest box here was originally installed to attract falcons, Great Horned Owls have been nesting around the plant for many years. It is not surprising that they took to the nest box.

In previous years, the owls sometimes nested close to areas where daily plant operations took place and the adult owls would dive and attack. Now that they nest high on the plant's stack, their defensive behaviors against plant operations have come to a stop. Thanks to a great deal of effort by Xcel employee Dave Madonna, an infra-red camera was mounted in the nest, which quickly developed a huge following. Dave maintained the camera, watched the young owls night and day, posted pictures and digital movies to various web sites, and also posted information and observations about the young. His support, energy, and enthusiasm made this site very special.

The owls laid their eggs in the middle of January. I found it interesting that the adult female owl brooded prey with her owlets to keep the prey from freezing before it could be eaten. Owl Cam provided a wonderful opportunity to study owls in their natural habitat.

Future Plans

Although the banding season has ended, we have a great deal of work to do! As mentioned earlier, we will be working to address mammalian predation at the Lansing cliff site. We also plan to do some more work at the Dresbach cliff in Minnesota and in Colorado, where our Peregrine-Utility program is in full swing. We have received our banding permit and will be looking at ways to coordinate and manage our increasing population of peregrines in the spring of 2004. Finally, we are planning to host a symposium this fall on a number of topics of interest to people who work in peregrine falcon recovery.

The Project's peregrine recovery program could not have happened without the help of our many friends and supporters. Biologists, ornithologists, enthusiasts, falconers, and many others have helped monitor and manage nest sites, maintain nest boxes and install bird cams, rappel down cliffs, domes, and buildings, and tirelessly advocated for our work. Thank you very much – you have truly made a difference and we could not have done it without you!