

2017 Raptor Resource Project Banding Report



Figure 1: Michelle at Great Spirit Bluff. Photo by Mike Shepard

Director's Message

I'm happy to present our annual report marking the close of the 2017 nesting season. It has been a very eventful year and we have accomplished so much! The year started out very promising. In mid-February, all of our eagle pairs - the Decorah Eagles, the Decorah North Eagles, and the Xcel Energy Fort St. Vrain eagles - laid three eggs almost simultaneously in each nest. All three eaglets at the Decorah nest thrived. At the Decorah North Nest, it was a much different scenario than in 2016. The earlier egg laying and hatching provided the eagles with seasonal flushes of food at just the right time, and the early loss of DN6 appeared to be related to cold, wet weather and a resulting narrow window of opportunity to get a first meal. Things were also much better at Xcel Fort St. Vrain this year. Two of their three eggs hatched and both eaglets went on to flourish and fledge, although the Fort St. Vrain eaglets apparently wanted their privacy and proceeded to pull down the camera viewing window with PS shade!



John Howe at GSB

In March, we were treated to the premier of the Iowa Public Television production of *The Eagles of Decorah*. I was very pleased to see the introduction of the movie and presentation of RRP founder Bob Anderson's work to restore peregrine falcons to the historic bluff eyries of the Mississippi River corridor. The story progresses to his collaborative work with Neil Rettig on the Nature production *American Eagle* that led to the world-famous Decorah Eagle Cam, the thrill of tracking the Decorah fledglings, and the resulting educational program developed by Anderson and Ries with the help of many dedicated volunteers. The movie serves as a tribute to the creativity, passion, and leadership of our RRP founder.

In May, a wet midwestern spring led to black fly infestations that affected several Mississippi river falcon nest sites in SE Minnesota, SE Iowa, and SW Wisconsin, although they were not as prevalent at our inland eagle nests, at our urban sites, or at our northern sites. We witnessed an amazing incubation and hatch at Great Spirit Bluff when all four eyasses hatched within one day of each other, and we captured some of the most remarkable high-resolution video at that nest yet. But that all changed two weeks after hatch when cool, wet weather turned hot and sunny. We watched a literal explosion of flies and, as we focused the camera in closer, it was painful to watch them swarming and biting the little nestlings. Mother Michelle (our resident female) did her best to pick the flies off her young, but she was not able to keep up and two of the four nestlings succumbed to toxicity and blood loss from the biting. We treated the box, but one of the remaining eyasses (Burr-D) sought refuge outside the nest box shortly before we arrived to band the falcons on May 28, and fell to the base of the bluff several weeks early. He was quickly retrieved by one of the land owners (George Howe) and brought up in time for banding with his sibling - Hamilton. Amy Ries carefully examined the exhausted young and treated them prior to banding them for return to a cleaned and treated nest box. Burr-D and Hamilton perked up after 24 hours and all seemed well until the hot weather stirred the flies up again. We saw Michelle make several

spectacular just-in-time retrievals from the perch, but the flies were simply too much. They drove the two falcons out of the box for the last time on June 3rd. Many thought Hamilton and Burr-D had perished but, as we've seen before, their parents tended them continuously at the base of the bluff as we watched and listened with our camera pointed downward. After several weeks, the young falcons took their place at the top of the bluff and we got to watch them develop into fierce flyers and hunters prior to dispersal in late summer. What a treat!

Our banding season stretched from late May to early July this year, although a combination of black flies, hippoboscids, extreme weather, and reduced productivity caused our numbers to fall. In 2017, we banded 58 falcons at 22 sites as compared to 77 falcons at 25 sites in 2016. In some cases, site failures were obvious, but others left us mystified. Why did the Greysolon Building fail when both falcons were on site? Why didn't the new female at Red Wing Grain lay eggs? Why did we see a downward trend in production, with sites that normally produce three to four falcons producing two to three instead? It's important to remember that, outside of extreme outliers like DDT, peregrine falcons tend to be the primary limiters of their own population. Given the number of sites we have in production now, we don't know whether their numbers can go much higher. Beyond that, the falcons were not helped by cold and rain during two vulnerable periods this spring. We'll see what next year brings!

Throughout our falcon banding activities, it was exciting to work with Sustainable Driftless, Inc. and the Untamed Science crew to document the peregrine falcon monitoring program we crafted over the years with so many conservation partners. The Untamed Science crew dropped over the clifftops and followed Amy Ries and Dave Kester to band young falcons, all while monitoring the process with sweeping passes from aerial cameras above. We can't wait to see more of the resulting video and the story that it will tell about peregrine falcon recovery efforts and the dedication taken to help secure that success. We drafted a report on our experience with peregrine falcons and drones. That can be read here:

<https://www.raptorresource.org/pdf/falconsanddrones2017.pdf>.

We spent late August, September, October, and early November working on cameras and microphones. We have more details about that later in the report, but it was an exhilarating experience replacing the nest box at Great Spirit Bluff! Our caring, dedicated livecam viewers helped greatly by raising funds to replace the original box installed by Bob Anderson and Dave Kester way back in 2003. It served fourteen productive years and produced 41 falcons, making it one of our most productive cliff sites. Rather than completely re-designing the box, we transitioned to a design that resembles a cliff eyrie. The lack of a back exposes the falcons to the bare rock of the cliff, and the added insulation allows it to better retain the temperatures of the massive rock face. Expert climbers Ries and Kester joined me for this project, and I could not be more pleased with the end result. We hope our resident falcons like it too!

We accomplished many of our goals for 2017, but we still have much more to do. How will we continue down that path and what is in store for the coming year?

- **Education in action:** Education is the core component of our mission. I'm very proud of the progress that we've made in just one year. We significantly expanded RRP's educational program and what we offer through our volunteers and through partnerships with key stakeholders. With the help of our moderator volunteers, we more than doubled the number of classrooms participating in our Decorah Eagles educational chat from 350 to over 900! We even had classrooms where the students led our regular moderated chat with the general public – that is amazing! We are continuing to learn how to

deliver raptor-based education through video, interactive technologies like Skype, online curricula, short movies, and other ways to reach out to learners of all ages and circumstances. A specific goal for 2018 is to again double our participating educational chat classrooms to 2,000. We are also embarking on a collaborative project to create a live cam with the US Fish & Wildlife Service that will help educate people about the importance of the Mississippi River Flyway to raptors and other birds. Imagine a live display where field trip classrooms and home viewers can observe bald eagles up close and personal along with pelicans, tundra swans, and countless varieties of ducks and waterfowl! Our American Kestrel project will kick off in 2018 with nest box creation, deployment, and hopefully a kestrel cam to help raise awareness of our smallest falcon. Stay tuned for more information on that project in collaboration with the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and Neil Rettig Productions.

- **Fostering the next generation:** We kicked off an educational endowment in Bob Anderson's name. The Robert Anderson Memorial Scholarship Fund is managed through the NE Iowa Community Foundation and we have a running start at funding it to the goal of reaching a sustaining level of \$25K. When we reach that goal, we will offer our first scholarship at Luther College in his honor. We have witnessed the type of students we envisioned during the first year of our raptor banding station at Hawk Hill. With good momentum and visibility of the fund, we may reach that goal by the end of 2018! If you are interested in donating to the endowment, please visit <https://cfneia.org/giving/contribute/712-as>. We also submitted a proposal to the Iowa Department of Natural Resources' [Conservation Education Program](#) to develop a collaborative educational partnership with the Luther College Center for Sustainable Communities and Environmental Studies. The proposal included the construction of a raptor banding station at Hawk Hill on the NW corner of the Luther campus. It is managed by RRP's board member and master bander permit holder Dave Kester, who is working closely with Emily Neal of the Luther College Center for Sustainable Communities and Environmental Studies. The partnership strengthens the connection between academia and non-profit conservation to provide students with unprecedented direct access to conservation research. Our first year is almost done and we are excited to continue this valuable program in 2018 and beyond!
- **Connecting people with the natural world:** We have worked to keep our bird cam streams accessible and available through a wide variety of devices. This year we strengthened our partnership with Explore.org to allow greater access to ads-free live streams for all our watchers. Our outreach projects with partners like Sustainable Driftless, Inc., Explore.org, and the US Fish & Wildlife Service will help share the amazing lives of raptors and other birds with even more people!

It has been almost one year that I have been working as a full-time director and I could not be happier serving in that role! Thank you for making that happen with your financial and volunteer support. Here's to a productive year to come! We hope you enjoy reading our banding report!

Acknowledgements

We wrote the Raptor Resource Project's 2016 Banding Report to provide formal banding data for collection and study, and to share our observations and experiences with our friends and supporters. I would like to thank the many people who helped us this year by identifying falcons, tracking hatch dates, emailing pictures and observations, helping with banding, and gifting us with donations. You are a crucial part of what we do.

Many thanks to our forum members. Your postings, comments, and contacts document behavior at our nests and help us maintain an increasingly complicated calendar. You are very helpful in our efforts to monitor nests and babies, for which we are deeply grateful. Especially me! I don't always comment, so I just want you to know how much I appreciate it!

Education is part of our mission. A deeply heartfelt thanks to our moderators on Ustream and Facebook – especially Ustream lead mods jfrancl, Faith, and Tulsa, and Facebook lead mod Sherri Elliott. Your leadership, dedication, and hard work are a vital part of our success. A shoutout to Pagent for her very hard work organizing the awesome After the Fledge party. Our mods volunteer long hours and are an invaluable source of information and inspiration for millions. Thank you so much for your hard work, knowledge, and experience. We are deeply grateful for the best moderating teams around!

Thanks also to our camera operators and the people who capture and post video to YouTube, especially 70chico1, mochamama, blossom holland, eaglewhisperer18, prairiefirewind, ginger52, Arlene Beech, liznm, and Juanita Roper. Your hard work makes sure no one misses life in our nests.

We couldn't follow our eagles without Brett Mandernack! A very special thanks to Brett, the Eagle Valley staff, David and Ann Lynch, and Brian Malaise for their hard work trapping D27 and sharing data and maps with us. It isn't always easy to follow our eagles once they leave the nest, but we have learned so much we would never have known without you.

Power plants, stackhouses, and other industrial sites have been crucial to the recovery of the peregrine falcon. We really appreciate the staff that help us get it all done, including Tina Lopez, Bill Wardell, John Tradewell, Tawney Lira, Randy Capra, Cheryl Ehrler, Frank Sperlak, Jeff Berrington, Jessica Keller, John Kaczmarek, Liam Grainger, Bill Heston, Naresh Dahagama, JP Harris, Mark Books, Dave Dunbar, Mark Jackson, Scott Anton, Lynn Hall, Dale Micheletti, Brad Foss, Ben Campbell, Jim Larson, Pauline Biederman, Dean Pagel, Chuck Bremer, Doug Braff, Karen Kiekow, Britt Kagay, Taylor Aaland, Trevor Shearen, Jeremy Holman, Jim Fuchs, Jeff Blank, and Brenda Geisler. You guys help us monitor and band falcons at sites throughout Minnesota, Iowa, and Western Wisconsin, and we couldn't do it without you! If you don't see your name here, let me know!

A big thanks to landowners, site volunteers, and DNR staff, including Gary Grunwald, Myrna Buri, Gary and Deb Hartmann, Mark and Michelle Schnick, Joyce Caley, the Howe family, Jim and Aggie Olson, Dan and Sheila Broughtman, Wally and Tim Truttman, Stephen Grulkowski, Crystal Fauster, Rich King, the Nature Conservancy, the Guider family, Becky Danburg, Maggie Jones, Bill Smith, Dean Peterson, Doug Wood, Dave Noble, Sally Bolton, Mark Rasmussen, Dean Edlin, Gary Wolf, Pat Schlarbaum, and Matt Bonar. Another shoutout to the folks at the Bird Banding Lab and the FWS. We appreciate your support and help.

And finally, a big thanks to our support staff at Explore (especially Courtney Johnson, Jonathan Silvio, and Ann Haggart), and Ustream (especially Alden Fertig, Jeff Irwin, and Ramon Cabarrubia). A shoutout to Justin from A2Z Security for all his hard work and help as well.

Thanks, everyone for all of your hard work on behalf of the birds!

John Howe
Director, RRP

Minnesota

Xcel Energy Sherco Plant, Becker MN	7
Xcel Energy Allen S. King Plant, Oak Park Heights MN	8
Xcel Energy High Bridge Plant, St. Paul MN	9
Xcel Energy Prairie Island Plant, Prairie Island MN	9
Minnesota Power and Light Boswell Energy Center, Cohasset MN	10
Minnesota Power and Light Hibbard Plant, Duluth MN	11
Great River Energy, Elk River MN	12
3M Watertower, Cottage Grove MN	13
Ardent Milling, Lake City MN	13
Bay State Milling, Winona MN	14
P-4 (Homer Bluff), Homer MN	15
P-17 (Great Spirit Bluff), Dresbach MN	16

Wisconsin

Xcel Energy Bayfront Plant, Ashland WI	17
Diamond Bluff, Hagar City WI	18
P-11: Maiden Rock, Maiden Rock WI	18
Hemion Bluff, Nelson WI	20
Maassen's Bluff, Nelson WI	21
US Bank, La Crosse WI	22
Dairyland Power, Genoa WI	23
Redbird Bluff, Desoto WI	24

Iowa

Guider's Bluff, Lansing, Iowa	25
Dubuque County Courthouse, Dubuque, Iowa	26

Productive Unbanded Sites

12-Mile Bluff, Monehen, Bluff, West Bluff, Aggie's Bluff, Shellhorn	27
---	----

Unproductive Sites

Greysolon Plaza, Xcel Riverside, Red Wing, Wyalusing	28
Glen Haven, Greshiks Bluff, Alliant Lansing, Leo's Bluff	29
Bunge McGregor, Bellevue, 411 Hamilton	30

Bald Eagles

Decorah Bald Eagles	31
Decorah North Bald Eagles	32
Energy Fort St. Vrain Bald Eagles	33

Get in Touch!	34
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Minnesota

Xcel Energy Sherco Plant, Becker MN

Seasonal Data

Location: 45.375, -93.891

Adult Female: Unknown

Adult Male: Unknown

Laying began: 4/01/17 | 4 eggs laid

Hatch began: 5/10/17 | 3 eggs hatched

Banding date: 5/31/17 | Site visits: 5/31/17, 10/18/17

- 94/P b/blu | 1947-35595 | Strawberry
- K/49 b/r | 1156-14996 | Jensen
- K/50 b/r | 1156-14997 | George

Banding at Sherco is always pleasant! We take an elevator to the 400-foot level of the stack, collect the little falcons in a kennel, and bring them down to the guard shack for banding! This year, our helpers included Jessica Keller, her daughter Emily, John Kaczmarek, and Liam Grainger. John and Liam also helped us install a new HD camera on October 18. We hope to be able to read band numbers next spring!



Jessica and Emily with falcon Strawberry

I sometimes get

questions about what this site looks like. The falcons are nesting in a box at the 400'-level catwalk, which is quite large as catwalks go. The box is mounted on a platform, which means that young falcons can get out and walk around out of site of the cameras. If they end up on the catwalk during fledgling, their parents will find them and feed them below. The platform, catwalk, and enclosure make a great playground for fledgling falcons!

Year falcons first nested: 1992 | Total number of young produced (2017): 64

Xcel Energy Allen S. King Plant, Oak Park Heights MN

Seasonal Data

Location: 45.033, -92.782

Adult Female: Kris 69/W, a 2011 hatch from Dairyland Power Cohasset

Adult Male: Unknown

Laying began: 4/06/17 | 4 eggs laid

Hatch began: 5/15/17 | 3 eggs hatched

Banding date: 6/06/17

Site visits: 1/09/17, 2/09/17, 2/16/17, 6/06/17

- K/33 b/r | 1156-14980 | Prince
- 85/P b/blu | 1947-35586 | Ziggy

This is the plant where it all started. In 1988, Bob verified that a falcon was on site and got Xcel's permission to put a nest box on the 400' level of the King plant stack. In 1990 falcon Mae, a daughter of MF-1, adopted the site and the rest was history! Kris 69/W is the third falcon on site, following in the proud tradition of Mae and Belinda before her. Like her predecessors, she is a real handful – a kekking, diving terror who won't give up until the banders are gone. Fortunately, we had Bill Wardell to protect us as we retrieved the young falcons from the box, and John Tradewell, Tawney Lira, and Becky Danberg to help us band them downstack!



Tawney and Ziggy

In addition to banding two little falcons here this year, we installed an HD camera on February 2nd. It was funny to hear the male sweet-talking Kris on the 600-foot level of the stack, but we finished the job quickly and our presence didn't seem to bother them at all. As at Sherco, we hope the camera will help us get band numbers. We've had continuous data on females here since 1990, but I would love to have more information about the males!

Year falcons first nested: 1989 | Total number of young produced (2017): 69

Xcel Energy High Bridge Plant, St. Paul MN

Seasonal Data

Location: 44.930889, -93.111034

Adult Female: Unknown | Adult Male: Unknown

Laying began: 4/10/17 | 4 eggs laid

Hatch began: 5/22/17 | 2 eggs hatched

Banding date: 6/12/17 | Site visits: 3/31, 5/22, 6/12

- 79/P b/blu | 1947-35576 | Jano

Falcons nested here until 2007, when Xcel Energy removed their stack and converted the plant to natural gas. We put a replacement box up on the nearby ADM plant, but the falcons chose to go back to the High Bridge instead. Last year, the Minnesota DOT approached the plant about putting a nest box on the roof. The bridge was going to be resurfaced in 2017 and the DOT wanted the falcons off it. We

worked with the plant to locate a spot, they built and placed a box, and the DOT blocked access to their former nesting site. Everyone did a great job and the falcons adopted their new home this spring, producing one baby after a ten-year absence. Thanks to Scott Anton, Luke Kusilek, Randy Fordice, and everyone else at the High Bridge plant for their hard work and support! We're looking at installing an HD camera here next year, possibly in conjunction with the Science Museum.



Scott Anton with Jano!

Year falcons first nested here: 2000 | Total young fledged from this location (2017): 23

Xcel Energy Prairie Island Plant, Prairie Island MN

Seasonal Data

Adult Female: Unknown | Adult Male: Unknown

Egg laying began: 4/05/17 (estimated) | unknown number of eggs laid

Hatch began: 5/11/17 | 3 eggs hatched

Banding date: 5/31/17 | Site visits: 5/31/17

- 93/P b/blu | 1947-35594 | Melba Jean
- K/47 b/r | 1156-14994 | Chuck
- K/48 b/r | 1156-14995 | Al

I love Prairie Island and it is always great to see Frank Sperlak, a true falcon friend who has supported our work for many years! He, John, plant employee Khamani, and myself went up the dome to retrieve three healthy little falcons. It was fun to introduce Khamani to the falcons – the unknown female here is quite aggressive, but Khamani loved every minute of it! Melba Jean was injured after she ran into a fence during fledge, but Frank rescued her and brought her to the Raptor Center. She was released back at Prairie Island on June 29th and fledged without further incident.

Year falcons first nested: 1997 | Total number of young produced (2017): 65

Minnesota Power and Light Boswell Energy Center, Cohasset MN

Seasonal Data

Location: 47.259, -93.653

Adult Female: Unbanded

Adult Male: Unbanded

Egg laying began: 4/19/17 | 1 egg laid by falcon #1 | 3 eggs laid by falcon #2 (began on 5/05/17)

Hatch began: 6/11/17 | 2 eggs hatched

Banding date: 7/05/17 | Site visits: 7/05/17

- 72/P b/blu | 1947-35571 | Stacy
- 38/B b/blu | 1156-23732 | Buster

This northern site tends to run late, but it was made even later this year by territorial fighting. A female showed up, was courted by the male, and laid an egg on April 19. While we never got a band number, we know she was banded. However, she was displaced or disappeared. The new female (a 2 y/o bird that still has some juvenile feathers) first showed up on camera on April 29. The male courted her and was successful.

Banding was really interesting! While the new female wasn't especially aggressive, she didn't want to leave the box. We usually put a screen over the front and take the little falcons out a side door, but I didn't want to trap her in with the young so I tried to flush her from the front of the box before putting the screen up. At one point, she leaped up and 'kickboxed' my arm, but I could not get her to leave! Little Stacy, larger and older than her brother, got right next to Mom, spread her wings, and joined the footing action. Once I finally flushed Fearless Mom, she flew right next to the box and glared at us while we removed her babies. Stacy, not to be outdone by Mom, footed me a few more times as I removed brother Buster. What an attitude! I really hope she makes it to adulthood – and thanks to Douglas Braff, Richard Narum, Jim Erickson, and the rescue team for all of their help!



Year falcons first nested: 1993 | Total number of young produced (2017): 74

Minnesota Power and Light Hibbard Plant, Duluth MN

Seasonal data

Location: 46.735, -92.152

Adult female: *R/*U Isabel, a 2009 hatch from the Colonnade Building in Minneapolis

Adult male: unknown

Egg laying began: 4/12/17 | 4 eggs laid

Hatch began: 5/21/17 | 3 eggs hatched

Banding date: 6/15/17 | Site visits: 6/15/17

- 73/P b/blu | 1947-35572 | River
- 74/P b/blu | 1947-35573 | Kaiya
- 39/B b/blu | 1156-23736 | Jet

This is a fun site! The nestbox is roughly 150' over the Duluth harbor, facing the Bong Bridge. We had four helpers up the stack on a warm, sunny day – a very pleasant day for climbing! The three falcons looked healthy and well-fed, with no signs of Frounce plaques or hippoboscids bites. While all of the little falcons were big, River was impressively large – the usual 7A band was just big enough to fit!



Year falcons first nested: 2003 | Total number of young produced (2017): 41

Great River Energy, Elk River MN

Seasonal data

Location: 45.296598, -93.558171

Adult female: 11/X Mary Ellen, a 2012 hatch from Queen's Bluff, MN

Adult male: 65/M Brooklyn, a 2012 hatch from the Colonnade Building in St. Louis Park, MN

Egg laying began: 3/25/17 | 5 eggs laid

Hatch began: 5/07/17 | 2 eggs hatched

Banding date: 5/30/17 | Site visits: 5/30/17

- 95/P b/blu | 1947-35596 | Hurley
- 96/P b/blu | 1947-35597 | Sora

We were glad this site was successful again! As watchers might recall, the sole hatchling last year was accidentally swept out of the box when Mary Ellen responded to something in the wee hours (probably an owl) near the nest. Brenda Geisler, who oversees GRE's nest box program, closed the box off during the winter to keep owls from exploring and possibly adopting it (something we've seen elsewhere) and put in a little less gravel when she replaced it last fall. Although we were a little concerned about how often Mary Ellen was off the eggs during incubation (again, in the middle of the night), her hard work was rewarded when two eggs hatched and both nestling falcons survived to fledge. John and Brenda went up in the lift to retrieve them, and Amy banded. Thank you, Brenda, for all of your hard work and enthusiasm. You are a great falcon friend!



Falcons first nested: 2007 | Total number of young produced (2017): 30

3M Watertower, Cottage Grove MN

Seasonal data

Location: 44.790, -92.912

Adult female: unknown

Adult male: unknown

Egg laying began: 4/09/17 | Number laid: unknown

Hatch began: 5/16/17 | 2 eggs hatched

Banding date: 6/06/17 | Site visits: 6/06/17

- 84/P b/blu | 1947-35581 | Kathleen
- K/32 b/r | 1156-14978 | Bruce

To get to the nest box, we climb a ladder up the middle of the 3M watertower, emerging through a hatch on to the top of the tower. After tying off, one person hops over the ring and retrieves the young birds from the nestbox, where they are handed back one at a time to whomever is available to help with banding. This year, 3M employee Trevor Shearen and John Howe banded falcons and cleaned the camera!



Year falcons first nested: 2008 | Total number of young produced (2017): 24

Ardent Milling, Lake City MN

Seasonal data

Location: 44.441, -92.271

Adult female: *Y/*P Charlette, a 2008 hatch from Wells Fargo Bank in Bloomington MN.

Adult male: unknown

Egg laying began: 4/09/17 | 3 eggs laid

Hatch began: 5/18/17 | 2 eggs hatched

Banding date: 6/15/17 | Site visits: 6/15/17

- 83/P b/blu | 1947-35580 | Princess

I was pleasantly surprised to see Charlette here for her 6th year! This nine-year old falcon has produced 20 young since 2011 and I have started to wonder how long she'll be able to hold the site. It was great to see her! Ardent Milling has been very supportive of our work and they are great about checking the box, reporting on the falcons, and keeping us informed. A special thanks to Jim Fuchs and the Ardent Milling team for their dedication and hard work!



Year falcons first nested: 2002 | Total number of young produced (2017): 51

Bay State Milling, Winona MN

Seasonal data

Location: 44.053411, -91.631531

Adult female: unknown

Adult male: unknown

Egg laying began: 4/09/17 (estimated) | Number of eggs laid: unknown

Hatch began: 5/15/17 (estimated) | 4 eggs hatched

Banding date: 6/05/17 | Site visits: 3/11, 3/16, 6/05

- 86/P b/blu | 1947-35587 | Maya
- 87/P b/blu | 1947-35588 | Amelia
- K/39 b/r | 1156-14986 | Charlie
- K/40 b/r | 1156-14987 | Dusty

John, Dave, Jeremy, and Jake banded four healthy little falcons on June 6th. Bay State Milling is an interesting site, since it seems to be in the same complex as Castle Rock, just across the river. While urban peregrines often nest closer together, these two sites face one another and we have never seen falcons nest in both spots at once.

There was some discussion about removing the box due to safety concerns, but Bay State Milling has decided to keep it. To read more about how the box was originally installed, follow this link:

<http://www.winonapost.com/archive/030701/2news030701.html>



Year falcons first nested: 2009 | Total number of young produced (2017): 24 | Total sites in complex: 2

P-4 (Homer Bluff), Homer MN

Seasonal data

Location: 44.023, -91.576

Adult female: unknown

Adult male: unknown

Egg laying began: 4/02/17 (estimated) | Number of eggs laid: unknown

Hatch began: 5/09/17 (estimated) | Number of eggs hatched: unknown

Banding date: 6/01/17 | Site visits: 3/11, 4/7, 5/12, 6/01

- 89/P b/blu | 1947-35590 | Adeline
- K/44 b/r | 1156-14991 | Bryan
- K/45 b/r | 1156-14992 | Daniel

The Homer falcons returned to the same pothole they nested in last year. As followers might remember, it was an oddly-shaped hole with a large deep anteroom and narrow chamber that led to an equally large but hard to reach back room. We blocked off access to the back room and found it easier (although not much easier) to reach the falcons this year. Dave and John rappelled to get the falcons and Amy, Ming (Dave's daughter), and volunteer Dean Peterson banded on top.



Year falcons first nested: 2007 | Total number produced (2017): 19 | Total sites in complex: 2

P-17 (Great Spirit Bluff), Dresbach MN

Seasonal data

Location: 43.871, -91.320

Adult Female: P/87 Michelle, a 2005 hatch from Maassen's Bluff south of Nelson, WI

Adult Male: Unbanded, referred to as 'Newman'

Egg laying began: 3/28/17 | 4 eggs laid

Hatch began: 5/06/17 | 4 eggs hatched

Banding date: 5/28/17 | Nestbox and camera replacement: 10/18, 10/27, 11/14

- K/51 b/r | 1156-14998 | Hamilton
- K/52 | 1156-14999 | Burr-D

It was another difficult year at Great Spirit Bluff. Michelle laid four eggs and four young falcons hatched. But cold, rainy weather resulted in an explosive black fly hatch that killed two young falcons on May 23. We rappelled down to retrieve their bodies for autopsy and treat the nest box. Despite our work, the black flies returned and chased the little nestlings out on to the perch. We watched Michelle pull them back in several times – what a great Mom! – but they eventually got away from her. One of them jumped the day we came to band! It was rescued by George Howe and returned to the nest box, which we treated once again in hopes of repelling the flies. However, the little falcons jumped again on June 3rd, six days after we banded them. Here's an example of Michelle pulling one of her babies back in: https://youtu.be/3_lrlG3NiQA. Although they were just 28 days old, both falcons survived the jump. Michelle and Newman cared for them and delighted fans saw the first fledge on the rock ledge diner on June 18th. Both falcons were finally ID'd on June 24th, 21 days after they jumped!

In November, we replaced the original nest box that was placed back in 2003 with a John-designed nestbox to expose the falcons to the bare rock of the cliff and better retain the temperature of the massive rock face. It also has an option for venting that we might use if the black flies become bad. We could not be more pleased with the end result and hope that the resident falcons like it too!



Year falcons first nested: 2005 | Total number of young produced (2017): 41

Wisconsin

Xcel Energy Bayfront Plant, Ashland WI

Seasonal Data

Location: 46.587202, -90.902355

Adult Female: Unknown

Adult Male: 69/C “Babyface”, a 2010 hatch from Bunge McGregor

Laying began: 5/05/17 (estimated) | 4 eggs laid

Hatch began: 6/09/17/17 (estimated) | 4 eggs hatched

Banding date: 6/30/17 | Site visits: 5/13/17, 6/03/17

- K/29 b/r | 1156-23735 | George
- K/28 b/r | 1156-23734 | Redloff
- K/27 b/r | 1156-23733 | Jesse

We banded three falcons at Ashland on June 30. This site has a history of being late, although this is the latest we have banded here. We had a new male this year, and a changeover in mates often means a later first nesting date at the nests we band at. Unfortunately, the little falcons were infested with hippoboscids and a fourth had died. We took them out of the nest box, removed prey remains and the top layer of gravel, treated the substrate with Sevin, added fresh gravel, and killed the insects before returning them. The dead falcon was so badly bitten that one eye was swollen shut and the underside of its wings was cherry red. It also had stains from green, loose mites

on its belly. The three survivors had some bites and one of them had started to turn green, but none of them appeared to have life-threatening injuries and all three fledged successfully!



Falcons first nested: 2014 | Total number of falcons produced (2017): 12 | Total sites in complex: 2

Diamond Bluff, Hagar City WI

Seasonal Data

Location: 44.37455, - 92.35014

Adult Female: Unknown

Adult Male: Unknown

Laying began: 4/17/17 (estimated) | Number laid: unknown

Hatch began: 5/22/17 (estimated) | Number hatched: unknown

Banding date: 6/12/17

Site visits: 3/16/17, 4/7/17, 4/21/17, 6/12/17

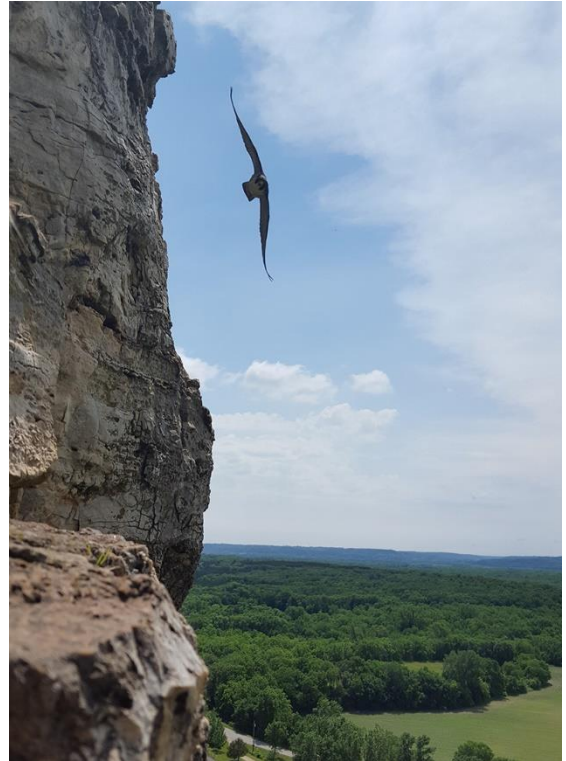
- 78/P b/blu | 1947-35575 | Diamond
- 77/P b/blu | 1947-35574 | Pearl

Falcons have nested in three different places at this lovely cliff since 2011. They nested in a nest box in 2011, a small pothole on the front side of the cliff from 2012-2015, and a large pothole near the top in 2016. They went back to the front pothole this year.

While we no longer have a goat hazard here, it does require rappelling off a device attached to a truck's tow hitch. I brought wheel chocks along to stop the rocking motion of the truck, and the banding went off perfectly! We're not sure why the falcons moved, since last year's pothole was productive and the unusually aggressive male has been here since 2015. Unfortunately, we haven't been able to get an ID on either one, but I'll be curious to see where they nest next year!

Thanks to the Truttmann family for all of their support!

Year falcons first nested: 2011 | Total number of young produced (2017): 9 | Total sites in complex: 3



The male shows off his aerial skills!

P-11: Maiden Rock, Maiden Rock WI

Seasonal Data

Location: 44.5, - 92.2866666

Adult Female: Unknown

Adult Male: Unknown

Laying began: 4/14/17 (estimated) | Number of eggs laid: unknown

Hatch began: 5/18/17 (estimated) | Number of eggs hatched: unknown

Banding date: 6/05/17 | Site visits: 3/16/17, 4/7/17, 4/21/17, 5/18/17

- K/38 b/r | 1156-14985 | Dean
- K/37 b/r | 1156-14984 | Jamie
- K/36 b/r | 1156-14983 | Mackey

After an absence of two years, Maiden Rock was finally successful again! We were accompanied by Dean Edlin from WI DNR, several interns from the Wisconsin DNR, Dean's daughter Jayne, volunteer Dean Peterson, and a film crew with Untamed Science. Dave Kester, John Howe, and Rob Nelson rappelled down to film and get the babies, and Amy banded on top. All three falcons were healthy and in good body condition, and it was great to be back on Maiden Rock!

This was an interesting site because we used a drone while the parents were defending the eyrie. Untamed Science launched it high up above the plane of the eyrie, and spotters were deployed to sound a warning if the falcons seemed interested in the drone. Dean reported that the female looked up when it passed over her, but she didn't respond to it otherwise. We don't know whether the falcons didn't see it as a threat (it doesn't fly much like a bird of prey) or whether they were simply concentrating on the banders, who were clearly a bigger threat to their young.



Dave Kester at Maiden Rock

Falcons first nested: 2001 | Total number of falcons produced here (2017): 33 | Total sites in complex: 5

Hemion Bluff, Nelson WI

Seasonal Data

Location: 44.415693, -91.995180

Adult Female: Unknown

Adult Male: Unknown

Laying began: 4/08/17 (estimated) | 4 eggs laid

Hatch began: 5/13/17 (estimated) | 4 eggs hatched

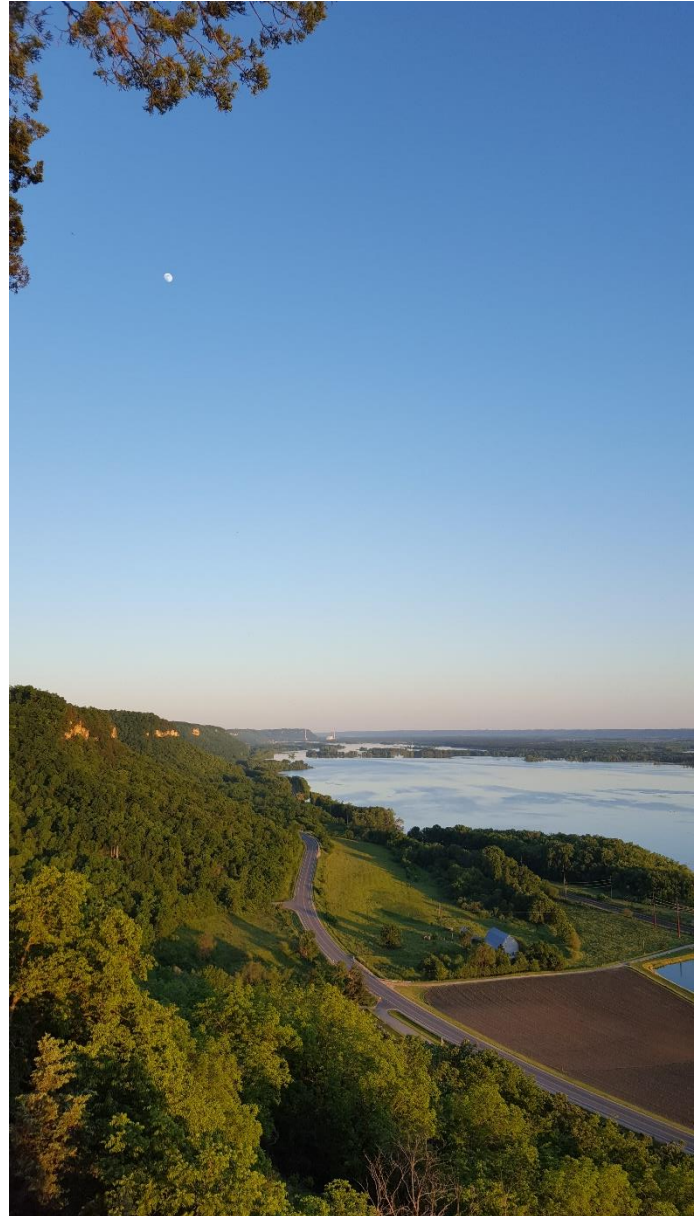
Banding date: 6/05/17 | Site visits: 3/16/17, 4/7/17, 4/21/17, 5/18/17

- 75/P b/blu | 1947-35583 | Myrna
- 74/P b/blu | 1947-35582 | Aimee
- K/35 b/r | 1156-14982 | Dwight
- K/34 b/r | 1156-14981 | Dennis

We have a new cliff in this territory! In 2009, Amy and Neil Rettig installed the Twin Bluffs box at the request of Myra and her husband Dennis. The site became productive in 2014 and falcons nested successfully here through 2016. However, Amy was unable to find them in early 2017. She visited the cliff twice, talked with one of the landowners, and visited the site of a former nest tray in Wabasha, Minnesota, to try to find them. Where were they?

On April 21st, Amber Burnette from the Raptor Center came surveying with me. When we didn't find falcons on Twin, she suggested we try Hemion Bluff, which is just south of Twin Bluff. She was right! The falcons were nesting in one of the shallowest, smallest potholes I have ever seen falcons nest in, although the site was productive. We banded four falcons on June 5th as the sun set. These falcons were a little older – maybe around 26-28 days – but so loggy from the heat that they were very easy to handle despite their age. We'll have to return a little earlier if they choose this spot again next year.

Year falcons first nested: 2014 | Total number of young produced (2017): 15 | Total sites in complex: 2



View from the eyrie

Maassen's Bluff, Nelson WI

Seasonal Data

Location: 44.383244, -91.962153

Adult Female: Unknown

Adult Male: Unknown

Laying began: 4/12/17 (estimated) | Number of eggs laid: unknown

Hatch began: 5/17/17 (estimated) | Number of hatched: unknown

Banding date: 6/07/17

Site visits: 3/16/17, 4/7/17, 4/21/17, 5/18/17

- 82/P b/blu | 1947-35579 | Jayne
- K/31 b/r | 1156-23738 | Joey

We had quite a crew for Maassen's Bluff! John, Dave, and the WI DNR went up to band while Amy and Gary Grunwald stayed down to watch the excitement from below. The adult female is very aggressive and came close to hitting Dave several times, but he was able to get the young out of the eyrie and into the kennel! Both young falcons looked well-fed and healthy.



Year falcons first nested: 2001 | Total number of young produced (2017): 24 | Total sites in complex: 3

US Bank, La Crosse WI

Seasonal Data

Location: 43.8135, -91.2527777

Adult Female: C/78, a 2014 hatch from MPL Hibbard (approximately 214 miles north)

Adult Male: Unknown

Laying began: 3/26/17 | 4 eggs laid

Hatch began: 5/01/17 | 4 eggs hatched

Banding date: 5/25/17 | Site visits: 3/16/17, 4/7/17, 5/25/17

- 99/P b/blu | 1947-35600 | Eleanor
- 98/P b/blu | 1947-35599 | Amber
- 97/P b/blu | 1947-35598 | Zazzles
- K/53 b/r | 1156-15000 | Perry

This is a fun site and one of our few public bandings! We walk across a bank lobby floor, step into a swanky elevator, and get a luxury ride to the roof. We climb two ladders, block off the front of the box, remove the lid, remove the falcons, and take them down to the lobby. Watchers are always excited to see their falcons up close, and the banding was well-attended! All of the little falcons were in good body condition, with no visible bites and no sign of Frounce plaques, and their names were chosen by children who attended the banding. Perry grounded during fledge but was kept safe by people who found him on the ground and kept him out of the road until building supervisor Jeff Blank could get him to the roof.

The City of La Crosse has a pigeon birth-control station set up across from the nest box to help alleviate the city's pigeon problem. We have been watching the box closely for signs of reproductive impairment, which could include failure to lay eggs or laying non-viable eggs. Fortunately, we haven't seen any problems yet.



Year falcons first nested: 2006 | Total number of young produced (2016): 32

Dairyland Power, Genoa WI

Seasonal Data

Location: 43.5593888, -91.2326111

Adult Female: 32/V Peta, a 2012 hatch from the Busch Agricultural Gardens

Adult Male: A/36 Marcelle, a male banded female at West Bluff in 2013.

Laying began: 4/04/17 | 4 eggs laid

Hatch began: 5/09/17 | 4 eggs hatched

Banding date: 6/01/17 | Site visits: 6/01/17

- 92/P b/blu | 1947-35593 | Stefanie
- 91/P b/blu | 1947-35592 | Pam
- 90/P b/blu | 1947-35591 | Barbz
- K/46 b/r | 1156-14993 | Stubby

I always enjoy going to Dairyland Genoa! Everyone is enthused about the falcons and I love the view from the stack. We brought the young falcons down this year and banded them in the lunchroom. Dairyland employees really enjoyed a chance to see their falcons up close, and it is a lot easier than banding on the stack! The box was quite messy and filled with feathers, including pigeon (the most feathers by far), American robin, downy woodpecker, and golden-shafted flicker. While we did some cleaning, we'll need to put Genoa on the list for gravel replacement next year!



Year falcons first nested: 1998 | Total number of young produced (2017): 62

Redbird Bluff, Desoto WI

Seasonal Data

Location: 43.500845, -91.212834

Adult Female: A/47 Lefty, a 2015 hatch from US Bank

Adult Male: Unknown

Laying began: 4/21/17 (estimated)

| Unknown number of eggs laid

Hatch began: 5/26/17 (estimated) |

Unknown number of eggs hatched

Banding date: 6/08/17 | Site visits: 6/08/17

- 81/P b/blu | 1947-35578 | Penelope
- 80/P b/blu | 1947-35577 | Snowflake
- K/30 b/r | 1156-23737 | Perry

RedBird Bluff is located in De Soto, WI, just behind landowner Rich King's house. Although the birds were there last year, we don't know who they were or whether they were productive. With no history, we decided to band on June 8th, smack dab in the middle of the season.



Rich King, Rich's grandson Jaxton, Kathy Carlyle, and Jennifer Herner-Thogmartin

Unusually, the eyrie is located maybe 30 feet above the talus slope. Given all the loose rock, we decided it would be safer if one person went down and lowered the falcons for banding. Dave descended, although we had to tow him over to the eyrie by the end of his rope so he could reach it. Once he got the falcons in the kennel, he lowered them and sat in the eyrie while we banded out of the rockfall zone! It was something to see him swing out of the eyrie once his work was done: <https://youtu.be/QWiqv-Jm-fc>.

Thanks to Rich and company for their hard work and help!

Year falcons first nested: 2017 | Total number of young produced (2017): 3

Iowa

Guider's Bluff, Lansing, Iowa

Seasonal Data

Location: 43.346140, -91.193744

Adult Female: Unknown

Adult Male: Unknown

Laying began: 4/11/17 (estimated) | 4 eggs laid

Hatch began: 5/16/17 (estimated) | 4 eggs hatched

Banding date: 6/03/17

Site visits: 5/13/17, 6/03/17

- F: 88/P b/blu | 1947-35589 | Marion
- M: K/41 b/r | 1156-14988 | Jesse
- M: K/42 b/r | 1156-14989 | Joe
- M: K/43 b/r | 1156-14990 | Jeff

The Raptor Resource Project installed a nest box on Guider's Bluff, a tall cliff located on the south end of Lansing, Iowa, in the early 2000's. The box sat empty until 2010, when a pair of falcons tried to nest in it. We found a three-day old falcon on our first visit, but when we returned to band roughly 21 days later, the box was empty and the falcons had vanished. Surveys by Bob, Dave, and Amy turned up an empty cliff year after year, so we were thrilled when Amy spotted falcons entering a pothole low on the cliff during an April survey this year. One of the landowners told her that the site had been productive for several years, which was news to all of us! I suspect that we were paying too much attention to the box and not enough to the rest of the cliff.

Having said that, we were a little perplexed when we came to band on June 3rd and didn't see or hear any falcons: not by the pothole, not by several large under hangs, and not in a large snag on top of the bluff. Were they still here? Had they nested at all? After about 25 minutes of observing without seeing or hearing any falcons, the Sustainable Driftless, Inc. and Untamed Science crew sent up a drone to film the cliff. They got some great shots, but didn't rouse any falcons. At this point, we thought the site had failed but decided to rappel down to the pothole anyways. At least the crew could get some footage!

Much to our surprise, we found four healthy young falcons in a very large pothole and ledge system low on the cliff. Given that the lift was about 100 feet, we decided to band in place. The little falcons handled nicely and were healthy and well-fed. We look forward to banding here again and will pay more attention to the cliff in the future! We now have three cliffs where falcons have rejected a nestbox in favor of a pothole or ledge.



Year falcons first nested: 2010 | Total number of falcons produced (2017): 4 | Number of sites in complex: 2

Dubuque County Courthouse, Dubuque, Iowa

Location: 44.525, - 92.29

Adult Female: Unbanded

Adult Male: Jeff, a 2013 hatch from the Savanna silo in Savanna, IL

Laying began: 4/26/17 | 4 eggs laid

Hatch began: 5/31/17 | 1 egg hatched

Banding date: 6/12/17

Site visits: 6/12/17

- F: 49/P b/blu | 1947-35548 | Taylor

We were very pleased that this site produced a falcon! Dave Kester banded one healthy little female on 6/12. He also checked a pothole at an abandoned quarry near Eagle Point, where he found at least two healthy fledgling Great Horned owls! The adult female was unbanded but appeared to be a two-year old, so we could have more production next year if she comes back. Given Dubuque's pigeon population, we hope she does!



Year falcons first nested: 2017 | Total number of falcons produced (2014): 1

Productive or Unknown Unbanded Sites

12-Mile Bluff, Dairyland Power, Alma

This site was interesting. An unknown female falcon laid a single egg in the nest box before disappearing. However, Brad Foss and Ben Campbell reported that falcons had taken over the cliff and ID'd one of them as resident female Power on April 6th. We assumed a new female had laid the egg before being roused by Power, and that the banding season would now go as usual. But when we rappelled down to the box on June 5th, we found five fresh eggs. We were not able to ID the female and am not sure it is still Power given that it appears the falcons reclutched, and Power hasn't laid five eggs before that we are aware. We are very curious to see who shows up here next year!

Monehen Bluff, Lynxville Complex, Lynxville WI

Falcons have nested on three cliffs in this territory: Lynxville bluff, Lee's bluff, and Monehen bluff. They have been at Monehen bluff, aka south Lynxville, for two years now. We intended to band here on June 16th last year, but the two falcons were already on the wing.

We decided to come back earlier this year. When we arrived on May 25, the falcons had three eggs. Given their nice, deep color and the eyrie's lousy location, we assumed a reclutch. The eyrie was located on a ledge at the base of a large, vertical crack. It was completely unprotected and the crack was a perfect funnel for water. We are waiting to hear from the land owner on whether or not he saw fledgling falcons.

Total sites in complex: four

West Bluff, Maiden Rock WI

Landowners Dan and Sheila reported eyasses on site, but we were unable to band them and I don't have a production count. The falcons used the Ogren eyrie, which is difficult to reach and hard to observe. Total sites in complex: 2

Aggie's Bluff, Lansing IA

We saw two eyasses here, but are unable to reach the eyrie to band them. Falcons first nested here in 2012 and have produced at least 18 young to date (2017).

Shellhorn Complex: Brownsville MN

The bluff changed ownership and we weren't able to get permission to rappel this year, but we will be working on it next year. Falcons first nested here in 2008 and have produced at least 7 young to date (2016). Total sites in complex: 3

Unproductive Sites

Greysolon Plaza, Duluth MN

This has been a productive site for several years and female Canada was back on site and as aggressive as ever. She and her mate Junior (a 2013 hatch from the Sappi paper mill in Cloquet, MN) produced four eggs, all of which appeared to be a normal color and shape. However, none of them hatched. Amy removed and disposed of three eggs on August 2nd. Although Canada was not sitting on her eggs, she was still quite territorial.

According to the Midwest Peregrine Falcon database, Canada hatched in 2004, which would have made her thirteen years old this spring. While we are used to seeing additional signs of impaired fertility in older falcons (white eggs, misshapen eggs, a decline in the number of eggs produced), we are very curious to see whether the nest will be productive next year if Canada returns.

Location: 46.789561, -92.094993

Site visits: 6/15, 8/2

Xcel Energy Riverside, Minneapolis MN

The falcons laid eggs, but around the time the eggs should have been hatching, they disappeared from the nest box. We suspect that the eggs may have failed to hatch and were eaten by the incubating female, something we've seen before in other places. This site doesn't have a camera, but we are looking at installing one next year.

Location: 45.021083, -93.275030

Site visits: 3/28

Red Wing Grain, Red Wing MN

This normally productive site had at least two birds: an unknown male and female 77/X, a 2011 hatch from the mouth of the Nipigon river in Canada! The two falcons went through courtship and everything appeared set, but 77/X never laid eggs.

Wyalusing Quarry, Wyalusing WI

Brett Mandernack watched this box very closely and we were extremely hopeful that we would finally have production this year. However, we arrived to band on May 24 and found two dead falcons – a hatchling and a two-day-old falcon – and an addled egg. While we don't know the cause of death for sure, a photo we took appears to show black fly bites on the two hatched falcons. However, the box, egg, and dead falcons were also soaking wet and cold following a very heavy rain event, so we are unsure of the source of mortality. Male is unbanded. Female is Freya 82/H, a bird that Jackie Fallon banded in 2015 at Faith Bluff in Winona county, MN.

Location: 42.951413, -91.14058

Site visits: 3/07, 3/24, 4/21, 4/22, 5/13, 5/10, 5/17, 5/24

Glen Haven Cliff, Glen Haven WI

Landowner Crystal Fauster reported seeing and hearing an adult and a juvenile falcon at the Glen Haven cliff. We didn't have any production this year, although it looks like the falcons created a shallow scrape in a large crevice in the bluff.

This location was productive once previously, but it has a history of attracting an adult/immature pair. We are very curious about whether it will be productive next year.

Location: 42.836987, -91.073102

Site visits: 6/08

Greshik's Bluff, Fountain City WI

Several monitoring trips found nothing here, and volunteer Doug Wood saw very little activity. Following what we saw at Guider's Bluff this year, it is my gut feeling that falcons may be nesting somewhere else close by. We will spend more time trying to find them next year – I have a couple of hunches regarding potential nest sites.

Location: 44.1395277, -91.7255833

Site visits: 3/5, 4/7, 5/10, 5/27

Alliant Lansing Bluff, Lansing IA

The nest box at the Alliant Lansing power plant looked promising. Ries and volunteers Dean Vicky and William Smith had all spotted falcons on or near the 'new box' at the north end of the cliff. But when the team arrived to band on 6/03, they found three dead nestling falcons of about 20-23 days of age in the nestbox. We took all three carcasses (two males and one female) to the top of the bluff for a field examination. The falcons had multiple bites and hemorrhaging on the underside of their wings, especially along the edges. They also had biting and some hemorrhaging on the skin around their eyes and near their ceres. However, their body condition seemed good otherwise – their growth curves were on track, we were able to sex them, their bodies seemed nicely fleshed, and they hadn't muted green that we could see. The falcons had been dead for perhaps two days and were just beginning to smell.

These weren't the first dead nestling falcons we dealt with this year. At Great Spirit Bluff in Dresbach, MN, horrified watchers observed young falcons die very rapidly following a black fly swarm in late May. An autopsy at the Raptor Center identified the source of death as a classic blackfly strike. Given the similarity between these carcasses and those carcasses, we believe that these falcons also succumbed to black flies. All three were left near a mound at the top of the cliff.

Location: 43.346140, -91.193744

Site visits: 3/5, 3/28, 4/1, 5/13, 6/03

Leo's Bluff, Harper's Ferry IA

We arrived to band at Leo's Bluff on June 11. Joyce Caley, a local volunteer and landowner, had reported hearing falcons, but we had no idea whether the site would be productive. It has a very poor production history and we've found dead falcons there twice.

Amy rappelled down to check the nestbox, which was unused. There were some very old skeletal prey remains, but nothing fresh and no scrape. She checked the pothole the falcons nested in for several years. Nothing. John Howe checked a ledge and another pothole. Nothing. We concluded that the site had been non-productive once again.

Location: 43.165179, -91.178797

Site visits: 3/5, 6/11

Bunge McGregor Stackhouse, McGregor IA

When we arrived to band on May 24th, we discovered that the lone female falcon here had been blown out of the nestbox during a powerful storm on the night of May 21st. The carcass was in bad shape and quite flat on one side, presumably where the falcon hit the ground. We left it there.

We have never had this problem in any nestboxes that we are aware, but plant staff told us the wind was blowing at speeds of up to 70 miles per hour during the storm. We'll keep an eye on this site to see if wind continues to be a problem.

Location: 43.023404, -91.1733

Site visits: 5/10, 5/24

Bellevue State Park, Bellevue IA

We were thrilled when this site finally became productive last year! Park staff and volunteer Sally Bolton kept an eye on it for us, and everything seemed set for success. Unfortunately, there was nothing there when we arrived to band on June 1st. We saw one adult but no falcons, eggs, or eggshell fragments. Based on what was seen earlier in the year, I would tend to think the falcons laid eggs at some point, but we have no idea why the nest failed.

Location: 42.247843, -90.417145

Site visits: 6/1

411 Hamilton Building, Peoria IL

Jim's falcons were rained out this year. They rejected the nest box for a spot on the roof between two HVAC condensers. Unfortunately, a heavy rain literally floated the eggs out from under them and they were not able to reclutch.

Site visits: Three, date unknown

Bald Eagles

Decorah Bald Eagles

After last year's three-egg, two-eagle clutch, we were very happy when the Decorah Eagles laid three eggs and hatched three eagles! Diva D27 was fitted with a transmitter and is still going strong as of this writing. We don't know what happened to D26 and D28, but we wish them the best of luck!

This year was very busy! In addition to watching the nest, sharing the eagles, and installing new cameras and microphones in September, we started an ads-free stream with Explore! Although we intend to continue our online chat, we are very excited about the ads-free stream, which (like our Ustream channel) started operation in early October. Thanks to the millions of fans around the world who joined us for eagle watching this year! We hope you like the new cameras and microphones and hope to have even more learning and interaction tools available for everyone in 2018! All of our streams can be found on our website at www.raptorresource.org.

Egg-Laying

- Egg #1: 2/20/17 @ 7:30 PM CT
- Egg #2: 2/23/17 @ 6:18 PM CT
- Egg #3: 2/27/17 @ 7:03 PM CT

Hatching

- D26 Hatches: 3/31/17, 1st seen 3:05 PM CT
- D27 Hatches: 4/01/17, 1st seen 6:59 AM CT
- D28 Hatches: 4/04/17 @ 6:57 AM CT

Fledging

- D26 Fledges: 6/16/17 at 11:03 AM CDT
- D28 Fledges: 6/17/17 at 6:36 AM CDT
- D27 Fledges: 6/22/17 at 2:16 PM CDT

Camera/Mic cleaning, replacement, and upgrades

- September 13 – September 23



Left to right: D27, D28, and D26 on April 8, 2017

Decorah North Bald Eagles

The Decorah North Eagles had a better year in 2017. They laid three eggs and hatched three eggs. Although DN6 died of hypothermia on April 6th, two days after hatching, DN4 and DN5 both survived. Mom and Dad North laid eggs roughly a month earlier than last year and were better able to take advantage of seasonal flushes of food. Dad North also upped his feeding game. Although he still passed food to Mom, he also spent more time engaged in tandem and single feeding. The increased flow of food seemed to reduce some sibling aggression and both of the surviving eaglets were also much closer in age, so their contests were more evenly matched. Note that DN4's fledge was accidental: DN5 knocked DN4 off while leap-frogging over it in the tree!

Egg-Laying

- Egg #1: 2/19/17 @ 5:53 PM CT
- Egg #2: 2/22/17 @ 3:09 PM CT
- Egg #3: 2/25/17 @ 5:12 PM CT

Hatching

- Hatch #1: DN4 - 3/29/17 1:20PM - 3:14PM
- Hatch #2: DN5 - 3/30/17 first glance 9:55PM
- Hatch #3: DN6 - 4/02/17 @ 9:13 AM

DN6 succumbed to hypothermia on April 4, 2017

Fledging

- DN4 Fledges: 6/11/17 at 7:23 AM CDT
- DN5 Fledged: 6/17/17 at 8:23 AM CDT

Camera/Mic cleaning, replacement, and upgrades

- September 13 – September 23



Counter-clockwise from top: DN4, DN5, DN6

Energy Fort St. Vrain Bald Eagles

We are very happy to report that the Fort St. Vrain eagles were successful this year! After several difficult years, two of the eggs they laid hatched and both eaglets survived to fledge! In September, we worked with Bill Heston, Tina Lopez, and Naresh Dahagame to install a new PTZ HD cam and moved the fixed cam slightly higher – and hopefully out of poop range! The job went very smoothly and we really appreciate their help!

One of interesting things about multiple cameras is the ability to compare different eagle pairs, soft materials, the timing of events, and behaviors. That cam can be watched on our website at <https://www.raptorresource.org/birdcams/xcel-energy-cams/> or at Xcel's site at http://birdcam.xcelenergy.com/cams/eagle_top.

Egg-Laying

- Egg #1: 2/14/17 @ 6:10 PM MT
- Egg #2: 2/17/17 @ 5:55 PM MT
- Egg #3: 2/21/17 @ 5:05 PM MT

Hatching

- FSV34: 3/26/17, time unknown
- FSV35: 3/28/17, time unknown but very early

Camera/Mic cleaning, replacement, and upgrades

- August 22 – August 26



Left to Right: FSV35 and FSV34

Get in Touch!

Want to learn more about us and/or get in touch?

Our address

Raptor Resource Project
119 Winnebago Street
PO Box 16
Decorah, IA 52101

Our phone

276-FALCON2 (276-325-2662)

Our website

www.raptorresource.org

Non-profit ratings

Guidestar

<https://www.guidestar.org/profile/41-1693761>

Great Non-Profits

<http://greatnonprofits.org/org/raptor-resource-project>

Our email addresses

john@raptorresource.org

amy@raptorresource.org