

Raptor Resource Project 2022 Peregrine Falcon Monitoring Report



Peregrine Falcon nestlings at Maassen's Bluff, Buffalo County, WI

Director's Message

Welcome! 2022 is coming to a close and I can't help but look back with a feeling of accomplishment. It has seemed like a tough couple of years, and I am ready for some R&R. You may think I'm referring to Rest & Relaxation. Yes, we can all use that, but I'm thinking about Renewal and Research. Life can be harsh in the natural world, and we have followed many recent changes and challenges that have led to opportunities for renewal and research.

Renewal: After over ten years of watching and learning from Mom and Dad Decorah, our Decorah Eagles decided to do what wild animals do - move on. Moving away from our watchful camera lenses was and still is a tough pill to swallow, but it is part of a natural progression that we can't control. That natural progression has led to an opportunity for renewal. We shifted our focus to our eagles in the valley of the Norths – the Decorah North Nest. And then after ten years away from the famous Decorah Eagle nest known as N1, we have a new pair of eagles entering the territory and calling it home! We are very fortunate to be starting the bald eagle love story all over again. Who knows what the coming nesting season will bring? Eaglets, we hope!

Research: We added a Golden Eagle monitoring and tracking program in January of 2022 to learn more about the eagles that winter in the Driftless area. I'm excited to report that we captured two golden eagles in our first year! I'm very proud of our team and the prospects for expanding our program in the coming year. Every day is an exciting day as we learn more about these powerful and mysterious raptors. You can read all about it in the Program Spotlight Section!

Our peregrine falcon banding and monitoring crew went above and beyond this year as highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) entered the picture. We assessed its impact on the peregrine population with pre-nest season monitoring, focused banding of young, and follow-up monitoring. We did not observe any HPAI cases in peregrine falcons and production was normal across the territory. I wish I could say the same for owl and bald eagle populations. Time and careful monitoring will tell us how lasting the effects of HPAI will be and which raptor species and populations it will circulate through. Managing and minimizing human impact on raptor habitat in the years to come will be critical to their survival, which means that our mission of education, stewardship, and creating a lasting connection between our two worlds has never been so important.

I want to close by recognizing everyone who helps us deliver our mission. Our live cams, education programs, and research would not be possible without you. A heartfelt thanks to our moderators,



especially lead Decorah Eagle mods Tulsa and Glogdog; lead Decorah North Mods RRiverEagle and EagleEyeDNN, Flyway chat lead Izzysamlíkeseagles, and lead Facebook Mod V. Your leadership, dedication, and hard work are a vital part of our success. Our moderators 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. You rock!

Thanks to our camera operators, Explore.org mods, and the people who capture and post video to YouTube, especially Camops Spish, Coqui, Dun, Talon, Zandra, Sandy, and Eaglewind; videographers EagleCam, Blossom Holland, Tulsaducati, Rosieann B, 70chico1, Mochamama, ginger52, Arlene Beech, Eaglespirit, GABear, Chickiedee64, Lori D, and LifeMedia. Your hard work makes sure that no one misses life in and around our nests.

We couldn't follow our eagles without Brett Mandernack! A very special thanks to Brett, Ryan Schmitz, and David and Ann Lynch. We have learned so much we would never have known without you. Another thanks to Robin Brumm for keeping us up to date on Decorah Eagles Mom and DM2 with her Day Trips to Decorah. We really appreciate it.

And finally, a big thanks to Explore.org, especially Charlie Annenberg, Courtney Huq, and Candice Rusch for all their help and support. I'd also like to give a shoutout to Justin from A2Z Security for his hard work and technical support.

Our future leaders in raptor conservation surround us. Each class of students we introduce to life in an eagle nest or the beauty of a buteo moves us along in our goal of engaging and developing our future conservationists. Whether it is watching the eagles or holding and releasing a hawk, there is nothing more engaging or effective in developing a connection and love for nature. I'm proud of the success of our teachers, volunteers, and conservation partners.

Thank you for supporting our programs, for your interest, and for your contribution.

John Howe

Director, Raptor Resource Project

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Peregrine Production 2022 By State: RRP Sites

State	Number of Sites	Production in 2022	Total Production, All Years
Minnesota	17	33	879
Iowa	11	9	140
Wisconsin	17	27	462
Totals	45	69	1,481

The Raptor Resource Project did not band peregrine falcons at our cliff sites this year because of concerns about highly pathogenic avian influenza. But we monitored all of our sites and banded at industrial sites with easy access, taking care to mask, glove, and decontaminate clothing and equipment. We also followed up at each site when falcons were fledging to verify that they survived.

In 2022, peregrine falcons at 25 Raptor Resource Project sites produced 69 young, which equals our five-year production average. Nine sites were on cliffs, nine were on power plants, four were on grain mills, and three were on buildings in the cities of Duluth, MN; La Crosse, WI; and Dubuque, IA.

2022 was relatively uneventful, although the three nestlings at Great Spirit Bluff jumped when blackflies swarmed their nest box on June 14. We used our cameras to scan the area beneath the bluff and found two of them alive. We don't know whether they survived, although we saw grounded nestlings fledge from beneath the bluff in 2014, 2017, and 2019. Great Spirit Bluff and Greshik's Bluff in Fountain City, WI were the only sites where blackflies had a significant impact, and we were able to treat the young at Greshik's Bluff. We also treated the Red Wing Grain nestlings for hippoboscids during our first visit there. All three young were alive and healthy when John Howe banded them a couple of weeks later. Fortunately, blackflies and/or hippoboscids were not present in large enough numbers to be a problem at most of our sites.

2022's site surveys began in late February and continued through mid-June. Falcons can shift around quite a bit before they lay eggs and their activity level changes dramatically with full-time incubation, hatch, and the end of full-time brooding. Regular observation is the only way to understand where falcons are nesting and what nest chronology looks like. Thanks to Bill Smith, Jon Stravers, and Mark Blackbourn for their helpful, detailed observations, in the case of Bill and Jon, their boats! We couldn't see some of our sites without you.

Power plants, stackhouses, and other industrial sites have been crucial to the recovery of the peregrine falcon. We really appreciate the people that help us get it all done, including our industrial partners at Xcel Energy, Dairyland Power, Minnesota Power, Great River Energy, 3M, River City Stone, Red Wing Grain, Ardent Milling, Bay State Milling, and Viserion America: especially Tina Lopez, Curtis Dominicak, Jaime Massey, Frank Sperlak, Richard Lockwood, Doug Peterson, Spencer Hoff, Cheryl Erler, John Kaczmarek, Bill Heston, Lynn Hall, Mark Jackson, Renata Johnson, Melissa Betzler, Brad Foss, Ben Campbell, Doug Braff, Karen Kiekow, Adam Aili, Brenda Geisler, Jon Frost, Tom Mercer, Jim Larson, Seth Bayer, Dustin Sanborn, and Jack O'Sullivan.

Our conservation partners manage much of the wildlife and wildlands where we work, help us get where we need to go, and are always enthusiastic when it comes to Peregrine Falcons, Bald Eagles, and the mighty Mississippi River. We appreciate the dedication and commitment of the Iowa DNR, Dubuque County Conservation Board, Wisconsin DNR, River Valley Raptors, Effigy Mounds National Monument, the Brice Prairie Conservation Association, the Mississippi River Valley Conservancy, the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge, and the Bird Banding Lab: especially Bruce Blair, Karmin Klingenberg, Jessica Salesman, Brian Preston, Elli Lineberg, Sumner Matteson, Dean Edlin and crew, Mark Rasmussen, Gary Wolfe, Naomi Rivers, Joe and Abbie Krumrie, Fritz Funk, and Marc Schultz.

And finally, a huge shoutout to our landowner partners: the Truttman, Greshik, Guider, Mulholland, Conrad, Howe, Burt, and Noll families, Myrna Buri, Doug Wood, Stephen Grulkowski, Rich King, Dave Noble, Cynthia Kindlien and Lawrence Underkoffler, and Vic and Mary Holec. Thanks for supporting our work.

Captive breeding and releases brought the peregrine falcon back from the brink of extinction. Your good stewardship and enthusiasm have helped it to thrive. Thank you everyone for all that you have do. Long may the falcon fly!



Wisconsin

Xcel Energy Ashland Plant: Ashland, Ashland County WI

Adult Data

Adult female: M/31 'Penny', a 2020 hatch from Briess Malt & Ingredients Company in Manitowoc, WI
Adult male: Unbanded

Nesting Data

Hatch began: June 18

Banding date: July 8 | Site visits: May 17, May 31, July 1, July 8

Ashland was very unusual. The site – already late – moved two weeks later and both adults were new. Lynn reported that one little falcon looked very ill when she checked the box on July 1. When Amy came to band them on July 8, both were still alive, and Lynn reported that the sickly one (B/82) looked healthier than it did on July 1. This was a surprise to Amy, since 'Timmy' was very listless and had green staining around his vent and on his belly. Brother B/81 'Thomas' also had green staining, although he was much more active and attempted to bite and foot the banders.

Both falcons had small crops and some hippoboscids, although the infestation wasn't bad. Amy squashed the hippoboscids and treated the falcons with Endure. Lynn reported fledge in late July.

Name	Sex	Color Band	BBL Band
Thomas	Male	B/81 bl/blu	1266-07938
Sloan	Male	B/82 bl/blu	1266-07939

Amy talked to Sumner Matteson after banding. She was curious about whether the Ashland Common Tern colony had been impacted by avian influenza. While some colonies were devastated, Ashland was not. We still don't know what happened here but are glad that both falcons survived.

Year falcons first nested: 2001 | Total number of young produced (2022): 27

Dairyland Power Alma: Alma, Buffalo County WI

Adult Data

Adult female: 89/H bl/blue, a 2015 hatch from Midwest Plaza in Minneapolis, MN
Adult male: unbanded

Nesting Data

Hatch began: May 6

Eyrie check date: N/A

We monitored this site by camera. 89/H laid four eggs beginning on March 29. All four falcons hatched between May 6th and May 8th and fledge began on June 14th.

Year falcons first nested: 1997 | Total number of young produced (2022): 87

Wisconsin

Maassen's Bluff: Nelson, Buffalo County WI

Adult Data

Both adults are unbanded

Nesting Data

Hatch began: May 12

Eyrie check date: May 27 | Site visits: March 8, March 16, March 29, April 5, April 19, May 17, May 27, June 14

John Howe and Dave Kester rappelled down and found three healthy-looking nestling falcons about 16 days of age. When we checked again on June 14, we spotted one fledgling on the ledge and another back in the pothole. Both were active and appeared to be healthy. While it is hard to tell without handling, we think one nestling was male, one nestling was female, and one was unknown.

Year falcons first nested: 2001 | Total number of young produced (2022): 37



Castle Rock: Bluff Siding, Buffalo County WI

Adult Data

Adult female: Banded black/blue

Adult male: Unknown. We did not see or hear an adult male during any of our visits.

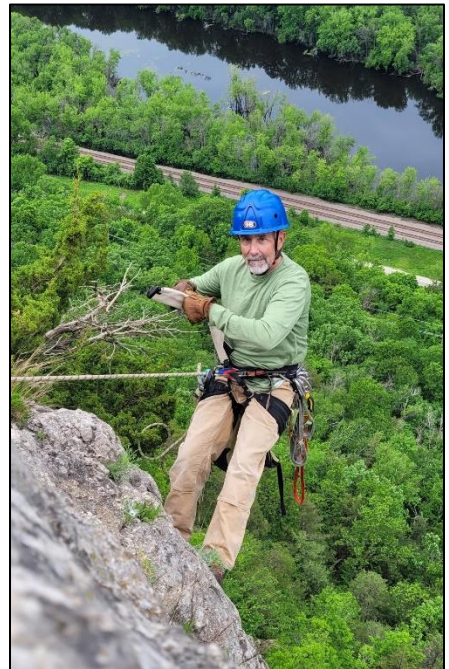
Nesting Data

Hatch began: May 14

Eyrie check date: June 4 | Site visits: March 8, March 16, March 29, April 5, April 19, May 17, June 4, June 15, June 23

Dave rappelled down and found one addled egg and two healthy eyasses about 21 days of age. We saw both nestlings 'wingercizing' near the lip of the pothole on June 15 and one fledgling in a pothole near the eyrie on June 23.

Year falcons first nested: 2002 | Total number of young produced (2022): 40



Wisconsin

Maiden Rock: Maiden Rock State Bluff Natural Area, Pepin County WI

Adult Data

Both adults are unknown

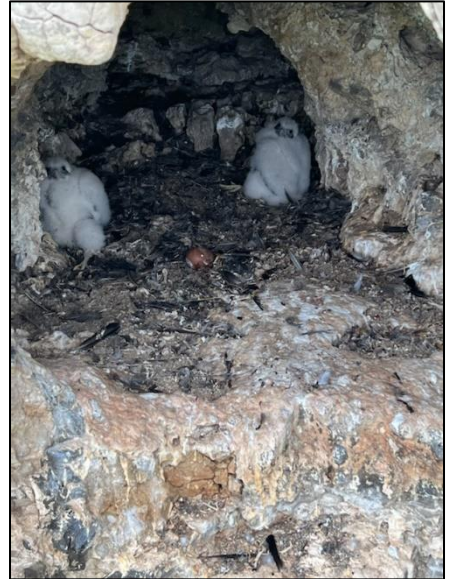
Nesting Data

Hatch began: May 16

Eyrie check date: June 6 | Site visits: March 8, March 16, March 29, April 5, April 19, May 17, June 6, June 15, June 23

Dave rappelled down and found four nestling falcons about 21 days of age. There were some blackflies in the eyrie, but the falcons were active and did not have hematomas around their eyes: good signs that the blackflies were not overwhelming them. We saw one parent drop-and-dash prey on June 15 and two fledglings on June 23.

This was a fun site to watch falcons this year! The parents were extremely defensive – we watched them chase and hit bald eagles, a red-tailed hawk, and even turkey vultures. The male especially never seemed to sit still for very long.



Year falcons first nested: 2001 | Total number of young produced (2022): 50

Greshik's Bluff: Fountain City, Buffalo County WI

Adult Data

Both adults are unknown

Nesting Data

Hatch began: May 14

Eyrie check date: June 8 | Site visits: March 8, March 16, March 29, April 5, April 19, May 17, June 8, June 15, June 23

Amy Ries rappelled down and found three male nestlings, one female nestling, and loads of blackflies on the falcons and in the box. Two of the little falcons were listless and all of them had hematomas, so Amy treated them with Endure. Although the little falcons had small crops and the nest box was full of prey remains, we did not see or hear parents. Doug Wood watched the site and reported both parents present on the 9th.

During a follow-up visit on June 23, Amy saw three fledglings perched on the lip of the nest box.

Year falcons first nested: 2008 | Total number of young produced (2022): 9

Wisconsin

Redbird Bluff: Desoto, Vernon County WI

Adult Data

Adult female: Lefty A/47 black/red, a 2015 hatch from US Bank in La Crosse, WI

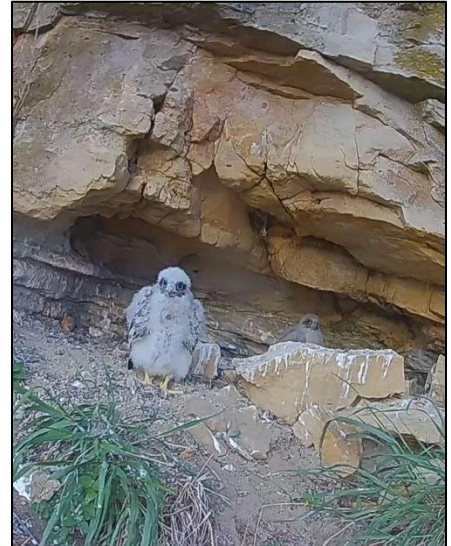
Adult male: Unknown

Nesting Data

Hatch began: May 14

Eyrie check date: N/A | Site visits: March 13, March 16, May 12, May 23, June 1, June 16

Landowner Rich King monitored this site. Redbird is quite unique - the falcons nest in a pothole roughly 30 feet off the ground and the site can be checked with a camera mounted on a long pole. Rich took photos of a roughly 25-day old falcon on May 23rd and reported fledglings in June. Bill and Mark Blackbourne reported fledglings on June 16.



Year falcons first nested: 2017 | Total number of young produced (2022): 14

US Bank: City of La Crosse, La Crosse County WI

Adult Data

Adult female: 94/P Strawberry, a 2017 hatch from Xcel Energy's Sherco plant in Becker, MN

Adult male: 06/D Ardy, a 2015 hatch from Ardent Milling in Lake City, MN

Nesting Data

Hatch began: May 6

Eyrie check date: N/A

We monitored this site by camera. 94/P laid four eggs beginning on April 4. Three of them hatched between May 12th and May 15th and local watcher klhfarrow confirmed fledge beginning on June 21 .



Strawberry laid egg #3 six days after egg #2. This was her first year and I'll be curious to see whether she closes the gap between egg #2 and egg #3 next year.

Year falcons first nested: 2006 | Total number of young produced (2022): 48

Wisconsin

Hobb's Hollow Bluff: Ferryville, Crawford County WI

Adult Data

Both adults are unknown

Nesting Data

Hatch began: May 6

Eyrie check date: June 16 | Site visits: March 16, March 29, April 4, April 21, June 16

Amy and John rappelled down and found three healthy young nestling falcons about 24 to 25 days of age. Thanks to Bill and Mark for monitoring this site, which can only be seen from the river.

Year falcons first nested: 2021 | Total number of young produced (2022): 6



Minnesota

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

Adult Data

Adult female: C/59 Faye, a 2014 hatch from Horizon Milling in Lake City, MN

Adult male: K/59 Mikey, a 2015 hatch from the Ford Parkway Bridge in Minneapolis, MN

Nesting Data

Hatch began: May 11

Banding date: June 7 | Site visits: June 7. *This site can be monitored remotely via webcam.*

The peregrine utility program started at the Allen S. King plant in 1988, when Paul Simonet, an Xcel Energy employee and falconer, told RRP founder Bob Anderson that there was a falcon on site. Bob was doubtful – falcons had just returned to nesting in the wild in 1987 – but checked it out. Paul was right! Plant manager Mike Miser gave Bob permission to install a nest box on the 400' level of the stack catwalk and in 1990, a young falcon named Mae became the first falcon to nest at a power plant. The King plant currently leads Xcel's falcon production pack with 82 falcons since 1990. It is our second-most productive site by raw numbers and our most productive by descendants.

All three falcons looked great, with nice crops and no ectoparasites. Watch the King falcons here: <https://www.raptorresource.org/birdcams/xcel-energy-cams/>.



Name	BBL Band	Sex	Color Band
Fury	1947-43843	Female	P/39
Frenzy	1947-43844	Female	P/40
Fearless	1947-43845	Female	P/41

Year falcons first nested: 1990 | Total number of young produced (2022): 82

Minnesota

Xcel Energy Prairie Island: Red Wing, Goodhue County MN

Adult Data

Adult female: *Y/*E Freya, a 2008 hatch from the Colonnade Building in Golden Valley, MN

Adult male: Unknown

Nesting Data

Hatch began: May 14

Banding date: June 8 | Site visits: May 19, June 8

John Howe, Amy Ries, Rich Lockwood, Justin Wick, and Ellie Bauer climbed the dome to find Freya ready and waiting! She laid five eggs and two hatched. The little falcons looked great, and Frank Sperlak nailed the banding date again! Curious about the names? All Prairie Island nestlings are named after plant staff! It's a wonderful way to celebrate them.



Name	BBL Band	Sex	Color Band
Big Andi	1947-43846	F	P/42
Schmittty	1947-43847	F	P/43

My notes from last year mentioned Freya's age. Would she survive to nest another year? She did! Freya is now 14 years old – a veritable Grande Dame in the falcon world! She's still laying five eggs per clutch and age hasn't mellowed her one bit! We hope to see her again next year.

Year falcons first nested: 1997 | Total number of young produced (2022): 75

Xcel Energy High Bridge: St. Paul, Ramsey County MN

Adult Data

Adult female: Brick 34/W, a 2017 hatch from Madison Gas & Electric in Madison, WI

Adult male: Monte 32/D, a 2017 hatch from the Fort Parkway Bridge in St. Paul, MN

Nesting Data

Hatch began: May 8

Banding date: June 9 | Site visits: June 9. *This site can be monitored remotely via webcam.*

Falcons nested at Xcel Energy's High Bridge plant from 2000 to 2007, when the company removed the smokestack and converted the plant to natural gas.



Minnesota

Unfortunately, the falcons rejected our replacement nest box on a nearby building for the lofty spaces of St. Paul's High Bridge. In 2016, MNDOT approached Xcel Energy and the Raptor Resource Project about installing a nestbox on the plant's turbine building to move the falcons. It was a bit of a gamble – would they really move to a lower spot? – but everyone did a great job and the falcons returned in 2017.

In 2021, the High Bridge nestlings were badly parasitized by hippoboscids flies. Despite treatment, one of them died. We were happy to see that all three were healthy and ectoparasite free in 2022! The two males fledged on June 15 and their sister fledged two days later.

Watch the High Bridge falcons here: <https://www.raptorresource.org/birdcams/xcel-energy-cams/>

Name	BBL Band	Sex	Color Band
Rocket	1947-50647	F	H/50
Polinske	1266-07910	M	19/U
Randy	1266-07911	M	20/U

Year falcons first nested: 2000 | Total number of young produced (2022): 32



Minnesota

Xcel Energy Monticello: Monticello, Wright County MN

Adult Data

Adult female: Unknown

Adult male: Unknown

We were not able to band at Monticello this year, but onsite falcon watcher Melissa Betzler confirmed that there were at least two nestlings.

In 1993, RRP Board president Rob MacIntyre built the original nest box with help from a North Community High shop class. But 25 years of weather had done its work on the lid and sides of the box, so Monticello replaced it in late 2019. We appreciate Monticello's commitment to their falcons and want to give a special shout-out to former caretaker Melody Schmidt for all she has done to make this program work! She was an excellent caretaker and advocate for our falcons. We look forward to banding here next year.

Year falcons first nested: 1995 | Total number of young produced (2022): 65

Minnesota Power Hibbard: Duluth, St. Louis County MN

Adult Data

Adult female: Unbanded

Adult male: Unknown

Nesting Data

Hatch began: May 9

Eyrie check date: May 31 | Site visits: May 31. *This site can be monitored remotely via webcam.*

The wind was blowing steadily at 25-30 mph as we headed up the stack to take measurements and check the falcons. It was possible, if difficult, to work until the rain came and the wind started gusting at *who knows what* – higher than 30 mph, at any rate! You couldn't hear anyone, and you couldn't take anything out lest the wind tear it from your hands, so we left the stack. Amy was able to get pictures of two of the little falcons before the wind kicked up and made working impossible. All three of them fledged between June 21 and June 25.



Watch the Hibbard falcons here: <https://www.raptorresource.org/birdcams/minnesota-power-and-light-falcons/>.

Over the past four years, emergency repairs and inspections during nesting season have given us an invaluable chance to learn more about how falcons react to disruption around their nests...and how to manage them safely when disruptions can't be avoided. A huge thanks to MPL for being wonderful falcon stewards.

Minnesota

Year falcons first nested: 2008 | Total number of young produced (2022): 34

Minnesota Power Clay Boswell: Cohasset, Itasca County, MN

Adult Data

Adult female: Lucia D/51. She was two years old when

Amy banded her in 2019

Adult male: Unbanded

Nesting Data

Hatch began: May 17

Banding date: June 9 | Site visits: June 9. *This site can be monitored remotely via webcam.*

Lucia was injured last fall. After rehabilitation at the Raptor Center, we released her back to her home on November 4. Her injury and stint in rehab did nothing to diminish her ferocity: as usual, Amy hand-captured her and found a volunteer to hold her while we banded her young! Thanks to Adam for holding Lucia and Zack Johnson, Dan Hendrickson, Mike Soule, and Doug for the banding help and stack climb.



Watch the Clay Boswell falcons here: <https://www.raptorresource.org/birdcams/minnesota-power-and-light-falcons/>.

Name	BBL Band	Sex	Color Band
Frightful	1947-35570	F	P/50
Tiberius	1266-07946	M	B/79
Hawkeye	1266-07937	M	B/80

Lucia laid four eggs and all four hatched, but the last hatchling was four days behind the first two and did not survive.

Year falcons first nested: 1993 | Total number of young produced (2022): 87

Great River Energy: Elk River, Sherburne County MN

Adult Data

Female: 31/P Breezy, a 2015 hatch from Xcel Energy's Allen S. King plant in Oak Park Heights, MN

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

Nesting Data

Hatch began: May 7

Banding date: NA. *This site can be monitored remotely via webcam.*

Minnesota

Great River Energy's Elk River plant shut down in 2019. Falcon caretaker Brenda Geisler, who launched the plant's falcon program in 2006, wanted to keep falcons on site after the plant's turbine building was torn down. She launched an effort to build a first-of-its-kind pole nest box after we determined there were no other good options on site. Her hard work bore fruit when resident falcons Breezy and Brooklyn returned to adopt their new box and produce four young in 2020 – and four more this spring! Thanks so much to Brenda and Great River Energy for keeping our utility peregrine program alive at Elk River! To learn more about GRE's utility-peregrine program, follow this link: <https://bit.ly/2FF14lv>.

How do peregrine falcon nest boxes influence local populations? Check out ebird.org to take a look at sightings in, around, and between Great River Energy Elk River and Xcel Energy Monticello – or any site of your choosing! If you watch birds, consider getting an account and reporting them. The more you report, the more data we have to help identify and protect birds!

Watch the Great River Energy falcons here: <https://www.raptorresource.org/birdcams/great-river-energy-falcons/>.

We did not band at Great River Energy this year.

Year falcons first nested: 2007 | Total number of young produced (2022): 50

Red Wing Grain: Red Wing, Goodhue County MN

Adult Data

Adult female: Unbanded

Adult male: E/30 Mac, a 2013 hatch from Dairyland Power Alma

Nesting Data

Hatch began: May 23

Banding date: June 17 | Site visits: June 9, June 17. *This site can be monitored remotely via webcam.*

The Red Wing Grain nestlings were heavily parasitized by hippoboscids. We treated them with Endure on June 9 and all three looked great when John returned on June 17 to band them.



We recorded large numbers of blackflies at two sites (Great Spirit Bluff in Minnesota and Greshik's Bluff in Wisconsin) and large numbers of hippoboscids at one site (Red Wing Grain in Minnesota). Both parasites feed on blood but have very different lifecycles and requirements. Blackflies lay their eggs in cold running water, but hippoboscids give birth to live young. A single larva develops in the female fly's uterus, molting and feeding on the secretions of a milk gland as it grows. After three instars, the mother gives birth to a white pre-pupa that immediately darkens and forms the pupal shell. Hippoboscids are common ectoparasites on birds of prey, but a huge outbreak can be fatal to young nestling falcons. We're glad all three survived.

Minnesota

Watch the Red Wing Grain falcons here: <https://www.raptorresource.org/birdcams/additional-falcon-cams/>.

Name	BBL Band	Sex	Color Band
Josie	1947-50646	F	H/49
Dean	1156-23782	M	49/U
Tiny Tim	1156-23783	M	50/U

Tiny Tim was very small! He was the last hatchling and had been heavily parasitized, which can delay growth. We weren't sure he was going to make it, but he survived and appeared to fledge successfully in early July.

Year falcons first nested: 2003 | Total number of young produced (2022): 47

Ardent Milling: Lake City, Wabasha County MN

Adult Data

Adult female: Unknown

Adult male: Unknown

Nesting Data

Hatch began: Unknown

Banding date: NA

We did not band at Ardent Milling this year, but manager Seth Bayer reported that the resident falcons produced two nestlings.

Ardent Milling falcons have gone on to nest at Dairyland Power Genoa, Alliant Cassville, the Weston Power Plant near Wausau WI, the 3M plant in Cottage Grove MN, the Lynxville Bluff complex in Lynxville WI, and the Prescott railroad bridge near Prescott, WI. While Ardent Milling isn't one of our top sites in terms of production, it has produced an extraordinary number of successful young. Husker, the first falcon to nest here, fledged from Woodman Tower in Nebraska and was a daughter of Project-produced falcon Zeus.

Year falcons first nested: 2002 | Total number of young produced (2022): 62

Minnesota

Bay State Milling: Winona, Winona County MN

Adult Data

Adult female: Unknown

Adult male: Malice 59/R, a 2020 hatch from the Alliant Lansing cliff in Lansing, Iowa

Nesting Data

Hatch began: May 20

Banding date: June 8 | Site visits: March 8, March 16, March 29, April 19, May 17, June 8

This site moved late last year, most likely due to a reclutch and/or mate change. We banded on May 28 in 2020, on June 25 in 2021, and on June 8 in 2022. Although we were disappointed not to get an ID on the female falcon, we were thrilled to ID male Malice! When we banded at the Lansing Bluff back in 2020, we treated the young falcons with Endure. They had been very badly bitten by blackflies and we didn't know if they would survive. Amy confirmed that at least two fledged in mid-June of 2020 and we were thrilled to see a 2020 alumnus show up to nest at Bay State Milling this year, roughly 55 miles northwest of his natal nest as the falcon flies!



Name	BBL Band	Sex	Color Band
Chien Po	1266-07908	Male	17/U
Zazu	1266-07909	Male	18/U

For years, we thought that Bay State Milling and Castle Rock, located 1.8 miles northwest of the plant, were part of the same territory. That we knew, falcons nested on one or the other, but never both. We are absolutely thrilled to be wrong! The relative abundance of prey and separation of both sites – Bay State Milling looks downstream and Castle Rock looks upstream – may allow for closer nesting. It is also worth noting that Castle Rock, which is just across the river from Winona, is relatively urban for a cliff. Urban falcons often nest at higher densities.

Year falcons first nested: 2009 | Total number of young produced (2022): 35

Rob's Nestbox, Greysolon Plaza: Duluth, St. Louis County MN

Adult Data

Adult Data

Female: Unbanded

Male: 89/B Junior, a 2013 hatch from Sappi Paper in Cloquet, MN

Minnesota

Nesting Data

Hatch began: May 6

Eyrie check date: May 31 | Site visits: May 11, May 31, June 14

Amy found three healthy young nestling falcons when she checked the nest box on May 31. One of them was standing on her feet in front of her younger siblings and appeared to be protecting the nest – a behavior we sometimes see in ‘big sisters’ who rule the sibling roost! All three falcons fledged successfully, albeit with some grounding drama.

We did not band nestlings at Greysolon this year, although Amy banded a fledgling that grounded.

Name	BBL Band	Sex	Color Band
Victory	1947-50683	F	P/61

Duluth provides ample prey year-round and may serve as an ‘island’ for wintering falcons that come in from across the Northland. Check eBird reports for more information: <https://bit.ly/203B89O> (and select Duluth, MN).

Year falcons first nested: 2003 | Total number of young produced (2022): 54

Great Spirit Bluff: La Crescent, Houston County MN

Adult Data

Adult female: Zooey

Adult male: Newman

Nesting Data

Hatch began: May 11

Banding date: N/A | Site visits: *This site can be monitored remotely via webcam.*

Last year, Zooey didn’t lay her first egg until April 16, and laid her second egg 10 days later than her first. She advanced egg-laying by 13 days this year, laid all of her eggs roughly two days apart, and did a much better job feeding her young. Unfortunately, a blackfly strike drove the nestling falcons from their box on June 14. We saw and heard two falcons below the bluff on June 15, but we have not seen or heard any falcons since. We did not band falcons here this year.

Watch the Great Spirit Bluff falcons here: <https://www.raptorresource.org/birdcams/gsb-falcons/>.

Year falcons first nested: 2005 | Total number of young produced (2022): 48



Iowa

Viserion America: McGregor, Clayton County IA



Adult Data

Adult female: Unbanded

Adult male: K/41, a 2017 hatch from Guider's Bluff in Lansing, Iowa. K/41 appeared in the movie 'Decoding the Driftless'

Nesting Data

Hatch began: April 24

Eyrie check date: May 24 | Site visits: May 1, May 18, May 24, June 4

We documented two healthy-looking nestling falcons about 30 days of age on May 24th. When we checked again on June 4, we found two fledglings exploring the steel beams and roof of the grain mill. Judging from the difference in size between the two, one was female and one was male.

This nest box can easily be watched from Ann's Point in Pike's Peak State Park. Drive around to the back of the bluff, park in the DNR parking lot, and walk up the trail. Follow the signs to Ann's Point and you'll come to the top of the hill. Admire the stunning river scenery or train your binoculars on the nest box and see if you can get a band number!

Year falcons first nested: 2010 | Total number of young produced (2022): 29

Iowa

Guider's Bluff: Lansing, Allamakee County IA



Adult Data

Adults are unknown

Nesting Data

Hatch began: May 12

Eyrie check date: June 2 | Site visits: March 13, March 16, March 29, April 26, May 18, June 2

Amy rappelled down and found two healthy 21/22-day old nestling falcons. They had no ectoparasites or hematomas, small but visible crops, and were sitting in an eyrie full of feathers. The falcons nested in a low pothole roughly 75 feet down from the top – the same eyrie that appeared in 'Decoding the Driftless'.

Year falcons first nested: 2010 | Total number of falcons produced (2022): 13 | Number of sites in complex: 2

Iowa

Dubuque Courthouse, Dubuque, Dubuque County IA

Adult Data

Adult female: She-Beast bl/blu D/20, a falcon that Dave Kester banded as an adult here in 2019

Adult male: Jeff bl/r 58/N, a 2013 hatch from the Savanna Silo in Savanna IL

Nesting Data

Hatch began: May 7

Site visits: None

We did not visit the Courthouse since we can watch it remotely. She-beast laid the first of four eggs on March 30. One egg hatched on May 7 and the second hatched on May 9.

You can watch the Dubuque Courthouse nest box here:

<https://www.dubuquecountyiowa.gov/385/Courthouse-Falcons>. Thank you to Dubuque County Conservation and the courthouse for their excellent records and camera!



Year falcons first nested: 2017 | Total number of young produced (2022): 14

Iowa

Leo's Bluff, Yellow River State Forest, Allamakee County

Adult Data

Adults are unknown. The adult female was unbanded and the adult male had a black/green band.

Nesting Data

Hatch began: May 13

Eyrie check date: May 24 | Site visits: March 22, April 22, May 18, May 24, June 2, June 15

Amy rappelled down and found three 10/12-day-old nestling falcons and one addled egg. The young were healthy, with no ectoparasites and nice little crops. When Amy checked the cliff from below on June 15, she spotted both adults and one young falcon towards the front of the eyrie. She heard another falcon but was unable to locate it.



Year falcons first nested: 2004 | Total number of young produced (2022): 14 | Sites in complex: 4

Failed Sites

Skidmore Bluff Complex: Hagar City, Pierce County WI

Eyrie Check Date/Site Visits

May 27 | Site visits: March 8, March 16, March 29, April 5, April 19, May 17, May 27, June 16, November 11

Amy checked the cliff early on the morning of May 27 and saw a juvenile falcon but did not see any adults. When Amy and John rappelled down to check the eyrie, it was empty. It did not appear to have been used this year – they didn't see a scrape, slices, prey remains, eggs, eggshells, or egg fragments.

Skidmore never really seemed to gel this year. Falcons arrived late and were engaged in early reproductive/courtship behaviors (chasing, wailing, performative territorial defense) at a time when other falcons were already laying eggs. While Amy spotted a female falcon in front of the eyrie on May 17, falcons weren't seen or heard here on three of her monitoring rounds.

Could the juvenile Amy saw have been produced this year? That would put onset of egg-laying on Saturday, March 12 – not impossible, but highly improbable based on our overall calendar, this particular site's history, and falcon sightings. We're putting Skidmore in the 'failed' column for 2022.

Amy and John visited on November 11 and dropped the nest box, which was starting to fall apart.

Year falcons first nested: 2011 | Total number of young produced (2022): 18

Monehen's Bluff Complex: Lynxville, Crawford County WI

Site Visits: March 16, April 21

Bill and Dave watched this site from the river and the ground. They did not see or hear any falcons here.

The Lynxville area is an enigma. There are miles of cliffs along this stretch of Pool 9. Why aren't falcons nesting at the north and south ends of the territory, which are a little over two miles apart? Why do such excellent cliffs stay empty year after year? We haven't seen them nest at Monehen's Bluff and Hobb's Hollow yet. Perhaps the two cliffs are too close together, or early territorial fighting results in an empty site. We'll continue to watch, but we're stumped for now! We'll probably start lumping Monehen's Bluff and Hobb's Hollow together until the falcons tell us they are two different sites.

Year falcons first nested: 2003 | Total number of young produced (2022): 20

Wyalusing Quarry: Wyalusing, Grant County WI

Site Visits: March 25, March 29, April 4, April 22, May 18

Dave saw a falcon here on March 29, but neither Dave nor Bill nor Amy saw falcons during any of their other visits. Given that this site has never been successful, we plan to pull our nest box next year.

Failed Sites

Xcel Energy Riverside: Minneapolis, Hennepin County MN

Site visit: May 20

We knew that falcons weren't nesting in the nest box, but thanks to a local volunteer, we also knew that they were in the neighborhood. Amy and Spencer Hoff checked the plant's roofs on May 20 and did not find any falcons or signs of a scrape, but Amy did see a falcon carrying prey towards the Lowry Avenue Bridge. It vanished beneath the bridge and she didn't see it again, although it was far away and her perspective made flight past the bridge difficult to see. She did not see or hear falcons when she checked the bridge later that day.

Falcons are clearly in the neighborhood, but we have no idea where they are nesting. We'll keep looking!

Year falcons first nested: 1998 | Total number of young produced (2022): 22

Xcel Energy Sherco: Becker, MN Sherburne County MN

Site visit: May 16

This site can be monitored from a camera mounted in the guard shack. There were no falcons, eggs, or young in the nestbox when Amy checked it on May 16. We're not sure what happened, but it is unusual for this site to sit empty.

Year falcons first nested: 1992 | Total number of young produced (2022): 68

Homer Bluff: Homer, Winona County MN

Site visits: March 16, March 21, March 29, April 19, April 26, May 11, May 17

Amy and Bill visited this site repeatedly, checking Homer and a formation downstream that we call the V-Bluff. We did not see or hear falcons at Homer this year. Bill spotted a falcon on the V-Bluff on May 11, but we could not confirm occupancy.

Year falcons first nested: 2007 | Total number of young produced (2022): 27

Fire Point: Effigy Mounds National Monument, Allamakee County IA

Adult Data

Adults are unknown

Nesting Data

Hatch began: Unknown

Eyrie check date: June 10 | Site visits: April 4, April 22, June 9

Dave Kester, Brynn Olsen, and William Smith all reported falcons here in April of 2022. However, when Dave rappelled down to the eyrie on June 10th, he found it empty of nestling falcons, although it was full of down, prey remains, and mutes.

Failed Sites

Dave also found four neatly separated pinfeathers from a roughly 18-day old falcon. The pinfeathers and lack of carcasses suggests predation, although it did not look much like owl predation: there were no torn off heads, cached carcasses, or piles of plucked feathers. Dave spotted a black rat snake right above the eyrie, which makes us wonder if snake predation was a factor here.

Year falcons first nested: 2020 | Total number of young produced (2022): 5

Alliant Lansing Cliff: Lansing, Allamakee County IA

Adult Data

Adults are unknown

Nesting Data

Hatch began: Unknown

Eyrie check date: June 2 | Site visits: March 13, March 16, March 29, April 26, May 18, June 2

Lansing failed. When Amy rappelled down to the eyrie, she found two addled eggs and prey remains: blue jay and Baltimore oriole feathers were especially common. Both parents defended and the addled eggs had streaks of white on them, indicating that there were young in the nest earlier this year. We do not know why it failed.

Year falcons first nested: 1999 | Total number of young produced (2022): 41

Aggie's Bluff: Lansing, Allamakee County IA

We did not see or hear falcons at Aggie's Bluff during six observation periods from March through early June.

Year falcons first nested: 2012 | Total number of young produced (2022): 18

Bellevue State Park, Bellevue, Jackson County IA

Adult Data

Adults are unknown

Nesting Data

Hatch began: Unknown

Eyrie check date: June 1 | Site visits: March 25, April 22, May 22, June 1

Bellevue failed. When Dave rappelled down to the eyrie, he found one addled egg and one dead nestling falcon. The falcon was roughly 23 days old and had been dead a week or two. There was an adult falcon on site, but she wasn't defending the nest box.

We don't know what happened here. Owl predation is one possibility. While owls usually rip heads off and pluck, we've seen them kill at our Great Spirit Bluff site without doing either one. Avian influenza is another possibility, although I would have expected zero falcons in that case and an adult female was on site. We could also have had a territorial fight that led to the resident female being chased off or

Failed Sites

killed. New falcons sometimes kill the nestlings of resident falcons. Unfortunately, the carcass was too decomposed to evaluate.

This site has only been successful once. Year after year, it looks like we are going to have nesting success, and year after year, something happens, and the nest fails. Most of our reports look something like this: "Based on reports from local observers and RRP staff, we looked forward to banding young here. But when Dave/Amy/John rappelled down to the nest box, they found eggshell fragments and prey remains, but no falcons". If this box continues to act as a sink for nesting falcons, we'll need to pull it.

Rose Spur Quarry, Dubuque County IA

Adult Data

Adults are unknown

Nesting Data

Hatch began: Unknown

Eyrie check date: June 1 | Site visits: March 25, May 18, June 1, June 18

An adult male and female were on territory and began defending as soon as we approached the top of the cliff. Amy rappelled down and found no young, no eggs, no eggshells, and no egg fragments, although 'slices' of poop suggest this eyrie had nestling falcons in it. There was also a blurry scrape, which suggests that young hatched and were mobile long enough to shuffle around in the soft substrate.

We're not sure why the nest failed, although the site is very open and at the bottom of a large, easily climbed fissure. Birds, mammals, or reptiles could easily predate the young and a stiff wind could blow them out of the eyrie. We checked the brush at the base of the cliff but found nothing.

Year falcons first nested: 2021 | Total number of young produced (2022): 0

Eagle Point Bluff, Dubuque, Dubuque County IA

Staff at CR Boats told us that great horned owls had, in their words "chased the falcons away". Falcons are spotted almost every season, but the site has never been successful that we know. We hope they choose another spot.

Eagle Point Park, Clinton, Clinton County IA

Falcons have not been reported here since RRP installed a nest box back in 2013.

Production Unknown

3M: Cottage Grove, Washington County MN

We do not have any data on 3M this year. We can't visit the nest box and the site can't be seen from outside 3M, but our plant contact usually calls us when fledglings ground. Unfortunately, we did not get any phone calls this year and don't know what happened here.

Year falcons first nested: 2008 | Total number of young produced (2022): 28

Outcome Unknown

Alma Marina: Alma, Buffalo County WI

Site Visits: March 8, March 22, March 29, May 11, May 12, May 31, June 9, June 23

Alma Marina is another complex site. Falcons were seen/heard here between March 22 and May 22, but they were not spotted in June, and we never saw juvenile falcons. We believe this site failed.

Year falcons first nested: 2020 | Total number of young produced (2022): 1

Glen Haven: Glen Haven, Grant County WI

Site Visits: April 4

Falcons were not seen or heard on Bill's April 4 River survey. The property has changed hands and the site has a poor production history, so we took it off the survey list this year. We'll contact the new landowners and consider how to move forward next year.

Year falcons first nested: 2015 | Total number of young produced (2022): 2

De Soto Bay: De Soto, Vernon County WI

Site Visits: March 13, March 21, June 16

A pair of adults was observed here on March 31st. Due to road construction no additional visits were made until mid-June. One adult was still present on September 13th.

Year falcons first nested: 2020 | Total number of young produced (2022): 4

Twin Bluff: Nelson, Buffalo County WI

Eyrie Check Date/Site Visits

June 6 | Site visits: March 8, 16, and 29, April 5 and 19, May 17 and 27, June 6, 16, and 23, August 24

Amy found five eggs when she rappelled down to check the nest box but did not see or hear any young on subsequent visits in June and August. However, if the young hatched in mid-June and fledged in late July, she could have missed them, which is why we're listing Twin Bluff as unknown.

Year falcons first nested: 2014 | Total number of young produced (2022): 29

Mississippi Flyway Cam, Lake Onalaska, Mississippi River

We added a new 4K camera to the Mississippi Flyway this year with the help of Shafer's Marine Service, volunteers from the Brice Prairie Conservation Association, staff from the US Fish and Wildlife Service, and friends and family. Some notable sightings in 2022 included:

- A Snowy Owl irruption in January and February: <https://youtu.be/A99pVJ9PpMY> (and many more)
- A Short-Eared Owl (January 23): <https://youtu.be/olaObmYOflE>
- A White-faced Ibis (May 4): <https://youtu.be/IJ5ZZEhMSHw>
- A Black-necked Stilt (May 13): <https://youtu.be/hDmFLYCj0iY>
- Sandhill Cranes raising young in April and May: <https://youtu.be/Pm6cVIV9NQY> (and many more)

We've also spotted American golden plovers, which travel 8,000 miles or more from the high Arctic to the grasslands of Argentina and Uruguay, northern pintail ducks in eclipse plumage, northern harriers hunting the grass and reeds on sandbars, interactions between bald eagles and sandhill cranes, groups of 30+ eagles quarreling over food, visiting peregrine falcons, and so much more! We've watched the wonder of spring and fall migration, improved our duck identification skills, and have been awed by the number and diversity of the birds we see on the Flyway.

We really appreciate all the help from the Brice Prairie Conservation Association, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, and the boat rental from Schafer's River Rentals. Watch this site at <https://www.raptorresource.org/birdcams/upper-mississippi-onalaska-cam/> or <https://explore.org/livecams/raptor-resource-project/mississippi-river-flyway-cam>.



Decorah and Decorah North Eagles

Decorah Eagles

Link: <https://www.raptorresource.org/birdcams/decorah-eagles/>

Mom and her mate DM2 built a nest behind the Decorah-area Walmart in the fall of 2020. She appeared to have laid eggs this year, but they failed to hatch. The nest was destroyed during a storm on July 23, but the two are building a replacement. They are still nesting on private land that we can't access.

- Eggs and incubation: <https://www.raptorresource.org/2022/04/26/decorah-eagles-update-at-n3-with-mom-decorah-dm2/>
- Nest N3 destroyed in storms: <https://www.raptorresource.org/2022/07/29/nest-n3-fell-in-the-strong-storms-that-rolled-across-ne-iowa-on-saturday-night/>
- N3 replacement underway: <https://www.raptorresource.org/2022/11/01/october-29-2022-day-trip-to-decorah/>.

But N2B – the location they nested in from 2015 to 2020, didn't sit empty! A female Canada Goose laid the first of six eggs in it on March 24. Five of them hatched on April 27 and all of them jumped on April 28. Four survived the jump. We recovered the dead gosling and found that it weighed 3.2 ounces.

- Visitors at N2B: <https://www.raptorresource.org/2021/05/12/more-visitors-at-n2b/>
- A Canada Goose egg in the Decorah Eagles' nest! <https://www.raptorresource.org/2022/03/25/a-canada-goose-egg-in-the-decorah-eagles-nest/>
- Goose jump highlights: <https://www.raptorresource.org/2022/05/03/goose-jump-highlights/>
- All goose-related posts: <https://www.raptorresource.org/tag/canada-goose/>

We rebuilt a starter N1 nest last year in the 'original' location in an effort to entice Mom and DM2 back. Instead, we attracted a new pair of eagles. Their behavior leads us to believe we might be watching them nest in 2023.

- Summary: <https://www.raptorresource.org/2022/08/17/countdown-to-shutdown-2-the-confusion-couch-becomes-a-tilt-a-whirl/>.

Decorah North Eagles

Link: <https://www.raptorresource.org/birdcams/decorah-north-nest/>

The Decorah North eagles laid egg number one on February 16 and egg two on February 19. DN15 hatched on March 25 and DN16 hatched on March 27. The two fledged in June.

American Kestrels: Prairie du Chien, Crawford County



2022 marked the fifth year of our American Kestrel Cam with Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Neil Rettig, and Laura Johnson. We had a blackfly problem this year but keeping the fan on kept the blackflies (mostly) away and four of five eggs hatched! Highlights video: https://youtu.be/JYBhDK_wR5Q.

Watch this cam live here: <https://www.raptorresource.org/birdcams/american-kestrels/> and here: <https://www.allaboutbirds.org/cams/american-kestrels/>.

Osprey Cam

The Raptor Resource Project worked with Dairyland Power to put an osprey cam on a nest on the Dairyland Power Reservoir near Ladysmith, WI. Sadly, the nest failed when the young osprey disappeared at about three days of age. We have our fingers crossed for this nest next year!



Golden Eagle Tracking Project

The Raptor Resource Project began a Golden Eagle research study in January of 2022. We are monitoring wintering Golden Eagles in the Driftless Area to learn more about their movement on their winter and summer range with potential nest locations, seasonal migration patterns and timing, and route fidelity. Research is being conducted under the guidance and permits of RRP's Jeff Worrell, former director of the National Eagle Center, and raptor biologist Brett Mandernack.

This year we trapped two Golden Eagles in Wisconsin's Driftless area, one mature female and one immature female, and fit them with satellite transmitters to learn more about these mysterious winter visitors! The adult female died in Nunavut, possibly due to avian influenza. Ryan Schmitz made contact with some local people, and they are going to try to recover the carcass for us. The immature female also summered in Nunavut. She's back and I've included a map for her.

We hope our study helps answer these questions and makes people, especially in the Driftless area, more aware of their wild neighbors all year long. While we're not publishing interactive maps to our website, we do publish new maps here: <https://www.raptorresource.org/learning-tools/golden-eagles/golden-eagle-maps/>.



Biologist Brett Mandernack measures a Golden Eagle's Tarsus

Autumn Banding Research Stations

Banding Station Summaries

Hawk Hill

Sharp-Shinned Hawk: 8
Cooper's Hawk: 4
American Kestrel: 1
Merlin: 1
Peregrine Falcon: 2
Red-Tailed Hawk: 98
Total: 114 (a record for this station)

Wyalusing

Sharp-Shinned Hawk: 0
Cooper's Hawk: 13
American Kestrel: 1
Merlin: 0
Peregrine Falcon: 2
Red-Tailed Hawk: 134
Total: 150

Our interns were wonderful. They were engaged, attentive, and excited to learn all aspects of our banding program. However, the season itself was strange. Autumn was long and warm, which delayed and extended migration. We trapped and banded nearly a third of our birds after November 15th – our typical stop date at the Hawk Hill site.

We also saw a lot of visitors this year, including students, educators, and homeschool groups from Luther College, Upper Iowa University, Carleton College, Pleasant Valley Homeschool Association, the Decorah and Postville K-12 school systems, 4H, and individual families. Our Wyalusing site hosted visitors from landowner families, Iowa Master Naturalists, representatives from the Boys and Girls Clubs of America, Des Moines County Conservation Board members, and staff from Effigy Mounds and the Fish and Wildlife Service.

We've seen really strong growth and interest is only accelerating.

I've witnessed an increase from other organizations using sites such as ours as important partners in monitoring population, migration, and health changes in raptors as global climate change increases in frequency and intensity. Programs such as this are as important as ever, if not more. Thank you for supporting our work. – *David Kester, Station Master*

