

Peregrine Falcon - *Falco peregrinus*

Abundance: Rare

Status: NSS3 (Bb)

NatureServe: G4
S1B,S3N

Population Status: population size is restricted but extirpation is not imminent; minimum number of nesting pairs statewide is 85; statewide population is not expected to exceed 120 pairs

Limiting Factor: Habitat: limiting factor is severe; potentially vulnerable to environmental contaminants and disease

Comment:

Introduction

The Peregrine Falcon is cosmopolitan and breeds on every continent except Antarctica. It is found scattered throughout most of Wyoming, but breeds mostly in the western half of the state. Some individuals are year-round residents in Wyoming, while others winter south to Mexico. The Peregrine Falcon is considered a rare resident in Wyoming. The species suffered severe population declines and was extirpated from much of its range because of widespread use of pesticides, especially DDT, that caused extensive eggshell thinning and reproductive failure. By the late 1970s, viable breeding populations no longer existed in Wyoming. In 1972 the use of many pesticides, including DDT, was limited by federal legislation, and in 1980 the Wyoming Game and Fish Department formed a partnership with The Peregrine Fund, Inc., and began a 15-year cooperative reintroduction effort. A total of 384 captive-raised peregrines were released from 1980-1995 with 85% surviving to dispersal age (one month post release). Since 1984, Wyoming's nesting population increased by about 35% every year, and more than 90 pairs nested in the state in 2009.

Habitat

The Peregrine Falcon preys on smaller birds and forages in a variety of open habitats from open woodlands and forests to shrub-steppe, grasslands, marshes, and riparian habitats. It nests on cliffs often located near water that are usually proximate to habitats with abundant prey.

Problems

- h The development and use of new chemicals along with growing pollution could increase environmental contamination and again threaten production and nesting populations.
- h Increasing numbers and distribution of Peregrine Falcons in Wyoming mean a dramatic increase in survey efforts to continue adequate documentation of the population increase, but funding is increasingly inadequate to monitor peregrine populations.

Conservation Actions

- h Conduct annual monitoring surveys to determine territory occupancy, nest success, and productivity at known nesting areas.
- h Maintain more than 70 nesting pairs and fledge more than 100 juveniles annually in Wyoming.
- h Maintain cliffs with minimal disturbance and open habitats for this species to use for nesting and foraging.

Monitoring/Research

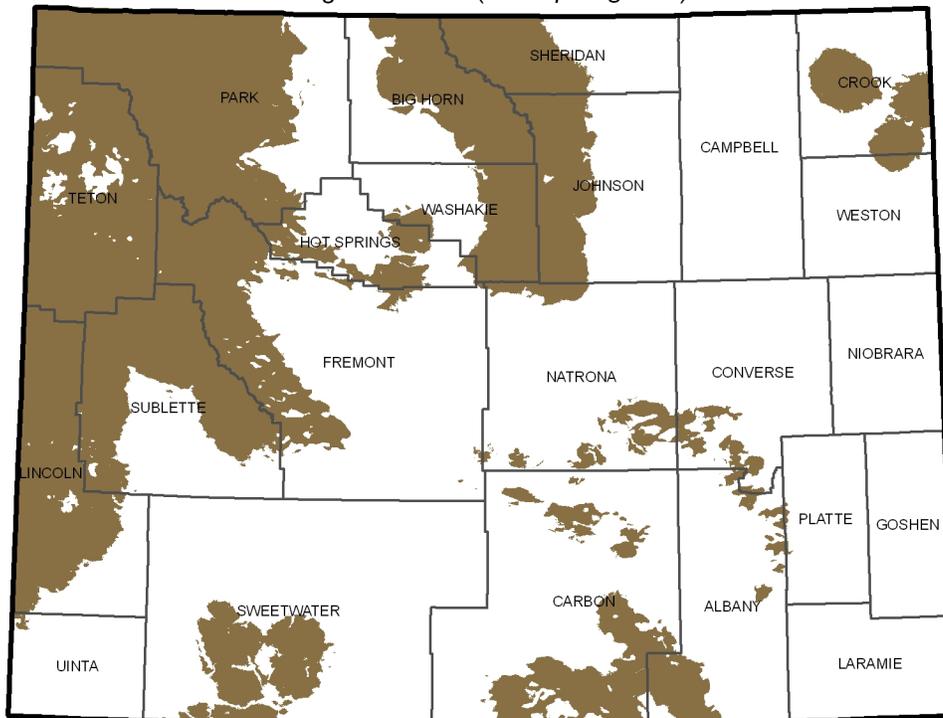
Annual monitoring to determine territory occupancy, nest success, and productivity.

Recent Developments

Although occupancy rates of known territories has remained close to 100% in Wyoming, mean productivity may be declining and should be monitored closely in future years. Up to 116 wild first-year Peregrines Falcons are allocated by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service for take by authorized falconers within the Pacific Flyway states. Since 2005 in Wyoming, a take of up to 5 nestling peregrines is allowed at designated areas within the state.

References

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SOURCE: Digital maps of ranges and predicted distributions for Wyoming Species of Greatest Conservation Need: April 2010. Wyoming Natural Diversity Database. University of Wyoming, Laramie, Wyoming. Note that brown indicates the predicted distribution of the species; heavy black lines indicate outermost boundaries of possible occurrence.