

American Peregrine falcon *Falco peregrinus
anatum*

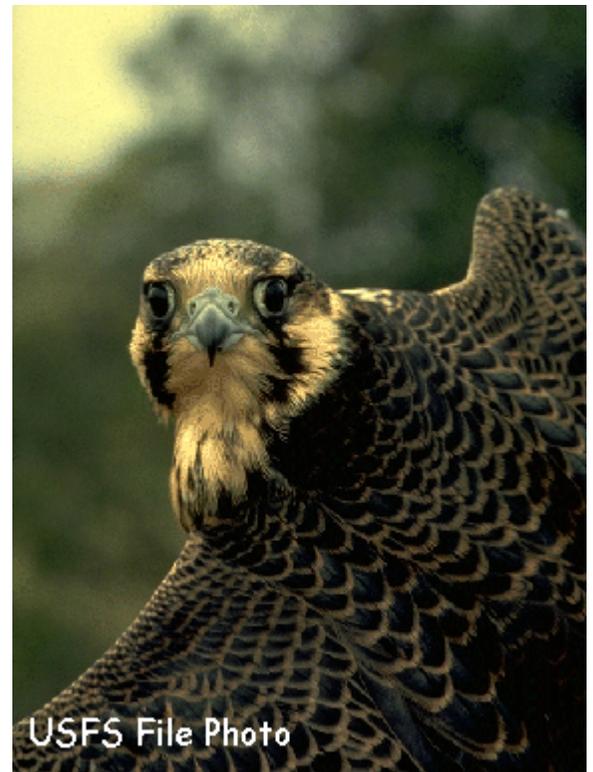
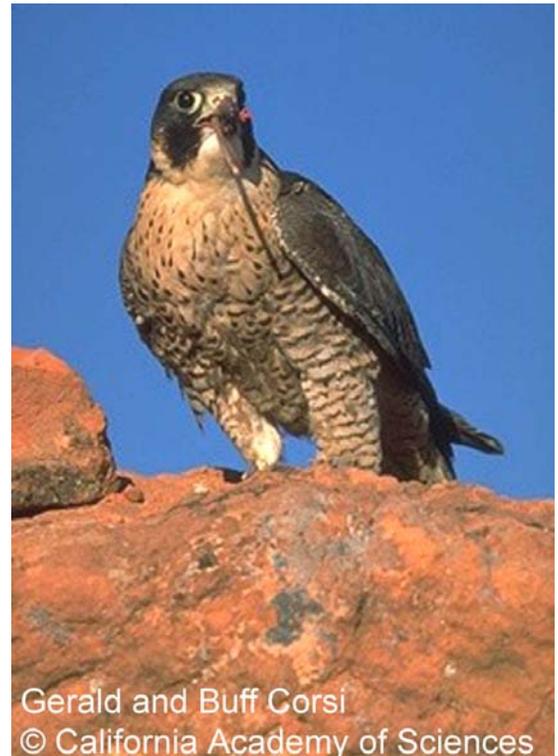
State	Endangered	1971
	Fully Protected	
Federal	Delisted	1999

General Habitat:

The range of the American Peregrine Falcon includes most of California during migrations and in winter. The California breeding range, which has been expanding, now includes the Channel Islands, the coast of southern and central California, inland north coastal mountains, the Klamath Mountains and Cascade Range, and the Sierra Nevada. Nesting sites are typically on ledges of large cliff faces. Many pairs are nesting on city buildings and bridges, and some pairs nest in tree cavities of coastal redwoods. Nesting and wintering habitats are varied, including wetlands, woodlands, other forested habitats, cities, agricultural areas and coastal habitats. Peregrine Falcons feed on birds that are caught in flight.

Description:

This bird is a medium-sized raptor with long, pointed wings and a long tail. The adult is slate gray; its wing, tail feathers, and flanks are barred with black. The dark cap of the head extends to the cheeks and its throat is white. Coloring for the lower part of the body is nearly white, and is extensively spotted and barred with black. The legs and feet are yellow. Immature birds are brown above, streaked below. The wingspan exceeds three feet.



Status:

Beginning in the late 1970s, intensive efforts were made annually by federal and state agencies and cooperators to assess breeding population size and locations, and to collect information on breeding success. Comprehensiveness of statewide surveys of breeding status diminished since the late 1990s. A DFG-contracted statewide breeding survey was conducted during 1997 by the University of California, Santa Cruz Predatory Bird Research Group (SCPBRG), when observers checked nearly 150 known and suspected nesting areas and obtained data on at least 111 active territories (i.e., two courting adults present); productivity averaged about 1.5 young per pair. Owing to reduced availability of funding, only about half of the 193 known territories in the State could be

adequately monitored by the SCPBRG in 1998 and 1999. The Department ceased recommending projects for funding under ESA Section 6 after this species was delisted in 1999, in anticipation of post-delisting monitoring by USFWS. A 2003 national survey was supported financially by USFWS as part of its post-delisting monitoring plan.

Partial statewide surveys were made by SCPBRG from 1999 through 2003. From 1999 to 2002, 96 of the state's known territories were found to have been occupied at least one of the years; 20 percent of the territories were on man-made structures. The cumulative total of sites known to have been active at some time since 1975 increased from 202 in 1999 to 222 in 2002. Undoubtedly, many other relatively new sites have not been found. Number of active sites monitored has generally declined since 1997, ranging from 39 to 66 during 1999-2002. Reproductive outcomes were determined from most of those active sites each year, and number of young produced per active site of known outcome ranged from 1.58 to 2.72. These rates, which appear to show that reproductive success is higher than prior years, are not directly comparable to data gathered before the late 1990s, when most sites were checked annually. In those partial surveys, no attempt was made to obtain a representative sample of the state, and site selections were biased toward easily accessible sites, especially urban sites.

The USFWS is now coordinating national monitoring efforts. When federal delisting of the Peregrine occurred in 1999, USFWS was mandated by the Federal Endangered Species act to develop a plan--in cooperation with State wildlife or natural resource agencies, recovery team members, and other cooperators--to monitor the national Peregrine population for not less than five years after delisting. The plan is designed to examine trends nationwide and to detect declines in territory occupancy, nest success, and productivity in six regions across the U.S. Data are being collected from a randomly selected subset of Peregrine territories for five sampling periods, at three-year intervals. The monitoring started in 2003 and will end in 2015. Monitoring efforts include collecting samples of addled eggs and of feather for contaminant analyses.

After a trial monitoring effort in the Pacific states region in 2002, 96 randomly chosen Peregrine nest sites in Washington, California, Oregon, Idaho, and Nevada were monitored in 2003. Under the USFWS-funded effort, 30 territories were sampled in California. The Pacific region's overall occupancy was 86% (93% in California), the overall nest success was 64% (75% in California), and the overall productivity was 1.4 young per occupied site (1.5 in California). In these five states, approximately 43 new territories were discovered in 2003, including 9 in California.

As part of the federal delisting process, USFWS, with advice from western states, developed criteria for allowing a harvest of Peregrine Falcons for falconry purposes under revised national falconry regulations. Beginning in 2001, USFWS authorized 11 western states to coordinate the take of Peregrine nestlings within their jurisdictions and allowed a take of up to 5% of the state's productivity, at the discretion of each state. CDFG agreed that the proposed take would have extremely limited effects on the population of this species. However, Peregrine Falcons may not be taken in California for use in falconry. The American Peregrine Falcon is classified in California Fish and Game Code Section 3511 as a "fully protected bird." This law prohibits the take of Peregrine nestlings in the wild for uses such as falconry. Before the Commission could consider allowing such take, new legislation must be enacted to remove this subspecies from the fully protected bird list, or amended to allow such take; the Commission must approve removal of the Peregrine Falcon from State endangered and threatened species classification under CAC, Title 14, Section 670.5; and the Commission must add this species to the list of birds of prey that may be taken for use in falconry under CAC, Title 14, Section 670.

The increasing population of Peregrines has presented new risks to other endangered or sensitive birds, such as California Least Terns and Marbled Murrelets. Monitors of such species must assess the threat Peregrines pose and recommend actions, such as harassment or live-capture and relocation of individual Peregrines. At Least Tern colonies, predation by Peregrines and other rare native predatory birds normally is tolerated and monitored, but if immediate action is necessary to avoid major impacts to a colony, monitors would contact experienced Peregrine

biologists or wildlife control agents to arrange for live capture of the Peregrine.

Urban-nesting Peregrine Falcons present special protection and management challenges. About 20 percent of breeding pairs in the state nest on buildings and bridges. Often, nesting ledges selected by adult birds are suitable for egg-laying, but productivity of such sites is poor without intensive human intervention. Such sites are at risk from human disturbance, lack of good substrate for supporting eggs or young birds, and lack of wind protection. Commonly, management of this species in urban sites includes installation of special nesting platforms, rescuing of at-risk eggs and chicks, and implementation of restrictions on human actions during nesting periods. In coastal areas where an urban Peregrine nest is near endangered bird nesting sites, removal and relocation of the Peregrine chicks to wild nests or hack sites elsewhere in the state has been necessary at times to avoid subjecting the endangered prey to predation by the fledged Peregrines.

The status in 2003 of the American Peregrine Falcon: *Increasing*.