



Peregrine Falcon Monitoring

Importance

As a top trophic-level predator, the American peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus anatum*) occupies an important niche in Northern Colorado Plateau Network (NCPN) ecosystems. Known as the world's fastest bird, the peregrine falcon was nearly decimated in the 1950s and 1960s by pesticide contaminants such as DDT, and was listed as federally endangered in 1970. Though its successful recovery led this bird to be de-listed in 1999, population monitoring remains crucial, and is a high priority for NCPN parks. Public interest in the species, together with federal law, necessitate continued monitoring to track the population's recovery and document park-level populations in need of special conservation efforts. The peregrine falcon breeds throughout the Colorado Plateau, and occurs in 10 of the 16 Northern Colorado Plateau Network (NCPN) park units.



Peregrine falcon.

Long-term Monitoring

Inventory and monitoring of the peregrine falcon has been ongoing in 10 NCPN park units since 1973. In conjunction with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)'s 2003 *Monitoring Plan for the American Peregrine Falcon*, the NCPN developed monitoring protocols and a database that were subsequently distributed to NCPN parks. Actual peregrine monitoring and reporting is funded and completed by the individual park units. The network continues to provide overall guidance and data management support when requested.

Peregrine surveys usually involve 2–4 visits to potential habitat or a known territory during the breeding season to ascertain territory status and productivity of active nests. A minimum of four hours is usually spent at each known and potential nest territory, unless falcons are present and territory status can be determined sooner. Information supporting evidence of territory status is recorded on a Raptor Observation Record Card.

Monitoring Objectives

Objectives for peregrine falcon monitoring are to determine annual status and trends in territory occupancy, nest success, and productivity of peregrine falcons.

Management Applications

The NCPN peregrine falcon monitoring protocol is providing data required by the USFWS, as well as more detailed information on peregrine falcons in NCPN park units. The USFWS encourages continued monitoring of peregrine falcon territories outside of those selected by the recovery plan, and will actively seek these data to incorporate into its national trend analysis.

Contact

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Network park units where peregrine falcons are monitored

Arches NP	Colorado NM
Black Canyon of the Gunnison NP	Curecanti NRA
Bryce Canyon NP	Dinosaur NM
Canyonlands NP	Natural Bridges NM
Capitol Reef NP	Zion NP

NP = National Park; NM = National Monument; NRA = National Recreation Area