



Photo from Wikipedia

Peregrine Falcon

(*Falco peregrinus*)

DID YOU KNOW:

Peregrine Falcons were virtually eradicated from eastern North America by pesticide poisoning in the middle 20th century. After significant recovery efforts, they have made an incredible rebound and are now regularly seen, even in cities.

EATING HABITS:

Peregrine Falcons eat mostly birds, of an enormous variety—450 North American species have been documented as prey, and the number worldwide may be as many as 2,000 species. Typical prey include shorebirds, ptarmigan, ducks, grebes, gulls, storm-petrels, pigeons, and songbirds including jays, thrushes, longspurs, buntings, larks, waxwings, and starlings. Peregrine Falcons also eat substantial numbers of bats. They occasionally pirate prey, including fish and rodents, from other raptors.

THE YOUNG:

Mom lays 2-5 eggs and both parents begin incubating as soon as the first egg is laid. The newly hatched chicks are nearly helpless, their eyes are closed and they have little or no down (altricial). Mom and Dad brood the chicks for the first ten days of their lives and feed them for at least



Photo From: High Arctic Institute

six weeks. Peregrine Falcons are very good parents; if they think their babies are in danger, they will attack anything that they think is a threat!

HABITAT (HOME):



Photo from: BBC

Peregrine falcons prefer open habitats, such as grasslands, tundra, and meadows. They nest on cliff faces and crevices. They have recently begun to colonize urban areas because tall buildings are suitable for nesting in this species, and because of the abundance of pigeons.

DEFENSIVE HABITS:

Like all raptors, Peregrine Falcons have sharp talons. Kites are small raptors, but their sharp talons provide some defense. They are aggressive in defense of their nests and will attack much larger birds and mammals.

UNUSUAL FACTS:

- The Peregrine Falcon is a very fast flier, averaging 25-34 mph in traveling flight, and reaching speeds up to 69 mph) in direct pursuit of prey. During its spectacular hunting stoop from heights of over .5 mi, the peregrine may reach speeds of 200 mph as it drops toward its prey.
- This falcon is one of the most wide-spread birds in the world, found on every continent except Antarctica.
- People have trained falcons for hunting for over a thousand years, and the Peregrine Falcon was always one of the most prized birds. Efforts to breed the Peregrine in captivity and reestablish populations depleted during the DDT years were greatly assisted by the existence of methods of handling captive falcons developed by falconers.
- As the young become more adept at flying, parents begin to deliver prey to them by dropping them in the air. The young then pursue and capture this already-dead prey in the air. .



Photo From: Daily Mail