

**DRAFT IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

**FALCONRY TAKE OF NESTLING  
AMERICAN PEREGRINE FALCONS  
IN THE CONTIGUOUS UNITED  
STATES AND ALASKA**

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Division of Migratory Bird Management  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
4401 North Fairfax Drive, Suite 634  
Arlington, Virginia 22203-1610

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## ABSTRACT

- ▶ This plan has been prepared to coordinate specific procedures on take of nestling American peregrine falcons (*Falco peregrinus anatum*) in the western U.S. and Alaska for falconry.

- ▶ The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will allow the take of up to 5% of nestlings in the States west of 100° longitude. All aspects of take up to the 5% limit analyzed in the May 2001 Environmental Assessment of take of nestlings will be at the discretion of each State in which take is allowed, consistent with Federal falconry regulations.

- ▶ Allowed take will be based on the best available nesting population and productivity data for each State, as described in the Environmental Assessment.

- ▶ Special conditions for take, including limitations on the periods during which a nest may be entered and the take of male and female nestlings, will apply.

- ▶ Take will be summarized each year, and will be reviewed by an Adaptive Management Team comprised of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and State officials.

- ▶ The Adaptive Management Team may recommend changes in the 5% level of nestling take. However, to increase the percentage take or if a State other than those covered in the initial plan requests take, the team will provide guidance on the issue. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will then supplement the Environmental Assessment or prepare a new Assessment, as appropriate, to consider the request.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The peregrine falcon is the first delisted bird species in which there has been interest in take for purposes such as falconry. That interest added complexity to delisting and management of the species. An October 4, 1999 Notice of Intent to prepare two Management Plans and Environmental Assessments for Take of Wild Peregrine Falcons (Federal Register 64:53686-53688) provided notice of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service intention to consider take of nestling and migrant peregrines. We believed that nestling and dispersing juvenile American peregrine falcons from natal areas in the eastern United States require protection, but a limited take of nestlings in areas in which peregrine recovery has been good would not harm the population. Therefore, we considered a conservative take of nestling peregrines in the western United States and Alaska, where populations are robust. We incorporated basic management guidelines in both the draft and the final Environmental Assessments, and produced a final environmental assessment/management plan. This guidance provides additional details to be used by the States and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for implementing the alternative selected.

## **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this plan is to coordinate the specific procedural and logistical details related to take of nestling American peregrine falcons in the western United States.

## **CRITERIA FOR TAKE**

In the Final Environmental Assessment on take of American peregrine falcons for falconry (USFWS 2001), we concluded that a take of up to 5% of the nestlings produced in the States west of 100° longitude will still allow population growth. To allow take, a State must have a nesting population of at least 14 nesting pairs, which could be expected to produce 20 fledglings.

The basis for take will be the best available nesting and productivity data, which at this time are the data relied upon in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service decision to delist the species (USFWS 1999). The maximum number of nestlings that may be taken in each State, based on the best available nesting and productivity data, is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Allowed take of nestling American peregrine falcons for falconry.

<b>State</b>	<b>Nesting Pairs</b>	<b>Allowed Take</b>	<b>State</b>	<b>Nesting Pairs</b>	<b>Allowed Take</b>
Alaska	301	21	Nevada	6	0
Arizona	159	11	New Mexico	32	2
California	167	12	Oregon	51	3
Colorado	89	6	Utah	164	12
Idaho	17	1	Washington	45	3
Montana	18	1	Wyoming	42	3

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will review the allowed take each year to ensure that it does not harm the nesting population. Updated population or productivity data will be considered as they become available, and will be used to revise the allowed take, as appropriate. The current best available data indicate that productivity is 1.44 young per nesting attempt, based on monitoring from 1994 through 1998. The results of new population or productivity surveys in States in which take is allowed must be provided to the Division of Migratory Bird Management. If post-delisting endangered species monitoring or State surveys show a significant decline in the number of breeding pairs, the authority for take may be revoked. The number of nestlings taken in any State may not be increased unless new State survey results show an increase in the nesting population or in productivity.

The allocation and special management of take up to the 5% limit are at the discretion of each State in which take is allowed. As with management of take of other species for falconry, the States may regulate details of take, consistent with Federal falconry standards. Those details may include whether to allow take of nestlings, timing and location of take of nestlings, restrictions on aerie access, and allocation of take among interested falconers. Falconers and the States should take measures to avoid unintentional take and unnecessary disturbance of peregrines. For example, individuals entering aeries should be skilled in rappelling and climbing safety measures. Removal of young from aeries subject to physical damage should be carefully managed.

The following conditions also will be in effect as part of the requirements for taking nestling American peregrine falcons. The States may invoke additional or more stringent conditions.

- a. Nestling American peregrine falcons should not be removed from their aeries (nests) prior to 10 days of age.
- b. Peregrine aeries should not be entered when young are 28 days old or older to avoid premature fledging of other nestlings.
- c. A recently fledged young may be trapped only within 100 meters of its aerie.
- d. At least one young should be left in each aerie.
- e. Take of male and female nestlings should be equal in each State.
- f. Each falconer who takes a nestling from the wild must provide information about the sex and precise information about the capture location for each bird to the appropriate State wildlife agency and to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service within five days of the take of the bird. The falconer also should submit three plucked breast feathers from the nestling to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The feathers may be submitted with the form 3-186A reporting take of a wild bird for falconry. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will collect those feathers in anticipation of stable isotope analyses of them for information about the origins of North American peregrines.

## **ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT**

The DMBM will use regularly updated information to manage take of nestling American peregrine falcons. The DMBM will coordinate with the States to adjust allowed take according to the population changes indicated by Federal post delisting monitoring or by individual State population monitoring. All new data relevant to management of American peregrine falcons will be evaluated annually by a joint State/Federal Adaptive Management Team. The objective of the AMT will be to review the take of nestlings each year and make recommendations for adjustments in allowed take of nestlings or other appropriate actions. The AMT will consist of one representative from each of the regional agency associations (the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, Association of Midwest Fish and Wildlife Agencies, the Northeast Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, and the Southeast Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies), one from the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, and one from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The team will be co-chaired by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service representative and by a regional association representative. The AMT will meet annually at the North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference.

Each State that allows take must report the number of male and female nestlings taken in the State to the DMBM by January 1<sup>st</sup> each year. Each

State also can provide suggestions to the AMT for adjustments in management of take, and updated information on the American peregrine falcon nesting population and productivity in the State. The DMBM will provide the information on take to the AMT co-chairperson by February 1<sup>st</sup>.

Each year the AMT will review the DMBM report on take of nestlings and additional information provided by the States. The AMT will consider monitoring data, including the latest post-delisting monitoring information. The AMT also will review information on unintentional take of adults or nestlings, productivity information, and bias in take of female or male nestlings. The AMT will then produce a report to the States and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service by April 15<sup>th</sup> each year. The report will include sections on compliance with, and adequacy of, the restrictions on take described in this plan and enforced by permit. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will then adjust take as appropriate.

### **LITERATURE CITED**

- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 1999. Final Rule To Remove the American Peregrine Falcon From the Federal List of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife, and To Remove the Similarity of Appearance Provision for Free-Flying Peregrines in the Conterminous United States. Federal Register 64(164):46542-46558.
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 2001. Final Environmental Assessment of falconry take of nestling American peregrine falcons in the contiguous United States and Alaska. Division of Migratory Bird Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Arlington, Virginia.

*This plan was prepared by George T. Allen.*