

[From Summer 2001]

HI-Tech Peregrines

Once on the verge of extinction, the Peregrine Falcon has made a dramatic comeback in the mid-Atlantic region. NASA is teaming with state and federal agencies and academia to learn more about the species and their habitat. NASA is supporting the electronic banding and monitoring of several peregrines in the vicinity of Wallops Flight Facility. After becoming endangered, the first breeding pair in Virginia was on Wallops Island in 1981. The island is still home to peregrines in the marshland surrounding the island. Banding and monitoring is scheduled to begin in June. Captured birds will be outfitted with small radio transmitters that allow the falcons to be tracked by the NOAA Polar Orbiting Environmental Satellite.

NASA is using satellite telemetry to investigate activity of young falcons at Wallops Flight Facility. If successful, similar efforts involving other species may be conducted at other NASA centers. The data obtained will be integrated into the NASA Agency Environmental Geographic Information Systems Database. Other members of the mid-Atlantic Peregrine Falcon Network include Dominion Power, the National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, Virginia Department of Transportation, The College of William and Mary and EARTHSPAN.

Information source: Inside Wafts, 4/2/01