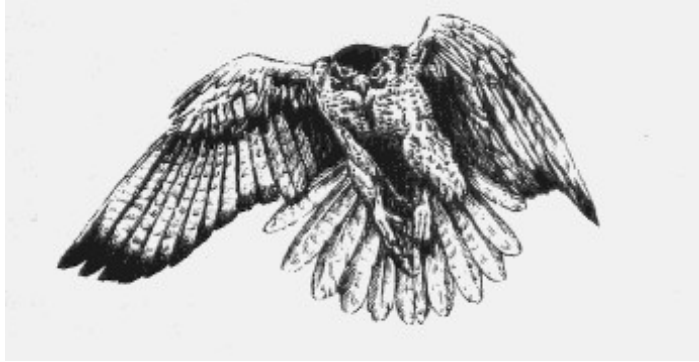


[From Summer 1997]

Avian Predators on Fisherman Island

At the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay, Fisherman Island National Wildlife Refuge is the summer home for a large variety of birds that nest on the island. Species such as the brown pelican, royal tern, American oyster catcher, and several gull species raise their young on the beach. A nesting pair of endangered peregrine falcons and heron rookeries are also on the refuge.



This area is extremely important because human development on many beaches and barrier islands has caused significant declines in some species. Even though Fisherman Island NWR is closed to the public during the nesting season, hatching eggs and raising young is still a difficult task. High spring tides often wash out the nests of the colonial nesting birds, and predators are always a problem. Although there are no mammalian predators on the island, avian predators like the fish crow (*Corvus ossifragus*) feed on eggs and attack the young fledglings.

During this summer, as a biology intern I will be observing the influence of fish crows on the nesting shorebird populations. The weekly study will focus on both crow behavior and the individual targets preyed upon.

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