

[From Fall 1993]

The Return of the Wanderer



The peregrine falcon, *Falco Peregrinus*, has made a dramatic comeback from the days of DDT. Breeding pairs from restocking efforts, coupled with a rebounding native population, have reared numerous fledglings in nesting areas as diverse as high desolate cliffs to city skyscrapers. Peregrine falcons feed almost exclusively on medium-sized birds, and can capture them in the air with diving speeds of 200 miles per hour! Since peregrines tend to follow shorelines during migration, Assateague Island has seen its fair share of this magnificent raptor.

Dr. William Seegar, Mike Yates and their associates will again conduct the annual peregrine falcon banding research project this fall. Various data were collected on 116 birds which were banded and released last year. In addition to migrating birds, Assateague has its own resident breeding pair of falcons. A tower has been constructed on the North Wash Flats impoundment to accommodate the birds, which have successfully reared fledglings there year after year. Last season, for the first time in eleven years, the pair failed to raise a brood due to nest predation. This year two eggs were laid with one hatchling resulting. The other egg, currently under study, was thought to be infertile.

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