



**Common Name** American peregrine falcon

**Scientific Name** *Falco peregrinus anatum*

**Status** Endangered

**Species Description** This falcon is medium-sized with long pointed wings and a long barred tail. Adults are slate-gray above and white with dark bars on the underside. A distinctive black "moustache" mark is on the side of the head and throat. Immatures have a brown back, underparts streaked with brown, and the "moustache" mark. Peregrines fly with quick, powerful strokes.

**Distribution**

*Historic* Peregrines formerly nested from Alaska and Canada, south through the continental U.S., to the central highlands of Mexico.

*Existing* In the U.S., peregrines are now primarily restricted to the western states, but captive raised birds have been reintroduced in the east with some success. New Mexico is a significant contributor to peregrine falcon production.

**Reason for Decline** Reduced reproductive success, due to pesticide accumulation from eating insectivorous birds, has reduced peregrine populations. Pesticide accumulation causes egg shell thinning which make the eggs susceptible to breakage, but may also directly kill the adults. Human disturbance of the nest site can cause abandonment and is now becoming a major concern.

**Habitat** The peregrine requires a combination of cliffs suitable for nesting, readily accessible to open grassy or brushy hunting territory, and reasonably close to water, usually in the form of running streams.

**Food** The peregrine diet consists mostly of birds with distinctive flight styles. In New Mexico the most commonly taken species are band-tailed pigeons, mourning doves, flickers, swallows, swifts, and jays.

**Did You Know?** This falcon is one of the most graceful of all flyers and can attain speeds of 165 to 180 miles per hour.