



Audubon Society of Rhode Island

2023 Providence Peregrines Season

March 28, 2023

Welcome to the 2023 nesting season - eggs should be coming any day now! Can you see the "scrape" in the nestbox? This depression is where the eggs will rest.

This year's pair is unbanded for the sixth year in a row - so it is impossible to confirm if they are the same pair from last year. However, the adult Peregrine Falcons that utilize this nest box usually have enough year-round food in their territory, allowing them to stay in the state instead of migrating south each winter. So, it is possible that the 2023 pair are the same birds that nested here as last year.

Answers to a couple of questions we have received today:

Why is there a cable hanging from the perch? We aren't sure how the cable got there and won't have access to remove it until "banding day".

Will the development of 111 Westminster affect the webcam? High Rock Development spokesman William Fischer has assured Audubon that the Peregrine Falcons "will be respected and they will not be disturbed in any way shape or form." Audubon will also be able to maintain our access to the camera system.

March 28; 8:25 pm

The first egg is here! VIDEO: [Watch the first reveal!](#)

The female will lay the clutch of three to four eggs at approximately 48 hour intervals. Incubation will not begin until the second-to-last egg is laid, which ensures all eggs will hatch around the same time. Once incubation starts, one of the adults will be sitting on the nest (with the exception of brief moments during warm weather or when the male and female need to exchange food.)

March 31

A second egg was spotted this morning!

April 2

The third egg was laid around 8:45 am!

April 4

The fourth egg arrived around 3 pm and incubation has begun!

April 7

The Peregrine Falcons have been diligently incubating the eggs and hunting for food; while one falcon broods over the

nest (typically the female), the other will hunt to feed both itself and its partner. The incubation period lasts around 30-35 days. To predict a hatch date, we count 30–35 days from when the second-to-last egg was laid as this is usually when incubation fully begins. Can you tell the male from the female yet? Females are larger than males and the easiest time to see the difference is when they are at the nest box at the same time.

April 29

Frequently asked questions: Why is there only one parent? Where is the male? Where did the female go?

Answer: The male and female take turns with their duties: while one parent is incubating the eggs, the other is resting and hunting. The changeovers happen very quickly, so they can be easy to miss – sometimes the changeovers even happen off camera (the parent will sense or see the other is near and get off the eggs.). The falcons “hang out” all around their territory range, not necessarily at the nestbox (which is strictly a nursery.)

It helps to know which bird is which - the female is much bigger than the male.

You’ll see the parents at the nestbox together for longer periods once the eggs hatch and there are many mouths to feed!

May 3

HATCHING HAS BEGUN! It looks like two eggs have pipping holes as of 4:30 pm. Look closely when the adult lifts their body up - can you see the holes? Pipping is what occurs when an egg is ready to hatch. The eyas (Peregrine hatchling) first uses the egg tooth on the tip of the beak to punch a small hole in the egg to allow it to breathe air. They will fully emerge 12-24 hours later.

May 5 Edit: looks like this may have been a false alarm but hatching should happen any day now so keep watching!

May 6 - HAPPY HATCH DAY!

The first eyas was spotted around 7 am this morning! The female was also seen eating the eggshell to replenish her calcium levels after producing the four eggs. Can you see the pipping holes on the other two eggs?

May 6 - 11:30am

Second egg hatched!

May 6 - 3:30 pm

Third egg hatched at 3:30 pm!

May 7 - 3:00 pm

Fourth egg hatched sometime this morning.

May 10

HIGHLIGHT VIDEO: [The First Days of Life](#)

Even in the first few days of life, you can see that every single day is important in terms of development for these young birds! In the highlight video, you can see them grow in size and strength.

For the first 1-2 weeks, the nestlings will be brooded almost constantly, usually by the female while the male hunts for food to feed the family. The female and male will switch places occasionally too! After this period, both adults will leave the nestbox in order to hunt enough food to feed the quickly growing eyases.

The eyases will fledge (leave the nest) around 38-45 days after hatching; timing depends on age, sex, and physical condition of each chick.

May 15



FAQ: Where are the parent Peregrine Falcons?! Answer: All is well at the nest! As you can see from this picture from this morning, the eyases are growing quickly and are now too big for the adults to cover with their bodies. The eyases are continuously brooded for only around the first 10 days of life. Then, the eyases will huddle together until their adult feathers come in at around three weeks.

At this stage, it is normal for the parents of the eyases to be absent from the nestbox. They are now spending most of their time hunting to feed their growing family, and they will really only return to feed their young. It also becomes pretty uncomfortable for the parent(s) to remain in the nest box at all times due to the increasing size of the eyases! Rest assured: the parents are only seconds away if any predator approaches. After all, they are the fastest creature on the planet.

Keep watching and hopefully, you will be watching at just the right time to see the adults return to feed their young!

May 30: Banding Day

On Tuesday, May 30th, we banded the four healthy peregrines: one female and three males! [View the images by Peter Green.](#)

Banding Day Process: A board will be placed across the front of the nesting box to protect the falcons. Joe Zbyrowski, our bander, will remove the back opening of the box and remove the falcons. The bird's sex will be determined based on the size of their legs and then two bands will be placed on one leg of each bird. The bird's legs have stopped growing at this point so the bands will never constrict their legs. The bands will help scientists identify where the birds were hatched, the year, and if they are male or female. The birds will then be placed back in the box, the front board removed and the process will be over. It takes a little over an hour to band four birds.

We have been banding the Peregrine Falcons in Providence since their re-introduction to Providence in 2000. Peregrine Falcons are a recovering species, nearly extinct in the United States due to the effects of DDT insecticide - and banding data has helped make recovery efforts successful!

How many and what kinds of leg bands do peregrines get and what do the codes mean? Peregrine Falcons banded in North America typically receive 2 leg bands-one on each leg. The first band is a U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) band which contains a number unique to that individual falcon (similar to a Social Security number). The numbers are small and hard to read unless you have the bird in hand. A second band is placed on the leg opposite of the USFWS band. This band is usually one or two colors and may have a few numbers and/or letters. This is done to increase the number of possible combinations of letters and numbers on these special color bands. These are made to be read from a distance, usually using a camera or spotting scope. Bird banding allows scientists to track the life history, migration and reproductive behavior of bird individuals and overall populations. The data that bird banding provides is increasingly valuable as we aim to better understand the climate and biodiversity crises.

Do the leg bands hurt the falcons or affect the way they hunt? The bands placed on peregrine falcons are a very lightweight aluminum material and are specially sized to fit a falcon's leg. They do not hurt the bird in any way and are comparable to a human wearing a bracelet. The leg bands do not interfere with flight or grasping of prey.

June 8



The Providence Peregrines' first flight day is fast approaching. By this time next week, we may have a couple of new fledglings in Providence! Today we got to observe the eyas(s) stepping onto the edge of the nestbox and testing their wings on the breeze. They will all begin doing this more throughout the week as they get eager to fly. They will also begin exploring the ledge around the nestbox too.

Over the past two weeks, the eyases have undergone significant daily changes. The fluffy, white down feathers have been almost completely replaced by their tan and grey juvenile plumage. Within just a couple of days during this period, the eyases have gone from walking and resting on their tarsi (lower leg) to now being able to stand and walk on their feet exclusively. All four chicks are now regularly opening their wings and running about the nest box.

Don't miss it as they leave their nestbox: keep tuning in!

June 10



At 7 am this morning, an eyas stepped out of the nestbox and onto the ledge. The other three nestlings will soon follow close behind! The fledgling was spotted on camera on the surrounding rooftop throughout the day, exploring the new area.

VIDEO HIGHLIGHT: [Watch the replay of the fledgling's first steps off the nest box.](#)

June 12

At 7:30 am, a second eyas left the nestbox and the third eyas followed 10 minutes later at 7:40 am. Within a few days, they will be learning to fly. Fledging is a very dangerous time. Luckily, because the nestbox is so high up, the falcons that fledge from this spot are able to easily glide from this roof to the many lower ledges and roofs of buildings below them as they learn to fly with confidence. The parents may even slow feed the fledglings in the next couple of days to encourage them to take their first flights.

Where is the fourth eyas? Our best guess is that he glided off the L-shaped rooftop around the nestbox onto the large roof 10 feet below, or to another nearby ledge/rooftop. He may not be strong enough yet to fly up & with control right away, but his instincts would still have guided him to open his wings and glide! If he is alive and well, his parents will know where he is and keep a close eye on him. We may or may not see him again on camera once he learns to fly. We haven't received any updates from the ground (which is a good thing) and just like our viewers, we only know as much as the camera shows.

June 12; 6 pm

INCOMING! Video highlight: [Watch as the fourth fledgling flies back onto the nestbox roof!](#) This is the first sighting of him since he left the rooftop sometime on June 10. It took a day or so, but he built up enough strength to take controlled flight and returned to his siblings to "show off" his skills!

June 13

Shortly after the fourth eyas returned yesterday (6/12), one eyas flew over the edge of the rooftop. The three other birds spent the night in the nestbox. One of them took off in flight at 11:45 am today (6/13), leaving two birds behind, including the female who has not yet stepped out of the box.

June 15



Three fledglings have now officially taken flight, but have been observed during the day and even spending the night in the nestbox. They will slowly begin to explore more of their parent's range as they spend the summer learning to hunt and improving their flight skills. Although the nestbox (and birds' nests in general) are strictly nurseries, these birds are still young and the nestbox is familiar territory - it's not uncommon to see them return the first few days after taking flight.

Why hasn't the fourth bird left the nestbox yet? She simply has just not reached a point of physical confidence. It has only been a few days since the males left. We can't explain the physiology or psychology of it but males leaving before females has been a behavior we've often observed over the years. The parents have been observed bringing her food.

Image: one of the fledglings spent the night (6/14-6/15) in the nest with his sister. A short while after this screenshot, he flew away.

June 15

06/15/2023 15:19:58



The fourth eyes stepped out onto the perch of the nestbox at 2 pm. An hour later, she made it off the perch and onto the rooftop!

[WATCH THE RECAP](#)

June 28

Thank you to everyone who tuned in for the 2023 season, sent in their observations and pictures, donated in support of the live stream, and shared this live stream with friends and family! Your support, in all forms, is greatly appreciated. We will be shutting down the live stream today.

Want to watch the "flying lessons" that will take place this next month? You can visit them yourself: the Providence Place Mall is close by, making it a great place to park (it's free for the first two hours.) Don't forget your binoculars! In early August, the parents will encourage their young to move out and find their own territory. Peregrine Falcons are a migratory species and have been recorded to migrate up to about 8,000 miles. Many birds will stay in their urban territory year-round though, due to the abundance of food in these locations (namely pigeons.)

If you haven't done so already, [sign up for Audubon's emails](#) so you won't miss the official 2024 Providence Peregrine nesting season announcement and consider [making a donation](#) to bring back the live stream next year!