

Peregrine Falcon Restoration in Iowa

2018 Nesting Report

The peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*) restoration program in Iowa began in the 1989 with 23 birds released in Cedar Rapids followed by another 19 released in Des Moines in 1991. Between 1989 and 2003, a total of 169 birds were released in Iowa feeding into a regional restoration effort that saw 875 birds released across the Midwest. In 1999, a further milestone was reached in Iowa when the first pair of birds nested on their historic nesting grounds along the Mississippi River bluffs. In 2018, most of the Peregrine Falcon nesting occurs in the eastern half of the state in three main environments: Urban, Mississippi River bluff faces and energy plant towers (Figure 1).

Monitoring of nest sites is accomplished by a network of volunteer and professional surveyors. The Raptor Resource Project monitors and bands a number peregrine nest sites in the Northeastern corner of the state. Several of the nest sites are on power plants which have restricted access so we rely on employees who not only monitor the nest sites but are often wonderful stewards for the birds. Surveyors collect data on the nest's activity and whether the pair are successful in producing fledglings. Some opportunistic reports of nesting activity are also accepted if no formal data is available.

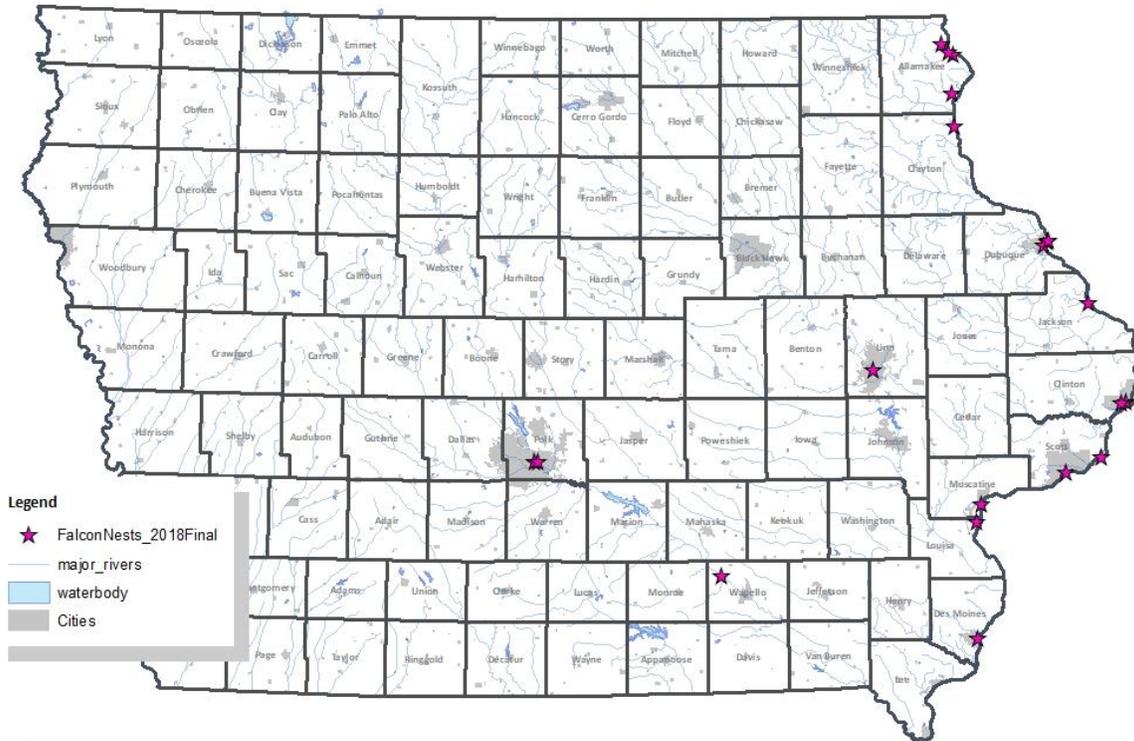
There were no new Peregrine Falcon nest sites reported in 2018. There are 20 sites that are known and which have been recently active or are suspected active. Reports were received on 16 of the 20 sites. Fourteen of the 16 nests were active, two inactive. Of the 14 active nests, 2 failed to produce young, 8 were successful and 4 had an unknown outcome. A minimum total of 20 young were fledged from the 8 successful nests. The average number of young produced per nest with a known outcome was 2 (Table 1).

Examining data from this year compared to recent years indicates that 2018 was fairly similar to the 2017 nesting season at least in the number of young successfully produced (Table 1). It is difficult to draw a complete comparison because more thorough records were gathered in 2016 and 2017 than in 2018. The DNR is aware of two nesting sites that will no longer be viable, one on an urban building because of an ownership change and one at a power plant which has closed down and will be demolishing its structures. It is hoped that the pairs that used these sites will find alternatives nearby and we will continue to monitor. Overall, the nesting population of Peregrine Falcons appears to be stable. While a couple of new nest sites have been reported in recent years, an overall increase in nests and young produced has not resulted.

In future years, the DNR will continue to monitor Peregrine Falcon nest sites with the partnership of volunteers and others who care about falcons in Iowa. Falcon nest sites can be very challenging to monitor because of their location and the territoriality of the birds so any data received is much appreciated. There are two nest sites one in Cedar Rapids and one in the Quad Cities area that could use volunteer monitors. Let the Volunteer Wildlife Monitoring Program coordinator know if you are interested, vwmp@dnr.iowa.gov.

Figure 1. Statewide map showing known Peregrine Falcon nests, 2018

Iowa Peregrine Falcon Nests, 2018 Nesting Season



Produced by Iowa DNR Wildlife Diversity Program, March 2019.

Table 1. Summary of Peregrine Falcon Nesting Results in Iowa

Summary	2016	2017	2018
Number of Nest with active or Unknown Status	18	18	20
Number of Nests Reported on	18	18	16
Number of Inactive Nests	0	1	2
Number of Active Nests	18	17	14
Number of Nests Failed	4	6	2
Number of Nests Successful	14	10	8
Number of Nests With Unknown Outcome	0	1	4
Minimum Total of Young Produced	36	21	20
Average Young per Nest	2	1.31	2

Table 2. 2018 Peregrine Falcon Nesting Results in Iowa

Nest ID	County Name	Year Nest Activity	Nesting Outcome	#young fledged
22	Jackson	Active	Failed	0
29	Allamakee	Active	Failed	0
6	Clinton	Active	Successful	3
21	Clayton	Active	Successful	4
31	Polk	Active	Successful	2
37	Des Moines	Active	Successful	1
42	Scott	Active	Successful	2
130	Dubuque	Active	Successful	2
131	Muscatine	Active	Successful	2
133	Allamakee	Active	Successful	4
19	Linn	Active	Unknown	NA
20	Polk	Active	Unknown	NA
30	Allamakee	Active	Unknown	NA
134	Dubuque	Active	Unknown	NA
27	Allamakee	Inactive	No Activity	NA
43	Louisa	Inactive	No Activity	NA
36	Scott	Unknown	Unknown	NA
38	Wapello	Unknown	Unknown	NA
41	Clinton	Unknown	Unknown	NA
44	Dubuque	Unknown	Unknown	NA