

Peregrine Falcon Restoration in Iowa
2025 Nesting Report - Iowa DNR

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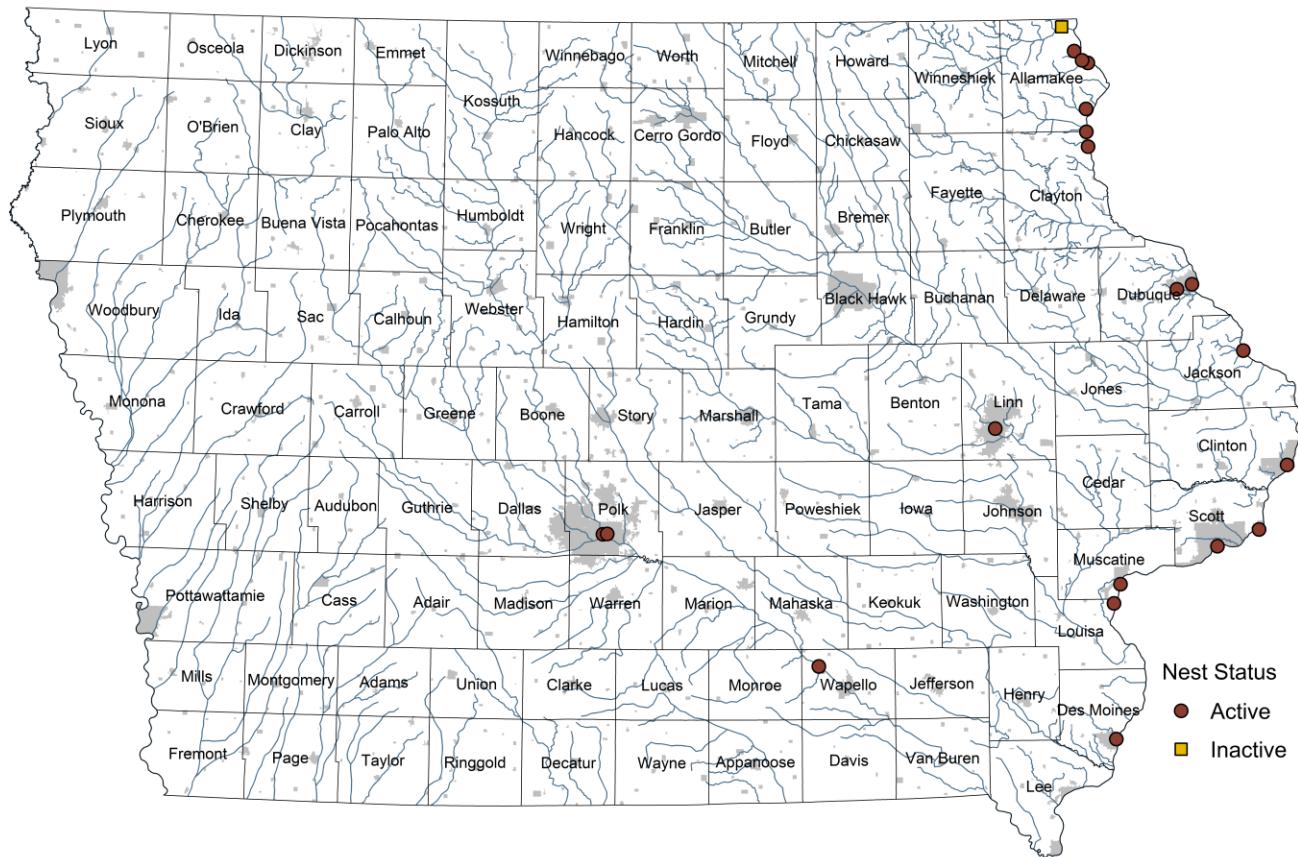
The Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus*) restoration program in Iowa began in 1989 with 23 birds released in Cedar Rapids followed by another 19 released in Des Moines in 1991. Between 1989 and 2003, a total of 169 captively reared birds were released in Iowa, feeding into a regional restoration effort that saw 875 birds released across the Midwest. In 1999, another Iowa milestone was achieved when the first pair of birds nested on their historic nesting grounds along the Mississippi River bluffs. As of 2025, most 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. 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 are available. The Raptor Resource Project monitors and bands a number of Peregrine nest sites in the Northeastern corner of the state and we appreciate their partnership. Several 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.

There were a total of 20 nests monitored in 2025 with no new nests reported. Of these 20 nests, 19 were active and 1 was inactive. Of the 19 active nests, 13 (68.4%) were reported as successful, 2 (10.5%) were reported as failed, and 4 (21%) had no outcome reported. The average number of young produced per nest with a known outcome was 1.87, a decrease from last year (2.77), but similar to the three years prior (Table 1, Figure 5). While the number of fledged young in 2025 is lower than 2024, the similarity in the number of fledged young to previous years indicates that falcon reproduction still likely remains stable with 2024 representing an outlier as a particularly successful year. Compared to previous years, 2025 was a fairly average year for Peregrine reproduction with 68.4% of active nests reported as successful (Figure 3). A minimum total of 28 young fledged from the 13 successful nests, notably lower than 2024 (36 young fledged), but similar to the previous three years (Figure 4).

Continued monitoring is warranted with ongoing disease threats such as Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (H5N12.3.4.4). Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) predominantly effects wild waterfowl and shorebirds but can also be spread to species that eat waterfowl and shorebird prey, such as Peregrine Falcons and Eagles. In 2025, the Iowa DNR documented the loss of four Peregrine Falcons from HPAI outside the nesting season. Overall, Iowa's nesting population of Peregrine Falcons appears to be stable, with birds generally returning to historic nesting sites each year, but this recovering population continues to warrant annual monitoring.

A huge thank you to all of the volunteers who are vital to tracking Peregrine Falcon nesting in Iowa. Thanks to the efforts of our dedicated volunteers, all nest sites were monitored in 2025. The DNR will continue to monitor 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 are much appreciated. Please contact the Volunteer Wildlife Monitoring Program coordinator if you are interested in helping with monitoring in the future; vwmp@dnr.iowa.gov.



Produced by the Iowa DNR Wildlife Diversity Program, December 2025

Figure 1. Statewide map showing 2025 Peregrine Falcon nest locations (19 active, 1 inactive).

Table 1. 2025 Peregrine Falcon nest site activity in Iowa

Nest ID	County	2025 Activity	Outcome	Young Fledged
29	Allamakee	Active	Failed	0
148	Clayton	Active	Failed	0
6	Clinton	Active	Successful	2
19	Linn	Active	Successful	1
21	Clayton	Active	Successful	1
22	Jackson	Active	Successful	2
27	Allamakee	Active	Successful	1
31	Polk	Active	Successful	2
37	Des Moines	Active	Successful	1
42	Scott	Active	Successful	4
43	Louisa	Active	Successful	4
130	Dubuque	Active	Successful	3
131	Muscatine	Active	Successful	2
133	Allamakee	Active	Successful	3
153	Dubuque	Active	Successful	2
20	Polk	Active	Unknown	NA
30	Allamakee	Active	Unknown	NA
36	Scott	Active	Unknown	NA
38	Wapello	Active	Unknown	NA
163	Allamakee	Inactive	No Activity	NA

Table 2. Summary of 2021-2025 Iowa Peregrine Falcon nesting results

	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Number of Nests Reported On	17	20	19	17	20
Number of Inactive Nests	1	4	4	2	1
Number of Active Territories	16	16	15	15	19
Number of Nests Failed	5	5	3	2	2
Number of Nests Successful	11	8	10	11	13
Nests Gone/Removed	0	0	0	0	0
Monitored Nests with Unknown Outcome	0	3	2	2	4
Minimum Total of Young Produced	28	21	25	36	28
Average Young per Nest	1.75	1.62	1.92	2.77	1.87

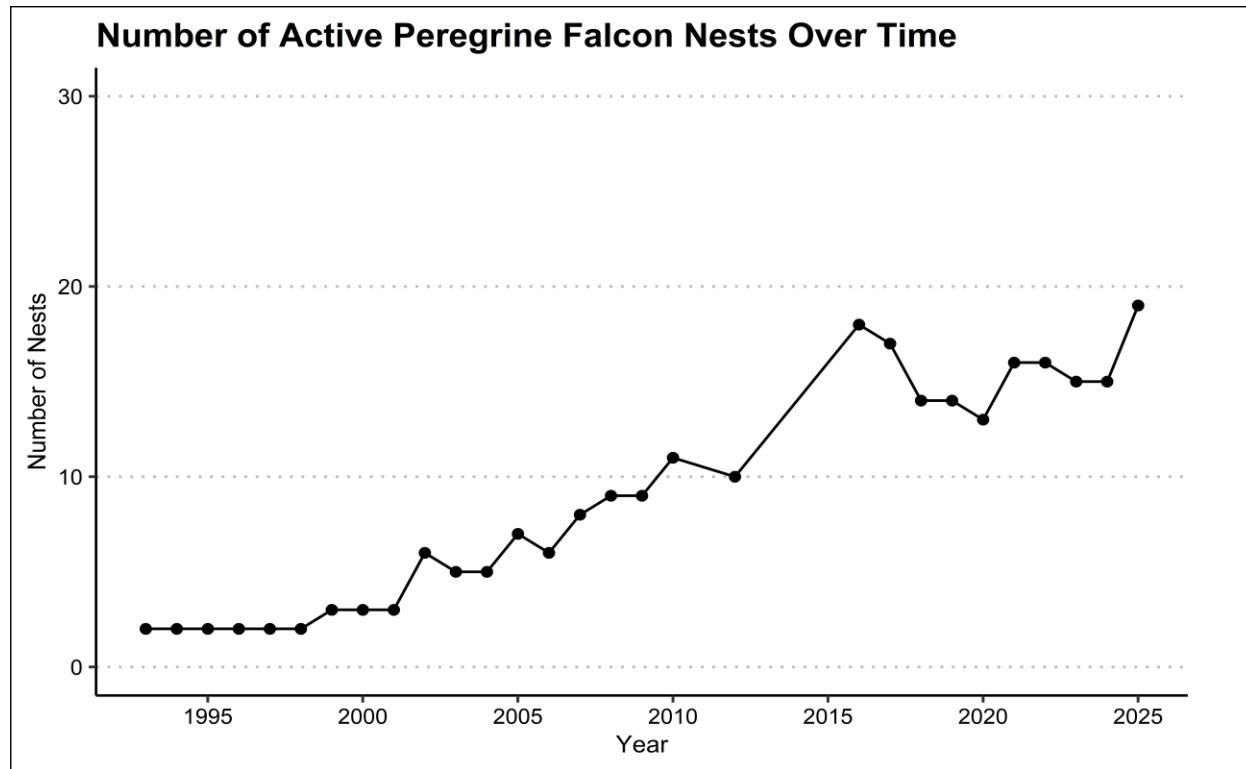


Figure 2. The total number of active Iowa Peregrine Falcon nests from 1993-2025 (data from 2011 and 2013-2015 were incomplete, thus are not shown).

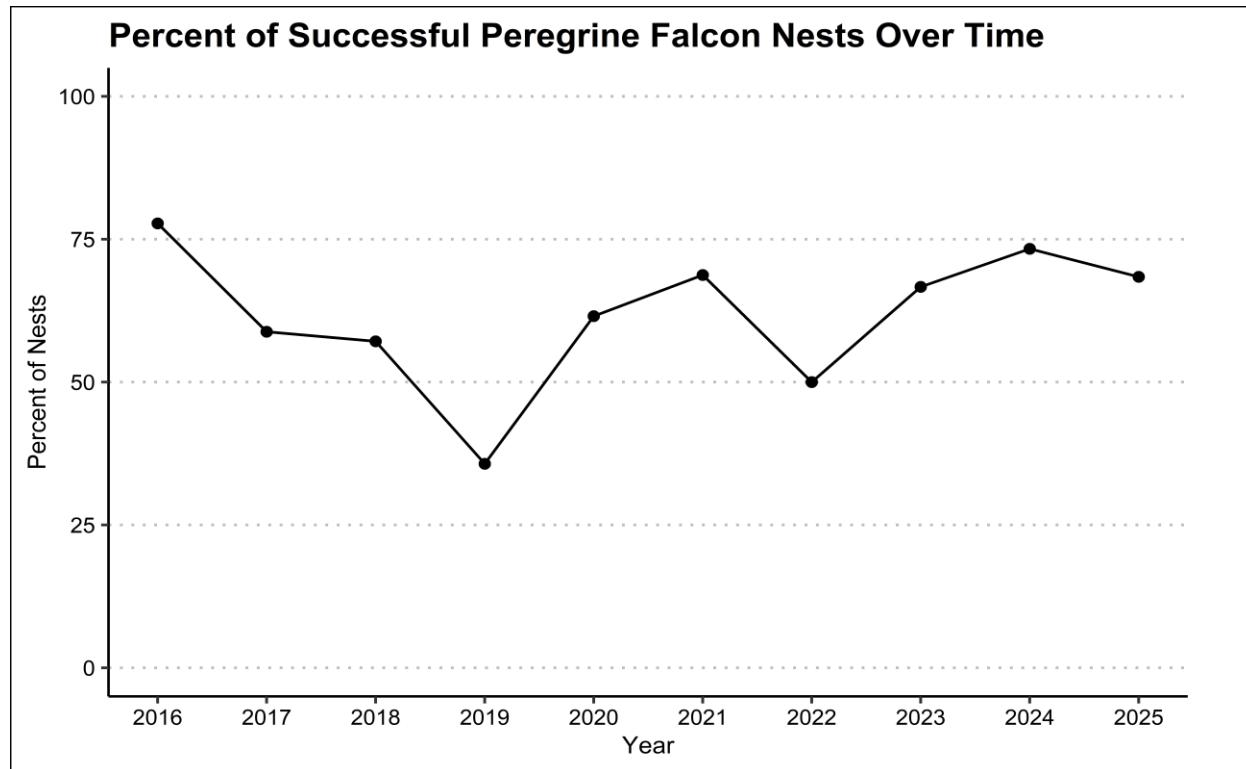


Figure 3. The percent of active and successful Iowa Peregrine Falcon nests (out of total active territories) from 2016-2025.

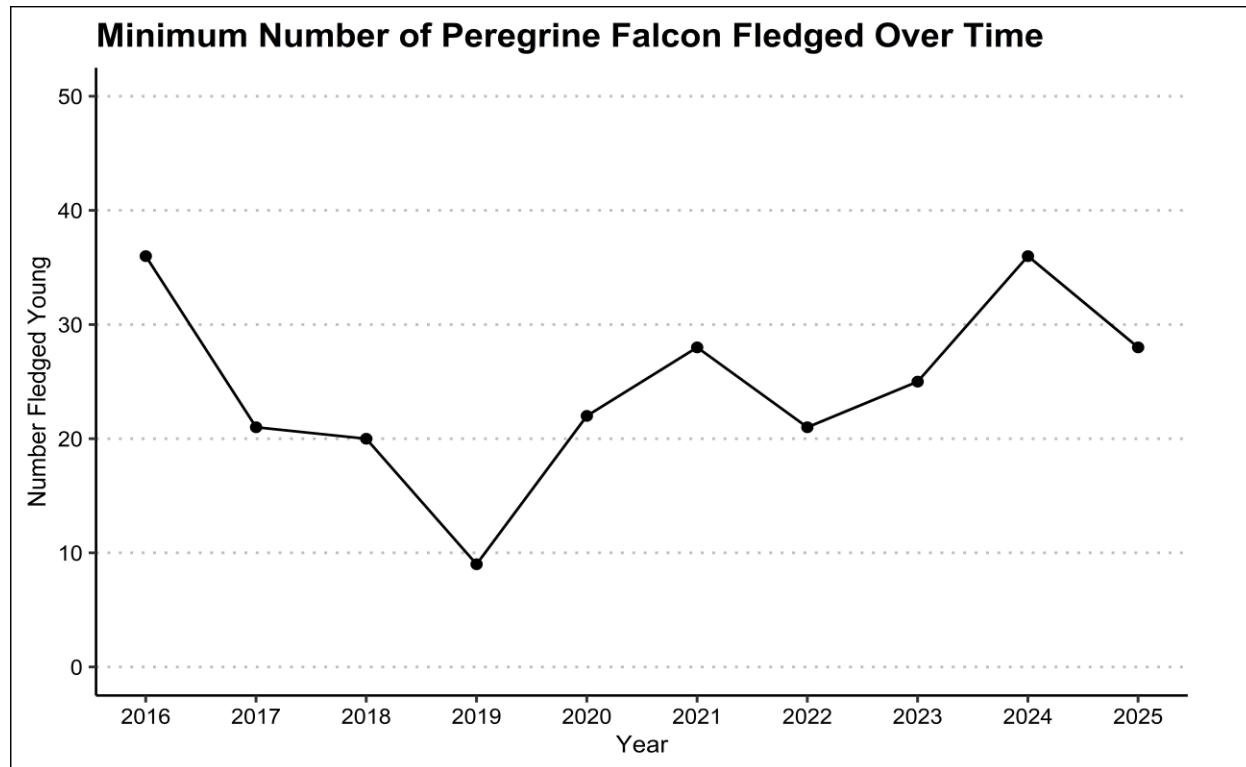


Figure 4. The minimum number of Peregrine Falcon young fledged per year in Iowa from 2016-2025.

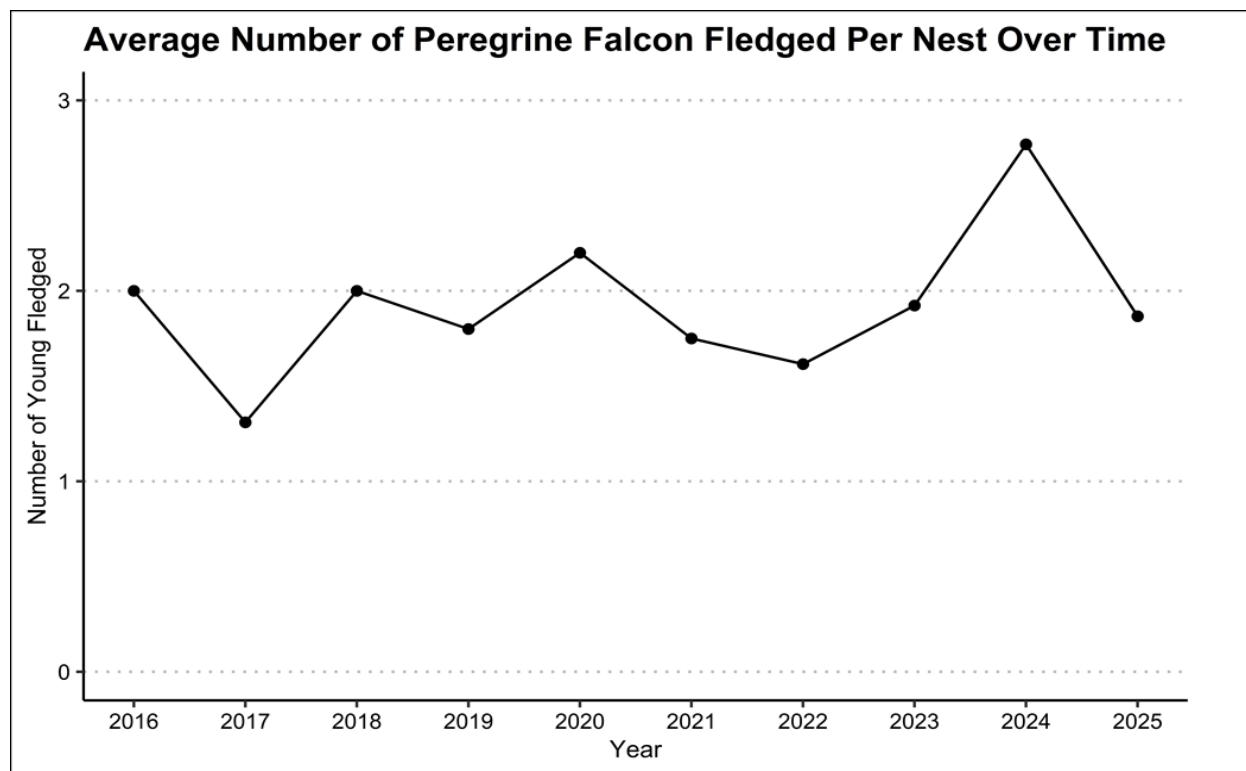


Figure 5. The average number of Peregrine Falcon young fledged per known-outcome nest from 2016-2025.