

Rare Animals of Louisiana

Peregrine Falcon

Falco peregrinus

Rarity Rank: S2N/G4

	1	2	3	4	5
State					
Global					
	imperiled		rare		secure



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Identification:

- Large falcon
- Adults bluish to gray above with a dark head and dark cheek stripe
- Buff to cinnamon below with dark spotting on the belly and strongly barred flanks
- Tail long and barred
- Bill grayish
- Cere and legs yellow
- Immatures brownish to bluish-brown with dark cheek stripe and heavy dark streaking on underparts
- Adults to 51 cm total length and wingspread to 1.2 m
- Usually solitary except during the nesting season

Habitat:

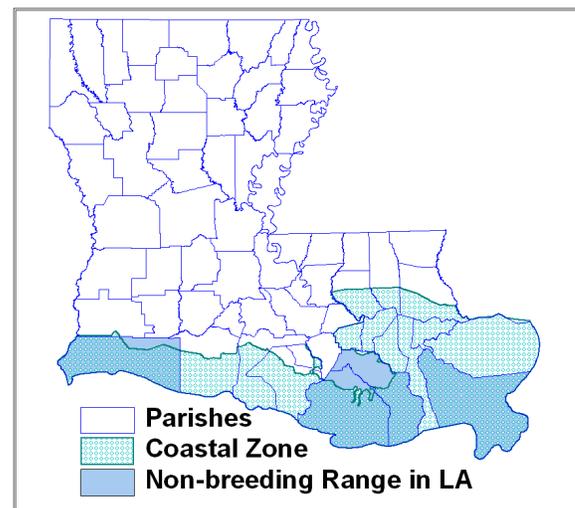
- Coastal marshes and lakes
- Primarily nests on cliffs, but in southern U.S. formerly nested in cavities of old, large trees
- In winter generally found in open areas along the coast

Food habits:

Birds are the most common prey, but also consumes small mammals and insects

Range:

- Formerly one of the most widespread birds, nesting in all regions of the world except Antarctica, but now greatly reduced in numbers and distribution is spotty
- A nest found by Roger Tory Peterson near Tallulah, Madison Parish, in 1942, is the only reported nesting record from the state
- Within Louisiana, generally restricted to the coastal region in winter but may be seen statewide during migration



Range based on occurrences in Natural Heritage database

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Reproduction:

- One brood per season
- Nests built on ledges by scraping a bowl in dirt, sand or gravel substrate
- Eggs fairly smooth and are cream to brown or reddish in color with spots and blotches of brown, red and purple
- Clutch size normally about 3 to 6 eggs

Threats:

- Dramatically declined due to DDT and other organochlorine pesticides
- Prior to DDT declines, shooting of birds was a principle mortality factor
- Habitat loss, particularly the wetland areas that supported large concentrations of the prey species of peregrines

Beneficial Management Practices:

- Protection of nesting sites
- Protection of wintering sites
- Public information regarding the vulnerability of this species
- Rebuilding of habitats with dredge material

LA River Basins:

Pontchartrain, Barataria, Terrebonne, Mississippi, Mermentau, Calcasieu, Sabine



Photo by James Weaver Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology



Lafayette Natural History Museum

References:

White, C. M., N. J. Clum, T. J. Cade and W. G. Hunt. 2002. Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus*). In The Birds of North America, No. 660 (A. Poole and F. Gill, eds.). The Birds of North America, Inc., Philadelphia, PA.

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For more information, please visit our Web pages at

<http://www.wlf.la.gov/wildlife/louisiana-natural-heritage-program> or call 225-765-2811
www.BTNEP.org or 1-800-259-0869