

## Peregrine Falcon 2021 Breeding Season

by Chris Martin

Overall the 2021 Peregrine Falcon breeding season was a very good one in New Hampshire. While still listed by NH Fish and Game as state-threatened, the Granite State's breeding population is gradually expanding with careful monitoring and management. NH Audubon staff and volunteers confirmed 26 territorial pairs in 2021 (up 8% from 2020), 17 of which were successful, one more than last year. In total 40 young fledged statewide, second only to the record-high 43 young fledged in 2018.

Highlights in 2021 included returning a rehabilitated falcon chick to its parents at Polar Caves in Rumney, collaborating with rock climbing volunteers to post temporary route closure signs at Painted Walls in Albany and Russell Crag in Woodstock, and having Mayor Joyce Craig's help for the banding of four chicks in Manchester.

Occupancy in 2021 of several previously unused sites was another promising development. Joe English Cliff in New Boston had a territorial pair for the first time, as did the I-89 Connecticut River Bridge in Lebanon, NH/Hartford, VT. Tern Project biologists on White Island at the Isles of Shoals also reported (with muted enthusiasm!) the regular presence of both an immature and a sub-adult falcon preying on nesting terns.

Over 30% of New Hampshire's Peregrines now occupy human-created structures, including buildings, bridges, stacks, and quarries. Bridge rehabilitation projects continued to require our management focus in 2021, and we collaborated with Maine DOT at the I-95 Piscataqua River Bridge in Portsmouth NH/Kittery ME, where for the second straight year a pair was unsuccessful nesting in a hollow structural beam under the bridge deck.

In last winter's *Notes from the Field* we highlighted Peregrine Networks' nest cam video of Brady Sullivan Tower juvenile "black/green 90/BU" interacting with parents at the Manchester nest box two months after fledging (<https://nhbirdrecords.org/nh-peregrine-recovery-turns-40/>). Recently 90/BU popped up again, this time at Plum Island in MA, where photographer George Woodland snapped a stunning photo of this 17-mo old bird now in adult plumage (photo above right). All of the 65 fledglings from this breeding site since 2001 have been banded, and to date we've had at least one encounter with 48% of them (31 of 65)!

NH Audubon conducts Peregrine monitoring and management in partnership with NH Fish & Game, who provides federal State Wildlife Grant funding to support some of our management activities. We received additional support for monitoring and education outreach this past year via a grant from the Dorr Foundation and from individual donors. Thanks to all our partners, including state and federal natural resource agencies, corporate partners, private landowners, rock climbers, and volunteers!



Healthy-looking 1½ year-old falcon "black/green 90/BU" at Plum Island in September (above). Photo by George Woodland. Just-hatched downy Peregrine Falcon chicks found at Russell Crag in late May (below). Photo by Torie Kidd.



NH Peregrine Falcon Productivity, 1980-2021

