

NH Peregrines Continue to Thrive

by Chris Martin, Senior Biologist

In 2023, NH Audubon staff and a dedicated team of volunteer observers confirmed 27 territorial Peregrine Falcon pairs in New Hampshire (see graph). We documented 23 incubating pairs, one less than 2022's record-high. We tallied 18 successful pairs that fledged at least one young each, and the total of 48 fledged young was the most ever documented in the Granite State in one season. This total topped 2022's record of 47 young fledged, and was due largely to finding 4 nest sites (Brady Sullivan, Holts Ledge, Polar Caves, Westmoreland Quarry) that produced 4 young each, as well as 7 more sites that fledged 3 young apiece.

Manchester's Brady Sullivan Tower came through once again, fledging 4 chicks in 2023. This territory has been successful for an amazing 23 consecutive years, with an average of 3.22 young fledged per year nesting, and producing total of 74 fledglings since 2001. An abandoned rock quarry in southwest NH has an even higher productivity rate, fledging 22 chicks (3.67 young per year) in 6 consecutive successful seasons since discovery in 2018. But it was last-minute confirmation of 2 chicks in early August at Abeniki Mountain in Dixville (see photo) that put us over the top with 48 fledged in 2023! We also had 2 territories where falcon pairs laid eggs more than once and yet still failed; both at Rattlesnake Mountain in Rumney, and at Swenson Granite in Concord. And we are still searching for potential nest sites in several other locations, including in Dover and Hampton/Seabrook, where adult peregrines continue to be seen during the nesting season.

This past year was the 43rd breeding season in the post-DDT recovery era for NH's peregrines. Once listed as federally endangered after disappearing from the entire region as a breeding species, peregrines still remain on NH's state-threatened list, and their population recovery continues to be very gradual. Yet our peregrines are a key piece of a now widely distributed regional breeding population that includes both cliff-nesting and urban-nesting pairs.

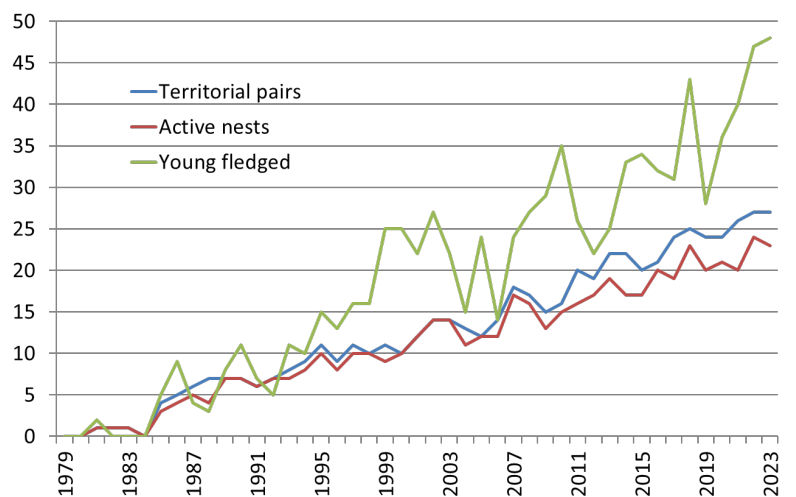
NH Audubon continues to lead management activities designed to promote successful nesting outcomes. In 2023, this work included posting and sharing info about seasonal climbing route closures at five popular cliffs, installing/maintaining nest boxes and trays, investigating nest failures, reviewing trail projects and other proposals with potential to disrupt falcon breeding, and offering advice to landowners who host peregrines on their land.

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Dixville's Abeniki Mountain fledglings found in early August 2023, by Lori Charron.

NH Peregrine Falcon Productivity, 1979-2023



NH Audubon data