

# Two fledgling peregrines spotted

ROSEBURG — Wildlife biologists and bird lovers are rejoicing over the news that a pair of wild peregrine falcons has been observed raising two young fledglings in the Umpqua National Forest.

"It's believed to be the first time that peregrines have been observed hatching young outside of Crater Lake National Park," says Jim Collins, a biologist with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife in Roseburg. "It's heartening to us."

Peregrines have long been on the

federal Endangered Species List because of their susceptibility to pesticides, he says.

Ray Zalunardo, wildlife biologist for the Umpqua National Forest, said the nesting peregrines were discovered by an 11-member team of amateur bird-watchers, led by Dan Fenske of Portland. Team members, Karen Phee of North Powder and Penny Ashenfelter of Silverton were the first to spot the pair over the Memorial Day weekend, he says.

"The two young are apparently

doing great," Zalunardo says. "The peregrine is truly a spectacular bird. They are truly aerially dynamic critters and fun to watch."

It is quite possible that the peregrine parents are birds first released in the wild by the "hacking" project at Crater Lake over the past several years, he says.

But wherever the birds come from, it's exciting to have a pair again raising young in the wild in Oregon, he says.

"To my knowledge, it's the only fully wild pair in Oregon," he says.

## Falcons

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hatch. In 1981 and again in 1982, as soon as the eggs were laid, they were taken out and replaced with live baby falcons, raised at the Peregrine Fund's Predatory Bird Research Group lab in Santa Cruz, Calif.

In 1983, one of the pair of falcons failed to return to the eyrie. So, the agencies began what is termed a "hacking" project in an attempt to increase the peregrine population.

Each year, three new-born peregrines from the Santa Cruz lab are placed in a special box on a ledge high above the lake. College students, such as Gilardi and Lenihan, are hired to watch and feed them.

The students are instructed to feed the fledglings at night by sneaking down the steep rock cliff to place

thawed frozen quail in their box. The stealth is necessary so the birds won't become accustomed to humans, one of their most dangerous predators, Jarvis says.

So far, 14 peregrines have been nurtured successfully through their fledgling period at the park. The state Fish and Wildlife Department has played a big part by paying the \$1,500 per bird charged by the Peregrine Fund to hatch the eggs and train the student attendants, he says.

This summer there have been more problems than usual. Not only have two fledglings been killed by predators but pine martens have discovered the site of the project and have become expert at stealing the frozen quail falcon food.

Jarvis certainly doesn't blame Lenihan and Gilardi for the prob-

lems. They have worked hard to scare away predators and have trapped three pine martens, which Jarvis hauls away to be released far from the rim.

"Even at wild eyries, only one in four young make it," he says.

Although Lenihan and Gilardi were pained at the loss of the two fledglings, both say they wouldn't trade their summer.

"When people find out how little we are getting paid, they don't understand why we do it," Lenihan says. "But it's just so beautiful up here. And with this project you feel like you're really doing something to save an endangered species."

Jarvis says he's optimistic that one or more pairs of peregrines will soon be raising their own young at Crater Lake.