

## **Eighth five-year survey of the peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*) in Québec, in 2005**

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There are two subspecies of the peregrine falcon in Québec. The *tundrius* subspecies nests in the north, mainly in the Ungava Bay region, whereas the *anatum* subspecies frequents the southern part, i.e. the part located south of the tree line (Bird, 1997).

From the end of the 1940s to the 1960s, there was an alarming decline in the peregrine falcon population in North America. The main cause was the use of organochloride pesticides, which led to the contamination of several raptors and consequently, resulted in lower reproductive success (Peakall et coll., 1990). The ban, in 1972, on the use of DDT together with repopulation programs have helped improve the status of this species.

It was in 1969, during a conference focusing on raptor research planning held at Cornell University, that the decision was made to monitor the peregrine falcon throughout North America (Cade and Fyfe, 1970). The objective of the eighth survey, carried out in 2005, was to survey all the known and potential nesting sites of the peregrine falcon in southern Québec with a view to confirming the presence of pairs. This survey also sought to accurately pinpoint the location of nests and to determine the number of young falcons. For financial reasons, it was impossible to survey the nesting sites for the subspecies north of the 49th parallel.

The results obtained confirm the attainment, even the exceedence, of the first objective of the peregrine falcon recovery plan, namely the obtaining, in September 2005, of a population that remains above 25 pairs and that is capable of producing, on its own, at least 37 young per year. The falcon population is steadily increasing and its productivity has been stable since the last survey was carried out. Officials must still determine the hazards that threaten each nesting site and identify the appropriate protection measures to achieve the second objective of the recovery plan.

The carrying out of the eighth five-year survey of the peregrine falcon by observers from several organizations, including Parc national du Saguenay, has made it possible to achieve the anticipated objectives. Fifty-three territorial pairs, having produced a minimum of 83 fledglings, were observed during the survey. According to the team of researchers, a survey of the nesting sites north of the 49th parallel should be made in order to determine the state of the population of the subspecies identified in the introduction.

This summary report presents encouraging results leading us to believe that at this rate, the peregrine falcon could be the first species to be removed from the list of precarious status species.