Distribution, Abundance, and Status of Recovery of the Peregrine Falcon (Falco peregrinus tundrius) in Northern Alaska

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In 1999, five years after the delisting of the tundra race of Peregrine Falcon, we conducted extensive surveys to assess the distribution and abundance of this subspecies in northern Alaska. A combination of ground, aerial, and boat surveys covered suitable raptor habitats north of the Brooks Range (~200,000 km²). Surveys were conducted from early incubation (June) to late nestling periods (August). Some areas surveyed in 1997 and 1998
(e.g., Central Brooks Range Foothills) were excluded from 1999 surveys, to focus efforts in areas lacking recent survey coverage. Combining all surveys, we found peregrines at more than 220 sites, including over 150 sites occupied by pairs. Successful pairs were recorded at 63% of all occupied sites; pairs without young are less easily detected, however. Most sites occurred in the foothills region along the Colville, Kogosukruk, Ikpikpuk, and Sagavanirktok rivers. However, successful nest sites also were found on eroding banks of large, deep lakes at the northern edge of the Foothills and on low dunes associated with meandering streams on the Arctic Coastal Plain. Overall numbers of occupied sites have increased more than 800% since the mid 1970s; for drainages where pre-decline numbers are available, most now have similar numbers to those recorded in the 1950s and 1960s. Population size estimates now equal or exceed earlier estimates of this population (200-250 pairs).