

**FEDERAL AID  
INTERIM PERFORMANCE REPORT**

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME  
DIVISION OF WILDLIFE CONSERVATION  
PO Box 115526  
Juneau, AK 99811-5526

**Alaska Department of Fish and Game  
State Wildlife Grant**

**Grant Number:** T-1 **Segment Number:** 3  
**Project Number:** 5.10  
**Project Title:** The population status and trend of peregrine falcons, gyrfalcons and other raptors in western and northwestern Alaska (Region V)  
**Project Duration:** July 1, 2006 – June 30, 2010  
**Report Period:** 1 July 2006 – 30 June 2007  
**Report Due Date:** September 30, 2007  
**Partner:** Alaska Department of Fish and Game

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**Project Objectives**

OBJECTIVE 1: Conduct, or cooperate with other investigators to complete population and production surveys (monitoring) of cliff-nesting raptors in selected areas on a scheduled rotational basis.

OBJECTIVE 2: Assess contaminant levels by analyzing opportunistic collections of addled eggs and other tissues located or found during production surveys. Note: laboratory analysis is coordinated by US Fish and Wildlife Service and often takes extended time and analysis will be completed when lab results are received.

OBJECTIVE 3: Collect 20 or more molted feathers from separate nesting areas of gyrfalcons (and other species as needed) to contribute to the State-wide effort to investigate genetic variation in gyrfalcons populations on a circumpolar basis.

OBJECTIVE 4: Evaluate the long-term potential for monitoring raptors in the area by comparing current population statistics with historical records.

**Summary of Project Accomplishments**

OBJECTIVE 1: Survey Area Schedule:

Lower Yukon River – last surveyed in 2004; scheduled for survey in June 2009  
Southern Seward Peninsula – surveyed in June 2007; scheduled for June 2008  
Norton Sound Coastline – scheduled for survey in 2010  
DeLong Mountains – not surveyed; not scheduled due to difficult logistics  
Northwest Alaska – scheduled for survey in July 2007  
Sagavanirktok River – last surveyed in 2002; not scheduled due to low staffing

**Summary of Southern Seward Peninsula:** Aerial surveys of the Southern Seward Peninsula study area were conducted in June 2007 using a R-44 helicopter for a total of 19.8 hours of flight. The area surveyed was the same as 2006 and included areas extending approximately 75 km east, 65 km west, and 140 km north of Nome

(approximately 16,000 km<sup>2</sup>). Previously mapped nest sites (N=543) and new sites within the survey area (N=57) were checked for occupancy by slow-speed fly-by survey techniques using GPS navigation to move from site to site. No landings or ground inspections were made during the survey. Total nest site occupancy (raptors attending nest sites or nests with eggs/young) was documented as follows: Common Raven – 35; Golden Eagle – 19; Goshawk – 0; Gyrfalcon – 41; Peregrine Falcon – 6; Rough-legged Hawk – 41; additionally, Canada Goose occupied 2 nest cliffs. Total raptor abundance (including ravens) was 142 nest sites, yielding an approximate occurrence of 1 pair per 113 km<sup>2</sup>. Classification of 458 vacant sites was not completed during the reporting period. Nesting success was variable among species: Golden Eagles were distributed similarly to previous years with 2 nestlings in many nests; Gyrfalcons experienced a wide range in hatching (about 40 days) and smaller than average brood sizes; Rough-legged Hawks were often attending cliffs without successful nests; Peregrine Falcons were distributed similarly to previous years.

OBJECTIVE 2: Since nest sites were not visited during annual aerial surveys, tissue samples for contaminants were not collected during the reporting period.

OBJECTIVE 3: Since nest sites were not visited during annual aerial surveys, feather samples for genetic analysis were not collected during the reporting period.

OBJECTIVE 4: Progress was made towards compiling historical and current records from two survey areas (Seward Peninsula and Northwest Alaska) into a comprehensive database to allow comparative analysis of raptor occupancy. Evaluation of trends of raptor occupancy will be possible once regional comprehensive data are summarized.

**Prepared by:** Peter Bente