

# Peregrine Falcons Continued Success

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By

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Pair on a rail

After last years success on the University of Westminster we awaited the bird's return, if in deed they were to return. As mentioned in last years breeding report alterations had been made to improve the bird's chances of success at one of the sites they had attempted to breed at last year. We had several sightings of the male over or in the immediate area of the park from late February. However the female was only seen on the university on a couple of occasions. As with last year the peak period for Peregrines to lay had come and gone. Dave Johnson again decided to go in search of his prey. It was a great deal easier this time as he had a good idea where the birds might be. The news was good news, Dave observed a nest relief indicating that egg laying had commenced. It was again time to let the various authorities know what was going on. In the last two years the RSPB had set up a watch point in Regent's Park, this they were keen to do again. Unfortunately after a meeting the relevant bodies, one spokes person was unwilling to allow for this to happen. The only watch point would again be on the embankment by The Tate Modern.



**Female coming into land**

With the pair busy at the new site we were very surprised when an immature female turned up on the university. This was some thing we had talked about as the best-case scenario, not really expecting it to happen. Even though a couple of miles away this visitor had not gone unnoticed. The male had come across and was only too glad to have another female to court. However when she strayed to near the present nest location the adult female was none to pleased and immediately chased her off. The intruder took several days to take the hint, before eventually moving off. Everything was progressing well with Dave popping down two or three times a week after work. There was the odd occasion when he would advise those concerned that various jobs and events planned would have to be put back. This they were only to keen to do, after all they wanted what was best for the birds. These jobs were not essential just routine, so they could be put back a few weeks until the birds had fledged. This was going to be a real challenge if we encountered the same problems we had met in the last two years. The surrounding landscape was totally different, lots of high-rise buildings. It was not until the youngsters ventured out of the nest cavity that we new how many were there, three eggs had hatched and two males and a female. We observed them as they grew up and the time for them to fledge came. The first male went off the ledge before dawn on the 13<sup>th</sup> June, it took a while to relocate him. Dave as I have mentioned before seems to think like a Peregrine, he found him on a rooftop. He looked to be in a safe location, and then as always happens it took off. It seemed as if he was quite a strong flier but was moving away from the nest site. Once again the bird looked settled on a ledge. Wrong, he was off again this time disappearing out of sight. We thought our best approach was to look for him from the ground. This was a great deal harder than in the Marylebone area, we had to give up. Feeling that he had landed at least 10 floors up and at the moment in no danger we decided to go back to work. Dave contacted Stuart a fellow Peregrine enthusiast who worked in the vicinity. He would get there later in the day, though by mid afternoon there was still no sign. Dave again went down to the area after work traipsing the streets, entering several office blocks and gaining access to their roofs. Finally in the early evening he phoned to say the bird had returned to the building we had seen it on twelve hours earlier.



**Youngsters on a roof**

The next morning as we peered across at the nest ledge the other juvenile male had fledged and was on a roof, but where had his brother gone. We then became aware of Peregrines calling; it wasn't the juvenile on the roof. Scanning we picked up the male bringing in food, the female above him, the other juvenile then appeared in the air with them. We then witnessed a successful food pass. This is normally achieved when the young become more skilled in flying Dave said. It then glided down on to the ground. I agreed to stay on the roof in case he took off Dave rushed down to the area the bird appeared to land in. Dave phoned to say all was fine and the bird was eating. Stuart then turned up, he and Dave then directed members of public away from him until he had had his fill. He then flew up onto a low wall, appearing unconcerned by the scores of people passing by as he sat there. That brief period of panic was the last of our worries for this year. The other youngsters including the female fledged with no mishaps. They would be hard to find on occasions, this was due to the fact that the buildings in their vicinity had plenty of suitable ledges allowing them to shelter from the sun, rain or blustery winds. The young would at times go down to the Tate Modern and put on a show for those at the RSPB's watch point.

We had some more good news during early summer; the immature female had managed to attract a mate. On a couple of dates they were seen in acrobatic displays over the park part of the bonding process. Let us hope that they come back to the university next year and are able to defend their territory.



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