

Central London Peregrine Falcons

A 2010 update on what has been happening in the last three years



Misty and Houdini

Well I am pleased to say that Misty and Houdini are still together and going strong, though Houdini is beginning to show signs of going grey, a bit like me. Including this year, this pair since they first bred back on the University of Westminster in 2004 has raised 16 young, with fortunately only two mishaps during the time that they were being monitored.

Since my last report back in 2007, the only disappointing thing to have happened is Misty becoming very wary of being observed. This is even though we or in particular Dave, as he is the person who has dedicated his last seven springs trying to ensure that things run smoothly at this location. Well he has done a sterling job and now most people are aware of the birds and disturbance during the breeding season is almost a thing of the past. There will always be the odd occasion when someone slips up.

In 2008 the pair managed to raise four young, with all four, 3 males and a female fledging successfully. It was looking fine until the 18th June and a phone call from the buildings manager. A female had been picked up having flown into a window, probably while chasing a prey item. Dave went and collected the bird and brought it back to the park. On inspection there was no outward sign of injury, though something wasn't quite right. It could have been concussed, and just needed a sometime to recover. It was decided to take her to ZSL's animal hospital, a facility that working with birds in Regent's Park we have used in the past. The vet examined the bird and didn't want to stress her more than was necessary and came to the conclusion that concussion was possible and keeping her boxed up over night might be all that was needed. Early the next morning Dave took her back to the roof of the nest building to let her go. It became apparent that the injury was far worse than at first thought. We returned her to the vet to be given a more thorough examination. A while later we were told that it could have a damaged back and they couldn't deal with it, but the Hawk and Owl Conservancy might help. We contacted them, who were very helpful and if we could bring it to them they would see it they could help. We got permission from our manager and drove to Andover as quickly as we could. The vet had a look and said that they check her over thoroughly and phone Dave later. We were then given a guided tour of what was a very interesting place, with some fantastic birds of prey. The downside of a brief visit was that we couldn't stay for one of their raptor flying display.



Peregrine at the Hawk and Owl Conservancy

Not long after we had returned to London Dave received a call, with the news that the bird had had to be put down as it had a broken pubis bone and was not likely to recover from that. The cause of that type of injury is a high speed collision. This is a major problem with Peregrines breeding in urban locations, to many glass sided buildings.

Misty only hatched three young in 2009, again once she had started laying there was no way she wanted anyone watching her again. We did pop up early one morning, as it is important that the chicks are aged so that the dates they are due to fledge can be calculated, this year there were only three youngsters on the nest ledge. People, in particular a small band of people who having watched the birds on the university have now become so attached to them, they are willing to spend hours on the ground and for some the comfort of a nearby residents balcony. This is done to make sure that no mishaps happen and if they do, they are there to call for help. From this small band an idea was ignited from which came www.london-peregrine-partnership.org.uk. The three youngsters all fledged and after a while they had moved away from the nest site and were being viewed by members of the public at the RSPB Peregrine Watch point at The Tate Modern.



Feeding time



Almost ready for take off



Three juveniles