



News for Immediate Release

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DEP Turns on New High-Definition Falcon Cam in Time for Mating Season

Harrisburg – The Department of Environmental Protection today launched its annual live, 24-hour webcast of a nesting pair of peregrine falcons who live on a ledge on the Market Street side of the Rachel Carson State Office Building in Harrisburg.

For the first time, three high-definition cameras will chronicle the falcons' activities while streaming the footage live on the internet to viewers around the world.

"The falcon cam has become synonymous with the Rachel Carson State Office Building and our agency," DEP Secretary Mike Krancer said. "We are delighted to host these unique birds of prey and look forward to presenting them in a way that more vividly shows their daily activities."

The new high-definition (HD) cameras include a personal-computer-operated zoom and pan and light/color balance capabilities. This new technology creates a crisper, more detailed image that enhances wildlife viewing opportunities. Around the time the first egg is laid, an additional HD camera will be set up for an intimate view into the nest.

In recent weeks, another male peregrine has challenged the resident male, who has been at the ledge since 2005. Despite that, the resident male has defended the ledge and started mating with the resident female, who has been at the ledge since 2012. Breeding activity typically takes place this time of year, so territorial battles can be fierce.

"The popularity of the streaming video has made the falcon page one of DEP's most visited webpages," DEP Environmental Education Director Jack Farster said. "By watching the young peregrines grow and develop, we can appreciate how our actions can have a direct and positive impact on endangered wildlife and their habitats."

In the 13 years falcons have been nesting at the building, the nest has produced 48 eggs and 40 hatchlings. Of these, 29 falcons survived—13 males and 16 females. The gender of one of the nestlings who hatched in 2008 could not be determined. That bird was the runt of the clutch, or set of offspring.

Last year, the female falcon laid a clutch of four eggs and only one hatched. The first egg of the 2013 breeding season should be laid the first week in March. The

eggs should begin to hatch around mid-May and the young falcons, also called eyases, will begin to take their first flights, or fledge, in mid-June.

While their numbers are increasing, the Pennsylvania Game Commission still lists peregrine falcons as an endangered species at the state level. Nationally, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service removed the bird from its list of endangered and threatened species in 1999.

The birds' population in Pennsylvania has increased since the early 1990s as a direct result of conservation efforts like this one. According to the Game Commission, there are now 32 pairs of peregrine falcons nesting at various locations across the state.

For more information, to sign up to receive the Falcon Wire e-newsletter or to watch the falcons live, visit www.dep.state.pa.us and click on the Falcon Cam button on the homepage.

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