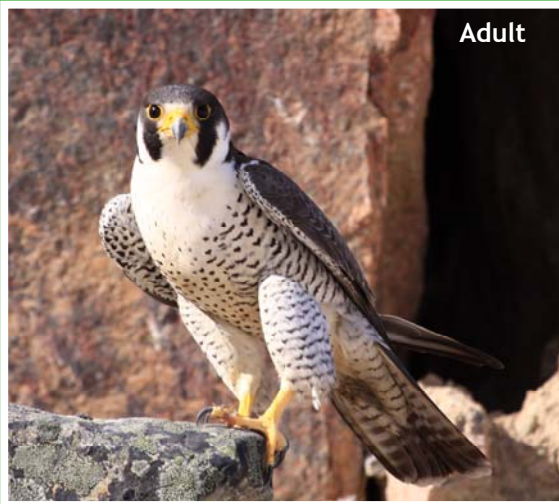


BC's Coast Region: Species & Ecosystems of Conservation Concern
Peregrine Falcon *anatum* and *pealei* subspecies (*Falco peregrinus anatum* & *F. p. pealei*) *F. p. anatum*: Global: G4T4 Provincial: S2B COSEWIC: SC BC List: Red / *F. p. pealei*: Global: G4T3 Provincial: S3B COSEWIC: SC BC List: Blue



Adult



Chick

Notes on *Falco peregrinus*: This member of the family Falconidae (falcons and carcaras), has a global distribution that ranges from Arctic tundra to the tropics. Best known for its ability to dive (“stoop”) up to 320 km/hr it is also referred to as “Duck Hawk” in North America as it often preys on waterbirds. Three subspecies are documented for BC, *anatum*, *pealei* and *tundrius*.

Description

Height: 38-53 cm Wingspan 1 m. Peregrine Falcon are medium “crow-sized” raptors. Plumage is slate-grey on the back, crown and upper sides of the wings and tail. Chest and belly feathers are white to buff with fine black bars and spots. The black crown has wide black ‘sideburns’. Juveniles are brown with extensive barring on the chest. The narrow tail and long tapered wings, characteristic of falcon species are used to assist in their high speed dives or stoops to take prey in the air. A special notch on the inside of the upper beak, found on all falcons, is used to easily dispatch prey through a bite to the base of the skull.

Diet

Peregrine populations on the Coast Region have adapted to a diverse range of native and introduced prey species from Rock Dove and European Starling in urban areas to waterbirds, diving ducks and songbirds. Prey is generally taken on the wing, with the bird diving at high speed through startled flocks of birds and knocking out its selected victim.

Look's Like?

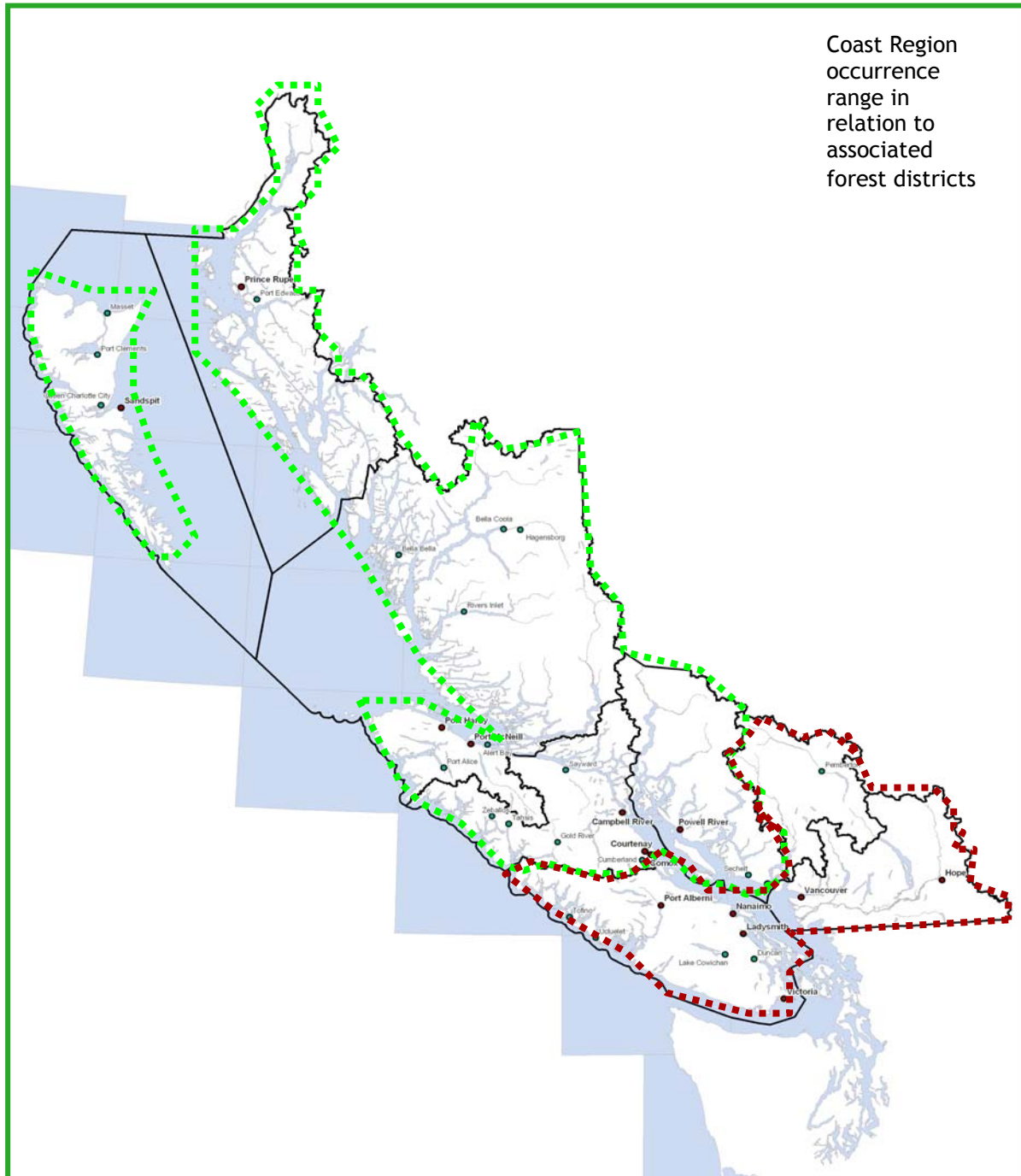
Several related species of falcon overlap in distribution with both Peregrine subspecies, including Merlin and American Kestrel. These birds are considerably smaller and have distinctly different plumage patterns. On rare occasions juvenile, grey-coloured Gyrfalcon, a coastal Arctic species stray south and may be mistakenly identified as juvenile Peregrine Falcon.



Gyrfalcon

Distribution

With ~20 active breeding sites or “aeries”, the *anatum* subspecies is the most common form to be found on the southern portion of the Coast Region (Fraser Lowlands as well as southern Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands). The former range of this subspecies in BC extended into the northeast, south and central interior regions of the province but only a few pairs are known to breed in these areas now. The *pealei* subspecies is coastal oriented with a range stretching from Washington State to Alaska. In BC, Haida Gwaii forms the center of this subspecies population with ~200 active and historic aeries documented from northern Vancouver Island, the Central and North Coast and associated islands. Both subspecies are considered resident and likely overlap in range on both the Mainland coast and Vancouver Island. Degree of interbreeding between subspecies is unknown.



Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus anatum* - red-dotted line & *F. p. pealei* - green) potential occurrence range (including areas of overlap) for the Coast Region

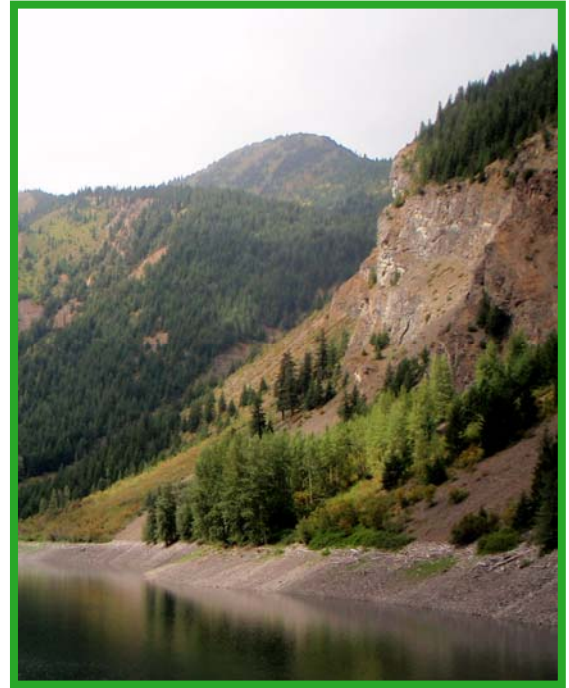
Habitat Preferences

Nest site selection is closely tied with optimal foraging habitat. Peregrines usually nest on rock ledges high on steep cliffs, mostly in undisturbed or inaccessible areas. Eggs are laid in a “scrape” on a part of the ledge that is sheltered by a rock overhang. Occasionally peregrines will occupy abandoned bird nests (e.g. other raptors or cliff nesting birds).

Critical Features

Aeries described in British Columbia are on the ledges of cliffs (6-260 m high) that overlook marine waters, large lakes and rivers. This falcon is also an urban adaptor and successful aeries have been established naturally or through reintroduction programs using building ledges or under high span bridges.

Peregrine Falcon place nests on high and inaccessible vertical cliff ledges or similar platforms.



Seasonal Life Cycle

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
	Courtship/ Breeding		Eggs laid/chicks in nest				Fledging/ Juveniles & adults begin over-wintering in the fall				

Threats

- ◆ Distribution coincides with areas undergoing significant urbanization and natural habitat loss including foreshore and hillside development.
- ◆ Loss of wetland and agricultural land threatens prey supply.
- ◆ Falcons can be sensitive to repeated human disturbance at aeries, recreational rock climbing and mountain climbing in areas used for nesting can lead to displacement or nest abandonment.
- ◆ Falcons are the target of egg and chick collection and non-permitted trapping by falconers for the black market raptor trade.
- ◆ This species is still recovering from historic local population declines from pesticide use (e.g. DDT). Despite bans on the use of DDT, reproductive failures attributed to environmental contaminants are still an issue in some regions.

Conservation & Management Objectives

- ◆ Apply conservation and management objectives as set out in the “Management Plan for Peale’s Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus pealei*) in British Columbia and COSEWIC assessment and update status report on the Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus (pealei* subspecies - *Falco peregrinus* and *pealei anatum/ tundrius* - *Falco peregrinus anatum/ tundrius*) in Canada. Integrate complimentary measures found in “Best Management Practices for Raptor Conservation during Urban and Rural Land Development in British Columbia”.
- ◆ Assess, inventory and monitor using methodology set out in the RISC standards # 11 Inventory Methods for Raptors (Version 2.0).

Specific activities should include:

- ◆ Population assessment is needed. Population size is low and still in early recovery stages. Few breeding sites are known and further monitoring is required.
- ◆ Eggshell fragments and any other available tissues should be collected from aeries after the breeding season to monitor levels of pollutants in conjunction with data on reproductive success.
- ◆ Taxonomic studies should be undertaken to determine subspecies boundaries and range of interbreeding for the Coast Region.
- ◆ The species as a whole should be considered for listing as Identified Wildlife under the Forest & Range Practices Act.
- ◆ Continue closure on wild-capture of chicks and or egg collection by falconers. Captive breeding programs should continue to be supported to reduce the likelihood of poaching from the wild.
- ◆ Continue to support private reintroduction initiatives, as long as they are done according to accepted Recovery Team protocols and provincial legislation/policy.
- ◆ Exact locations of aeries should be kept confidential unless it is in the best conservation interests of the birds. Disturbance, especially recreational activities should be managed as part of a combination of methods including outreach, education and access restrictions. Agreements should be made with rock climbing groups to co-manage and protect sites in popular climbing areas.

Peregrine Falcon subspecies in BC are listed under the Federal Species at Risk Act (SARA) and are subject to protections and prohibitions under the BC Wildlife Act. Habitat for this species may also be governed under provincial and federal regulations including the Fish Protection Act and Federal Fisheries Act as well as Regional and local municipal bylaws.

Content for this Factsheet has been derived from the following sources

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Every effort has been made to ensure content accuracy. Comments or corrections should be directed to the South Coast Conservation Program: info@sccp.ca. Content updated August 2010.

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