

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

TAKE OF NESTLING AMERICAN PEREGRINE FALCONS IN THE CONTIGUOUS UNITED STATES AND ALASKA FOR USE IN FALCONRY

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is proposing to allow a very conservative take of nestling American peregrine falcons (*Falco peregrinus anatum*) for falconry in Alaska and the contiguous United States west of 100° longitude. The nesting population in States west of 100° in 2002 was at least 1,800 pairs. Recent productivity in the contiguous western states was about 1.36 young per nesting attempt.

We considered the following six alternatives in preparing an Environmental Assessment of the issue.

1. No action, which would mean that no take of nestlings would be allowed.
2. Take of 5% of annual production. This was the proposed action. Each State west of 100° longitude could allow take of up to 5% of its annual production of American peregrine falcons for use in falconry. A State would have to have a nesting population of 15 pairs to allow take.
3. Take of 10% of annual production. Each western State could allow take of up to 10% of its annual production of nestlings of American peregrine falcons for falconry. A State would have to have 8 nesting pairs to allow take at this level.
4. Take of 15% of annual production. Each western State could allow take of up to 15% of its annual production of American peregrine falcons for falconry. A State would have to have 6 nesting pairs to allow take at this level.
5. Take of 20% of annual production. Each western State could allow take of up to 20% of its annual production of American peregrine falcons for falconry. A State population of at least 4 nesting pairs would be required to allow take at this level.
6. Lift all restrictions on take. Under this option take of American peregrine falcons would be managed by the States within the limits of the Federal falconry regulations. This option would make no distinctions as to where nestling peregrines could be taken.

Having reviewed 945 comments from the public and from Federal and State agencies on the draft Environmental Assessment, we prepared a final Revised Environmental Assessment, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act. Our preferred action is to allow the take of 5% of annual production in western States. The take is to be based on the most recent population data for each State. Assuming the average of 1.36 young per nesting attempt, the maximum take of nestlings under the proposed action alternative in initial years of the plan would be about 101 young. The allowed take would be reviewed if population monitoring shows a significant nesting population decline.

We believe that the conservative take we propose will not be discernible in American peregrine populations in the West. We also believe that effects of this action on wildlife habitats would be very small. We found no likely environmental impacts to air or water quality, to other wildlife populations, or to any other component of the environment.

Based on my review of the enclosed Environmental Assessment and other supporting documentation, I have determined that the proposed take of nestling American peregrine falcons for falconry under the conditions outlined above is not a major Federal action that would significantly affect the quality of the human environment within the meaning of Section 102 (2) (C) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969. Accordingly, preparation of an environmental impact statement on the proposed action is not required.

Dated 3/1/04

Signed: Steve Williams
Director, Fish and Wildlife Service

Reference Final Revised Environmental Assessment, Management Plan, and Implementation Guidance: Take of Nestling American Peregrine Falcons in the contiguous United States and Alaska for use in Falconry.