

AMERICAN PEREGRINE FALCON

The American peregrine falcon is the subspecies that lives in large parts of the lower 48 states and Alaska. This is the subspecies most often referred in the context of the Endangered Species Act (ESA), even if such references are to generic peregrine falcons and not the American, or *anatum*, subspecies.

Almost all of the American peregrine's remarkable rebound which led to its being delisted in 1999 can be attributed to four factors, which are discussed in decreasing order of significance:

- The ban of the pesticide DDT in 1972, one year prior to the passage of the ESA
- Data error and the natural population growth of peregrines that survived the DDT-induced population crash.
- The large population of peregrines in Alaska where very little, if any, conservation efforts occurred.
- The reintroduction and introduction of captive-bred peregrines throughout large portions of the U.S. due in large part to private organizations led by the Peregrine Fund. The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS) played a relatively minor role.

The American peregrine profile examines fourteen other issues that played roles in the peregrine's conservation: 1) the relatively minor importance of habitat protection in the lower 48 states; 2) the FWS's inclusion of Canadian peregrines when discussing the sub-species' conservation in apparent efforts to inflate population numbers; 3) conservation efforts hindered by the Interior Department; 4) introduction of non-native peregrines; 5) politics and taxonomy; 6) controversy as to whether delisting was merited; 7) waste of resources by the FWS through the designation of multiple recovery regions; 8) unqualified people appointed to recovery teams; 9) increasingly difficult recovery criteria with successive versions of recovery plans; 10) baseless opposition to delisting; 11) belated delisting; 12) ESA proponents exaggerating the role played by the federal government in the peregrine's conservation; 13) whether the ESA was necessary for the American peregrine to rebound; 14) the excessive and wasteful monitoring period prescribed by the post-delisting monitoring plan.