

PEREGRINE FALCON

falco peregrinus

FactFile

Length: 36cm –48cm

Wingspan: 95cm –110cm

Weight: 0.58kg –1.30kg

Habitat: Concentrated in the north, west and coastal regions with rugged cliffs with open, windswept hunting grounds nearby.

Nests are just rough scrapes on rock ledges. 3 or 4 eggs are laid which hatch after about 30 days. Fledging takes place about 40 days later but the young remain with their parents for a further 2 months as they learn to hunt.



The Peregrine, our largest, fastest breeding falcon.

The Peregrine is Britain's largest breeding falcon, females having a wingspan in excess of one metre and weighing almost 1.4 kilos. Males (tiercels) weigh about a third less.

Peregrines are exclusively bird-eaters who take their prey in flight, either binding to the victim after a short chase in level flight or, more often, by climbing above it and stooping at speeds of up to 200 mph, striking with the hind talon, usually with sufficient force to kill it outright.

During the hey-day of falconry the Peregrine was highly prized and protected but in recent times it has been persecuted as its interests came into direct conflict with those of man. Peregrines suffered badly from the effects of pesticide poisoning with organochlorines such as DDT affecting their breeding by causing severe thinning of eggshells. However, since the use of these pesticides was banned in the late 1970s, the Peregrine population has been restored.