



The peregrine falcon represents another success story in species conservation.

In 2008, the Commission directed staff to prepare a peregrine falcon management plan as a precursor to removing the peregrine falcon from Florida's list of imperiled species. At the April 2009 meeting, the Commission reviewed the draft plan and directed staff to finalize the plan and de-listing rule for this meeting.

The peregrine falcon was removed from the federal list of endangered species in 1999.

## Conservation goal

- Maintain a stable or increasing population in Florida.



Much like the bald eagle, the peregrine falcon population declined as a result of DDT use and has since made a successful comeback with the elimination of DDT and the efforts of many professionals and citizens.

This plan establishes a conservation goal to maintain the population of peregrine falcons in Florida.

Peregrine falcons do not breed in Florida but are commonly seen here, particularly during fall migration. Some may over-winter or pass through again during spring migration.

The goal is designed to prevent any harm to the population while they are in Florida.

## Conservation objectives

- Maintain or increase protected habitat for the peregrine falcon.
- Manage mortality risk of peregrine falcons while they are in Florida to maintain a stable or increasing population.



The plan proposes two conservation objectives.

- The first objective acknowledges that Florida provides important habitat for peregrine falcons and particularly for birds migrating in the fall. While conservation of coastal habitat is important in general for peregrine falcons, habitat in the middle Florida Keys has been identified as critical to their successful migration. The narrowness of the middle keys concentrates migrating peregrine falcons and therefore preservation of roosting and foraging habitat in this area is essential.

- The second objective addresses the need to ensure that while the birds are in Florida, they don't experience any undue risk of mortality. Examples of things that could affect their mortality include wind turbines, electrocution from power lines, and insufficient habitat for foraging, resting, and roosting.

## Proposed regulation

- Remove the peregrine falcon from the list of endangered species (68A-27.003)



Only one rule change is proposed in the management plan.

- The proposed rule change would simply remove the peregrine falcon from the state's list of endangered species.
- Peregrine falcons are currently and will still be protected by the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act

## Changes from draft plan

- Acknowledge that pesticide contamination is an ongoing threat
- Clarify that funding for monitoring is not currently available
- Recognize importance of monitoring in the Keys for determining range-wide population trend



•Acknowledge that pesticide contamination is an ongoing threat throughout much of the winter range of peregrine falcons because many south and central American countries lack the pesticide regulations that have been enacted in the U.S.

•Clarify in the “Monitoring” section of the plan that although grants have funded monitoring of peregrine falcons and other raptors in the Keys for the last ten years, these funds are no longer available. The grant programs that previously funded the work are not intended to fund long term projects and shortfalls in the nongame trust fund has led to the elimination of one of the grant programs. We will work with partners and the USFWS to look for opportunities for a dedicated secure funding source to support this monitoring.

•Strengthen support in the plan for continuation of the monitoring program in the Florida Keys due to its importance in determining range-wide population trends.

## Stakeholder issues

- Monitoring of peregrine falcons in Florida Keys
- Falconry permits not addressed in the plan; no permits will be issued this year
  - USFWS allows harvest of 36 birds per year east of the 100<sup>th</sup> meridian
  - Stakeholders not in agreement on peregrine falcon take for falconry
  - Staff will bring a draft falconry rule in September



### Monitoring:

FWC staff recognizes that the Keys site is a valuable part of the continental monitoring program to assess population status and trends. The Keys site has the highest annual autumn counts of peregrine falcons in North America. The data from this site provides important information that contributes to our understanding of the range-wide continental population status of the peregrine falcon and other migrating raptors. As stated previously, we will work with partners and the USFWS to look for opportunities for a dedicated secure funding source to support this monitoring.

Since 2003, the USFWS has had a separate monitoring program in place that runs through at least 2015 as a requirement of the federal delisting process. The federal monitoring measures reproductive success and occupancy of breeding territories.

### Falconry:

- As stated earlier, this plan does not include any changes to falconry rules to include peregrine falcons.
- The USFWS recently released a plan to allow a total of 36 birds to be taken from any state east of the 100<sup>th</sup> meridian.
- The primary issue is that some stakeholders are opposed to allowing wild peregrine falcons to be captured and held in captivity for falconry, because they believe captive reared birds are available for this purpose.
- As directed by Commissioners at the April meeting, staff have begun developing a rule to regulate take of peregrine falcons for falconry. A meeting is scheduled with stakeholders to continue to develop the rule.
- Staff will specifically seek your guidance on whether or not to allow the take of peregrine falcons for falconry when a draft rule is presented at your September meeting.

## Staff recommendation

- Approval of the management plan and rule as advertised.



- For additional information, visit [My FWC.com](http://MyFWC.com)

Staff recommendation is to approve the plan and rule.