Nesting of the Peregrine Falcon in the Desert Southwest

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2 Peregrine Falcon eyries discovered in 2013

Lower Colorado River
~ 35 km north of Yuma, AZ

Kofa National Wildlife Refuge,
Castle Dome Mountains (AZ)
American Peregrine falcons (*Falco peregrinus anatum*) experienced widespread declines in the 1900s due, primarily, to synthetic organic chemicals (e.g. DDT and dieldrin).

By 1970, approximately 95% of the California PEFA population had been reduced.

Listed as Endangered in 1970

Delisted in 1999  (64 FR 46542) 25 Aug 1999
LCR Eyrie

General eyrie specs:

Within a recessed, north-facing ledge

Within the top 1/3 of a near vertical cliff

39 m above water level

Elevation of ~ 101 m
Courtship activities – began mid-March

Egg laying - ~ 6-10 April

Hatching - ~ 12-13 May

Fledged - ~ 18 June (age 5 weeks)

Independent at ~80 days old
Territory defense against a Turkey Vulture
3 nestlings – approximately 27 d old

9 June 2013
19 June 2013        Age: ~37 d
~ 43 days of age

25 June 2013
Prey delivery

~ 43 days of age

25 June 2013
Fledglings mantle over food
Age ~ 64 days

16 July 2013
Peregrine Falcon eyrie on Kofa NWR-
Adult with 1 nestling
Kofa Eyrie

Nest location specs:

Within a recessed, north-facing ledge

Within the top $\frac{1}{2}$ of a near vertical cliff

Elevation of $\sim 662$ m
“Few Peregrine Falcons nest in Sonoran and Mojave desert mountain ranges away from large water features” Burger, 2005

Other authors consider availability of a bathing site and proximity to a perennial water source a requisite of Peregrine Falcon nesting.

Martinez Lake, LCR ~ 44km distant

There are ~20 developed wildlife water catchments and some ephemeral natural tinajas and springs within an estimated foraging distance of 390 km² from the eyrie.

Peregrine falcons at maintained wildlife water catchment on Kofa NWR (taken by trail camera)
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Questions?