Sightings of Peregrine Falcons (*Falco peregrinus*)
at Presumed Nest Sites in Eastern Hudson Bay, Summer 1985
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ABSTRACT. Eastern Hudson Bay breeding distribution of the peregrine falcon is poorly documented. We report the observation of immature falcons and behaviour of adult birds that strongly suggest the existence of a breeding population of peregrine falcons on islands near the Nastapoka River.

Key words: nesting, peregrine falcon, *Falco peregrinus*, Nastapoka Islands

Fyfe (1969) classified the Hudson Bay Arc (Cape Dufferin to Poste-de-la-Baleine; Fig. 1) as optimum nesting habitat for peregrine falcons (*Falco peregrinus* Tunstall), yet there are few reports of observations from the area. In 1915 O.J. Murie...
both birds are frequently seen demonstrating (Ratcliffe, 1980).

We spent the summer of 1985 encamped at the mouth of the Nastapoka River (56°55'N, 76°33'W). As part of our work on marine mammals, we travelled by freighter canoe in the vicinity of the Nastapoka Islands. We usually travelled on the east side of the islands and did not intentionally flush birds or land on the islands to pinpoint nests. Slaty upperparts, dark malar bars, and pale throats characterize this easily identified species.

The Nastapoka Islands rise gradually out of the water on their western side but present steep, broken cliffs on their eastern aspect. These rocky cliffs, with numerous ledges and cavities and close to an abundance of seabirds, make the area attractive to peregrine falcons (Fyfe, 1969). Although we did not attempt to locate the actual nests, the birds' behaviour at three sites (Table 1) strongly indicated active nesting in the area. The "cack-cack-cack" call given by the falcons is indicative of peregrines defending a nest site (Ratcliffe, 1980). The appearance of a second bird at the Davieau Island site suggests nesting had occurred. During incubation the female seldomflushes, but after hatching, she becomes more aggressive and both birds are frequently seen demonstrating (Ratcliffe, 1980). The appearance of immature birds at our camp (Table 1) suggests nesting in the area, although they may have been migrants from farther north.

The bird on Christie Island was seen only once, despite several trips past the site. However, we do not believe it was the same bird seen on Davieau Island. The birds at both sites flew over us cacking — normal behaviour of a falcon near its nest. The distance between the two sites is 8 km, which is greater than all but one of the average nearest neighbour distances given by Ratcliffe (1980:Table 20). The behaviour exhibited at each location and the distance separating them suggest they are discrete sites.

Traditional use of certain cliffs by peregrines has been proposed (Hickey and Anderson, 1969). Unfortunately neither Murie (Todd, 1963) nor Manning (1946) is specific about the location of nests on Christie Island. We are thus unable to comment on traditional use of this site.

The Nastapoka River is depicted by Murphy (1990:Fig. 1) as near the dividing line between the F.p. anatum and F.p. tundrius subspecies. This would make it another area useful to test the hypothesis of a latitudinal cline of morphological variation for peregrine falcons (Court et al., 1988).

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**REFERENCES**


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**TABLE 1. Sightings of peregrine falcons in eastern Hudson Bay, summer 1985**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Number of birds</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Taylor Island</td>
<td>17/07</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Cacking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(56°43'N, 76°37'W)</td>
<td>23/07</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Cacking, photographed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christie Island</td>
<td>19/07</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Cacking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(57°03'N, 76°40'W)</td>
<td>30/07</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Cacking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Davieau Island</td>
<td>22/08</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Cacking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(57°08'N, 76°38'W)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Silent, immature plumage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nastapoka River estuary</td>
<td>20/08</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Silent, immature plumage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(56°55'N, 76°33'W)</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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