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Manchester Peregrines 2013

This year celebrates the Chinese New Year of the snake, one of nature's most intriguing and awesome predators. Manchester is also gearing up to herald the successful breeding of the world's fastest creature, the peregrine falcon. These majestic birds have made the tall buildings in Manchester City Centre their home in the last 20 years and the programme has been managed by the RSPBs 'Dates With Nature' since 2006. Our parent birds are due to introduce their hatchling chicks in April and will be seen 'stooping' at over 200 mph whilst hunting their prey!

Four new staff members are chomping at the bit to be let loose in Exchange Square and enthuse as many people as possible about these magnificent birds which live right in the heart of Manchester City Centre. The camera was reinstalled in February with the help of

Manchester Digital Development Agency (MDDA) and will once again allow people to check up on the chicks progress from their own living room.

[Why not check out the webcam footage yourself?](#)

By inspiring people about the wildlife which lives in the City the new Information Assistants will be encouraging people to step up and take action to help protect it, they will be in Exchange Square seven days a week from April 27th until July 30th, 11am – 6pm.

To encourage engagement with a younger and faster moving audience the peregrine falcons will be [tweeting direct from their nest site](#), allowing followers to see video snapshots of what they are up to throughout the breeding season. We have also enlisted the help of some dedicated wildlife film students from Salford University to take the Peregrines to Hollywood with their very own 2012 season trailer, check it out soon on the WildaboutManchester [films and videos page](#)

Here's hoping the peregrines have as successful a year as in 2012 and keep us all eyes to the skies and screens!

The RSPB's Manchester Peregrine Project: Past and Present

This is the 8th year of the Manchester Peregrine 'Date with Nature' project, which was originally known as the 'Aren't Birds Brilliant' project.

A short history of peregrine falcons in Manchester City Centre.

Peregrine falcons were first recorded in the city of Manchester in 1993. This was a pair which bred on a derelict power station 2 miles from centre. The power station, however, was demolished in 1994 so the peregrines were unable to nest here for a second year. The next sighting of peregrine activity came in 1999 when the birds started roosting around Manchester city tower blocks. For this reason, between the years of 2004-2006, nest boxes were installed by BTO in four locations around the city centre including the City Tower, CIS Tower, and the Town Hall Building.

In 2006 a breeding pair of peregrine falcons successfully produced 4 eggs in one of the nest boxes (unfortunately the location can't be named) which hatched in May – there were 2 males and 2 females. Since then the same pair have continued to breed successfully, also producing 4 chicks in 2007, 2008 and 2009 and 2012.

The Manchester Peregrine 'Date With Nature' Project

The Manchester peregrine Date with Nature project is a partnership between the RSPB, the BBC and Manchester City Council. Each May the RSPB set up their telescopes and an information stand in order to show the public the breeding peregrine pair flying around the city and recruit potential new members to the charity. This takes place in Exchange Square, located to the North of the city. This is a great location for people engagement due to its high footfall and close proximity to tourist attractions such as the Manchester Big Screen, the Arndale Shopping Centre, and the MEN area.

With help from the BBC, in previous years the RSPB were also able to stream live images of the birds from a nest cam onto the BBC Big Screen. It ran 6 days a week, 11am - 6pm with 3 seasonal information assistants and some dedicated volunteers

2010 Success

Due to the success of the RSPB in Manchester in previous years, a new member of staff was appointed in 2010 to oversee the peregrine project, giving the project greater opportunities and more time to run.

In March of the same year, the breeding pair of peregrine falcons in Manchester decided to leave their original nesting site and move to CIS Tower, the 2nd largest building in Manchester (118m high) and home of Co-operative Insurance. Why they moved here was hard to say for certain. It could have been due to a disturbance (such as construction work or window cleaners) at their original nest site, or perhaps that a different peregrine was involved in the breeding pair (e.g. a young female).

The change of location meant a tougher challenge for the RSPB in 2010. Tracking the birds was harder and obtaining images of them for the public harder still, but the new location had unexpected benefits.

The CIS employees loved having the birds nesting on their roof and the PSPB featured heavily on their internal intranet throughout the summer. Many of their staff members came over to our stand to see the birds through the telescopes, generating new and enthused members for the RSPB. In fact, 2010 was a fantastic year for membership with over 460 memberships registered in the summer (in Manchester alone!) and nearly £1,000 generated for the RSPB to spend on protecting nature!

But how did the new peregrine chicks fair? Unfortunately, fledging proved difficult for the little chicks, with only one surviving this tough time in their lives. This was of course very sad for all the staff and volunteers involved in the project but despite these setbacks (and thanks to the hard work of RSPB and RSPCA volunteers) the surviving chick has fully fledged and has now become strong enough to leave the area. Mum and dad can still be seen regularly flying around the city.

What the future holds

So many people today are 'disenfranchised' from nature, especially young people living in cities. Projects like these are vital for getting people in touch with a nature they either know nothing about or have forgotten.

'Date with Nature' projects in the North of England have raised over 1000 members and over

£75,000 for the RSPB to spend on nature and wildlife since April 2010! They've also gathered over 7000 signatures for the RSPB's campaign, 'Letter to the Future'! So why not get involved? You can see the links below for more information about Manchester's peregrines or the RSPB as a whole, find out how you can become a member or keep up to date with news and events.