

We Energies and Wisconsin Public Service
2024 Peregrine Falcon
Nesting Season Report

© Greg Septon 2024



Cover image: *“Warrior” (b/blu) 34/AC, a male produced at We Energies Port Washington Generating Station this year, was captured on the nest box webcam when he returned for short visit June 21, 2024. © G. A. Septon 2024*

INDEX	PAGE
2024 nesting season overview	4
Active/productive sites	
Oak Creek, Wisconsin: Oak Creek Power Plant	6
Milwaukee, Wisconsin: Valley Power Plant	7
Port Washington, Wisconsin: Port Washington Generating Station	8
Rothschild, Wisconsin: Weston Power Plant	9
We Energies and Wisconsin Public Service-produced peregrines nesting in 2024	10
We Energies and Wisconsin Public Service-produced peregrines out and about	13
Production at We Energies and Wisconsin Public Service nest sites 1997-2024	21
Wisconsin nest site type and production 2024	22
Acknowledgements	23

2024 nesting season overview

There were nine young peregrines produced at We Energies and Wisconsin Public Service (WPS) nest sites in Wisconsin this year, bringing the total number of peregrines produced at these sites to 431. Adding another 22 peregrines produced at We Energies Presque Isle Power Plant in Michigan brings the combined overall total to 453.

Since 1987, a known total of 2,365 peregrines have been produced in the wild in Wisconsin. Peregrines first began nesting at power plants in Wisconsin in 1992. Since then, 941 (40%) have been produced at these sites. During this same period, there have been 431 peregrines produced at We Energies and WPS power plants in Wisconsin, which represent 48% of all peregrines produced at Wisconsin power plants, and 19% of the overall statewide total.

Once again, I began monitoring nest boxes via the webcams in late January and was able to identify all the banded adults at each site well before egg-laying began in mid-March. Although still a concern, the cases of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) were down again this spring. Even so, I again employed extra precautions when banding. So far, we're doing OK here in Wisconsin, but there are some peregrine populations that have declined by nearly 50%. Although a definite cause is yet to be determined, HPAI is a prime suspect.

This truly was a gold-medal worthy season in terms of outreach. As always We Energies Senior Communications Specialist Alison Trouy and WPS Senior Communications Specialist Matt Cullen reached out to the community and news media. To celebrate the return of the Olympic Games in 2024, they contacted Wisconsin Olympic medalists and themed this year's naming contest in their honor. A special media event was coordinated at the Pettit National Ice Center to kick off the contest. Attending the event were gold-medal-winning speedskaters Bonnie Blair and Casey FitzRandolph, bronze medal trap shooter Madelynn Bernau, Paralympic gold medalist Jake Williams, and Special Olympics Wisconsin athletes Tyler Derringer and Kyle Von Drasek, who all spoke very highly of the peregrine falcon program. We were thrilled to have many of them join us again at the end of the nesting season, where this year's chicks were banded and named in their honor. In total, 2.9 million viewers across the state were reached through news coverage and more than 775,000 users were reached on social media.

I'd like to personally thank Alison and Matt again for their untiring outreach efforts spreading the story of peregrine recovery in Wisconsin and the important role corporations have played in making this happen.

This year, We Energies and WPS-produced peregrines have been identified nesting in Wisconsin, Illinois, Minnesota, Indiana and Michigan. An account of this year's nesting peregrines can be found on Page 10 of this report.

And although most peregrines end up nesting 200 miles or less from where they were produced, some are true long-distance travelers. One such remarkable example is a falcon named "Pete." Pete was one of two young produced at We Energies Port Washington Generating Station in 2023. In January this year I received a banding return from the Bird Banding Lab informing me that "Pete" had been found in Nicaragua — over 2,000 miles from Port Washington! A more detailed account of this story can be found on Page 14 of this report.

We Energies and WPS have made a true difference in the world of conservation and endangered species recovery efforts in Wisconsin. With their power plant nest sites responsible for nearly 20% of all the peregrines produced in the wild since recovery efforts began in Wisconsin in 1987, We Energies and WPS have provided an example of how corporate stewardship can have a positive impact on the recovery of endangered species. From plant engineers, technicians and managers at the power plants, to information technology (IT), environmental and corporate communications departments as well as corporate executives, everyone contributes to the overall positive outcomes we've come to experience each nesting season.

I'm always heartened by the interest and help everyone freely provides to ensure the falcons are given a safe place to nest, especially for the extra consideration they're provided during the critical nesting season. This firsthand involvement and the environmental commitment behind it are truly impressive.

In closing, I'd like to especially thank Mike Grisar, whose steadfast friendship and support of peregrine recovery and management efforts on a corporate level makes everything run smoothly. Thank you again, Mike, for everything you do.

Looking forward to another productive nesting season next spring!

Greg Septon

Oak Creek: We Energies Oak Creek Power Plant



Nesting details

Adult female: “Essity” (b/blu) 48/Y, produced in 2018 at the Essity Mill nest site in Menasha, Wisconsin. This was her fifth year at this site.

Adult male: Unbanded

Note: This season there was a significant amount of territorial activity at this site. Until March 11, “Pack” (b/blu) C/45, a male produced in 2020 at Milwaukee’s Molson Coors site, was present here. On March 7-9, he battled with “Jake” (b/r) P/12, a male produced in 2014 at the Kenosha Hospital site. Then on April 10, there was another nest box battle between an unbanded adult male and “Yeager” (bl) C/31, a male produced in Toronto, Ontario, Canada, in 2022. In the end, the unbanded adult male prevailed. On April 4, another female, named “Techa” (b/blu) M/43, battled with Essity and at one point was observed mantling over Essity’s eggs. “Techa” was produced in 2019 at the Carmeuse Lime Plant site in Gary, Indiana.



Eggs: 4 laid between March 25 and April 1

Projected hatch dates: May 1-3

Eggs hatched: 3 between May 4 and 6

Banded: 2 females and 1 male on May 23

Site visits: May 23, Oct. 7

*Above: “Essity” at her nest box
Below: Her three young after banding*

This site has been active since 1998, producing a total of 80 young (2.96/year).

Banding data

Name	Sex	Project band	USFWS band
Birdie Blair	Female	(b/blu) 30/AC	2447-06865
Glider	Female	(b/blu) 31/AC	2447-08871
Fitz	Male	(b/blu) 49/AD	2447-06864

GPS: 42 Degrees 84’ 20 N, 87 Degrees 82’ 83

Milwaukee: We Energies Valley Power Plant



Nesting details

Adult female: Unbanded — likely the same female present since 2014.

Adult male: “Rolo” (b/blu) 69/E, produced in 2017 at Milwaukee’s St. Joseph’s Hospital nest site. This was his second year at this site.

Eggs: 3 laid between March 17 and April 3

Projected hatch dates: April 30-May 6

Eggs hatched: 2 between May 1 and 5

Banded: 1 female and 1 male on May 23

Site visits: May 23, Oct. 21



Above: The unbanded adult female with her first egg hatched on May 5.

Below: Her young after banding.



This site has been active since 2002, producing a total of 52 young (2.36/year).

Banding data

Name	Sex	Project band	USFWS band
Khash	Female	(b/blu) 48/AD	2447-06863
Trapper	Male	(b/blu) X/09	1266-25017

GPS: 43 Degrees 02' N, 87 Degrees 57' 49 W

Port Washington: We Energies Port Washington Generating Station



Nesting details

Adult female: “Brinn” (b/r) 84/X, produced in 2012 at Gold Hoist Cliff, Split Rock State Park, Lake Co., Minnesota. This was her 11th year at this site.

Adult male: “Beasley” (b/r) P/07, produced in 2014 at We Energies Milwaukee County Power Plant in Wauwatosa, Wisconsin. This was his eighth year at this site.

Eggs: 4 between March 26 and April 5

Projected hatch dates: May 5-7

Eggs hatched: 3 between May 5 and 7

Banded: 2 females and 1 male on May 24

Site visits: Jan. 10, May 24, Oct. 19



This site has been active since 2000, producing a total of 79 young (3.16/year).



Banding data

Name	Sex	Project band	USFWS band
Puck	Female	(b/blu) 32/AC	2447-08872
Hero	Female	(b/blu) 33/AC	2447-08873
Warrior	Male	(b/blu) 34/AC	2447-08874

GPS: 43 Degrees 23' 01 N, 87 Degrees 52' 13

Rothschild: WPS Weston Power Plant



Nesting details

Immature female:
Unbanded

Adult male: "Sheldon"
(b/r) 19/M, produced in 2013 at the UW-Oshkosh site in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, back for his ninth year.

Note: The new unbanded juvenile female arrived on-site on March 7.



Above: The new unbanded juvenile female with her freshly hatched young on June 12.

Eggs: 2 laid between May 6 and 8

Projected hatch dates: June 10-12

Eggs hatched: 1 on June 12

Banded: The lone youngster was not banded this year.

This site has been active since 2006, producing a total of 45 young (2.37/year).

GPS: 44 Degrees 51' 34 N, -89 Degrees 38' 57 W

We Energies and Wisconsin Public Service-produced peregrine falcons nesting — 2024



Following is known information on We Energies and WPS-produced peregrines that nested or were identified at nest sites in 2024.

Wisconsin

“Melvin” (b/r) 80/P, a male produced in 2013 at We Energies Oak Creek Power Plant in Oak Creek, Wisconsin, paired with an unbanded adult female at the Madison Gas and Electric (MG&E) site in Madison, Wisconsin, producing two young. This was Melvin’s 10th year at MG&E.

“Beasley” (b/r) P/07, a male produced in 2014 at We Energies Milwaukee County Power Plant, paired with “Brinn” (b/r) 84/X, produced in 2012 at Gold Hoist Cliff, Split Rock State Park, Lake Co., Minnesota. The pair nested at We Energies Port Washington Generating Station in Port Washington, Wisconsin, producing two young. This was Beasley’s eighth year at this site.

“Blaze” (b/blu) C/43, a male produced in 2020 at We Energies Valley Power Plant in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, paired with “Dana” (b/blu) 79/W, a female produced in 2019 at the St. Mary’s Hospital site in Chicago, Illinois. The pair nested at Milwaukee’s Veolia Water site producing four young. This was Blaze’s second year at this site.

“Wisco-Spirit” (b/blu) 07/R, a male produced in 2018 at the WPS Weston Power Plant in Rothschild, Wisconsin, paired with “Crush” (b/blu) 73/H, a female that was trapped and banded in 2018 by Dave Evans at the CRH Concrete Plant in Duluth, Minnesota. The pair nested at The General Mills S&X site in Superior, Wisconsin, but it is not known if young were produced.

“Kluski” (b/blu) 97/E, a male produced in 2018 at We Energies Oak Creek Power Plant site in Oak Creek, Wisconsin, paired with “Aurora” (b/blu) M/39, a female produced in 2021 at the Essity Paper Mill nest site in Menasha, Wisconsin. The pair nested at the Alliant Edgewater Generating Station in Sheboygan, Wisconsin, producing two young.

“Checkers” (b/blu) A/97, a male produced in 2021 at We Energies Oak Creek Power Plant in Oak Creek, Wisconsin, paired with an unbanded female. The pair nested at Milwaukee’s St. Joseph’s Hospital site producing four young.

“Bucky (b/r) 73/P, a male produced in 2013 at We Energies Port Washington Generating Station in Port Washington, Wisconsin, paired with an unbanded female. The pair nested at the Essity Mill site in Menasha, Wisconsin, producing two young.

“Millennial” (b/blu) 75/E, a male produced in 2017 at We Energies Port Washington Generating Station in Port Washington, Wisconsin, paired once again with “Alpha” (b/blu) E/02, a female produced in 2020 at the Multifoods/City Center site in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The pair was present at the US Bank site in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, where they have nested together for the past two years. Because of a large multi-month signage project, the nest box was closed off this year. However, it is believed the pair nested somewhere nearby.

Minnesota

“Seapro” (b/g) R/97, a female produced in 2009 at We Energies Port Washington Generating Station in Port Washington, Wisconsin, paired with an unknown male banded black/blue. The pair nested at the Mayo Building site at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis, Minnesota. One egg was laid but failed to hatch.

“Lisa” (b/blu) 53/W, a female produced in 2018 at We Energies Pleasant Prairie Power Plant in Pleasant Prairie, Wisconsin, was observed at the Great Spirit Bluff site in Houston County, Minnesota, but did not stay.

Illinois

“Lisa” (b/g) R/39, a female produced in 2009 at the WPS Pulliam Power Plant in Green Bay, Wisconsin, paired again with “Ben” (b/r) H/34, a male produced in 2013 at Chicago’s Wrigleyville site. The pair nested at Chicago’s Wacker site, which is the oldest of the Illinois nest sites (39th year). This was Ben’s ninth year at the Wacker site and Lisa’s 12th year on site. No exact egg count was made. Two eggs hatched and both young banded on May 15. Both were grounded after their first flights and taken to Willowbrook Wildlife Center and released in late July.

“Cheers” (b/blu) E/66, a female produced in 2021 at We Energies Port Washington Generating Station, in Port Washington, Wisconsin, paired with “James” (b/blu) 21/E, a male produced in 2018 at Chicago’s St. Mary’s nest site. The pair nested at Chicago’s Hyde Park site but no young were ever observed.

“Gunner” (b/blu) 96/E, a male produced in 2018 at the We Energies Oak Creek Power Plant nest site in Oak Creek, Wisconsin, paired with an unnamed female produced in 2019 at the Washington University Medical Center in St. Louis, Missouri. The pair nested at Chicago’s Foster site. The pair used their original balcony and laid three eggs, none of which hatched.

Indiana

“Jeffery” (b/blu) 52/E, a male produced in 2016 at We Energies Pleasant Prairie Power Plant, in Pleasant Prairie, Wisconsin, paired with an unbanded adult female at the Market Tower nest site in Indianapolis, Indiana, producing three young. This was Jeffery’s seventh year at this site.

“Xenon” (b/blu) 27/M, a female produced in 2015 at We Energies Valley Power Plant in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, paired with an unbanded male. The pair nested at the Carmeuse Lime Plant/Dean Mitchell Power Plant site in Gary, Indiana, producing three young. This was Xenon’s third year at this site.

“Thunder” (b/blu) 11/H, a female produced in 2015 at We Energies Pleasant Prairie Power Plant in Pleasant Prairie, Wisconsin, paired with an unbanded adult male. The pair nested at the ArcelorMittal Bethlehem site in East Chicago, Illinois, producing at least one young.

Michigan

“Lillie” (b/blu) A/43, a female produced in 2018 at We Energies Port Washington Generating Station in Port Washington, Wisconsin, paired with **“Regal” (b/blu) 48/C**, a male produced in 2018 at the Campbell-Ewald Building in Warren, Michigan. The pair nested at the Wayne State University site in Wayne, Michigan, producing one young.

Info on We Energies and WPS-produced peregrines nesting in other states provided by:
Illinois: Mary Hennen, Field Museum of Natural History.

Indiana: Brad Bumgardner, Indiana Audubon Society, and Allisyn-Marie Gillet, Indiana Department of Natural Resources.

Minnesota: Amy Ries, Raptor Resource Project, and Jackie Fallon, Midwest Peregrine Society.

Michigan: Don Avers, Michigan DNR.

We Energies and Wisconsin Public Service-produced peregrines out and about!

The following images showing band numbers were taken by birders, photographers and researchers in late 2023-2024.



“Igggy” (b/blu) S/96, a female produced in 2023 at the We Energies Valley Power Plant nest site in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, was photographed by Jessika Pokropinski at the Highlands Heron Rookery in Lake County, Indiana, on Oct. 10, 2023. Note: The color band was attached upside down in error. It should have been black/blue. This same falcon was also photographed by three other photographers

Photo credit: Jessika Pokropinski



“Pete” (b/blu) W/54, a female produced in 2023 at We Energies Port Washington Generating Station in Port Washington, Wisconsin, was found injured by Missael Sotelo Rizo, 5.6 miles southeast from Sebaco Vielo, Matagalpa, Nicaragua, on Dec. 9, 2023. “Pete” had been grounded and was being harassed by two Crested Caracaras. Missael rescued and cared for “Pete” for two weeks until she was fit for release. If you look closely at the above image, you’ll note the injured middle toe on her left foot which could be part of the reason she was found grounded. The toe will likely be lost but raptors can often survive and do well after losing a toe, so we’re hopeful “Pete” will return north and that we’ll see her again at some point.

The distance from Port Washington to Sebaco Vielo is over 2,100 miles, so “Pete” has entered the long-distance travelers club!



“Cheers” (b/blu) E/66, a female produced in 2021 at We Energies Port Washington Generating Station, was photographed by Richard Neer in Hyde Park at the University of Chicago in Chicago, Illinois, on March 27, 2024.

Photo credit: Richard Neer



“Iggy” (b/blu) S/96, a female produced in 2023 at the We Energies Valley Power Plant nest site in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, was photographed by Michael Topp at the Seidner Dune and Swale (SHLT) in Hammond, Indiana, on Sept. 5, 2024. This falcon was also photographed by Jessika Pokropinski at the Highlands Heron Rookery in Lake County, Indiana, on Oct. 10, 2023 (see Page 13).

Photo credit: Michael Topp



“Trapper” (b/blu) X/09, a male produced in 2024 at We Energies Valley Power Plant in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, was photographed by Braden Ribbens at 2856-2872 County Road V in Sheboygan Falls, Wisconsin, on Sept. 2, 2024.

Photo credit: Braden Ribbens

Visiting peregrines captured on nest box webcams

The following accounts are all opportunistic catches, and it's more than likely we miss a lot of these encounters as peregrines move about throughout the year.



“Pack” (b/blu) C/45, a male produced in 2020 at the Molson Coors Brewery site in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, was captured on the nest box webcam at We Energies Oak Creek Power Plant site on Jan. 30, 2024.



“Charlie” (b/blu) 61/S, produced in 2019 at the Briess Malt site in Manitowoc, Wisconsin, was captured on the Weston Power Plant (Rothschild, Wisconsin) nest webcam on Feb. 19, 2024. Interestingly, “Charlie” was also captured on the webcam at this site on Feb. 11 the prior year.



Above: “Yeager” (bl) C/31, (bottom falcon) a male produced in 2022 in Toronto, Ontario, Canada, battled for over an hour on April 10 with the unbanded, resident adult male in the nest box at We Energies Oak Creek Power Plant nest site in Oak Creek, Wisconsin. Although the eggs being incubated by the resident female (“Essity” (b/blu) 48/Y — top falcon) became scattered, she continued to incubate during the entire battle and gathered up her eggs afterwards. Of the four eggs produced at this site, three hatched, which is average. In the end, the resident adult male prevailed.

Essity also survived her own territorial battle on April 4 with an adult female, “Techa” (b/blu) M/43, produced in 2019 at the Carmeuse Lime Plant site in Gary, Indiana. At one point “Techa” brooded over and began incubating the four eggs. It would be interesting to know just how many similar battles take place each year at other nest sites across the country.

Peregrine falcon production at We Energies and Wisconsin Public Service power plant nest sites 1996-2024



Year	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	Total	
Site																															
WPS Pulliam	4	3	4	2	4	4	4	3	2	1	3	4	2	4	3	2	4	3	3	3	3	4	3								72
WE Pleasant Prairie		2	3	2	3	4	1	4	2	5	5	2	4	1	4	4	3	4	4	2	1	2	4								66
WE Oak Creek			4	4	4	4	4	3	4	3	2	2	4	2	3	0	3	4	4	0	4	4	2	3	3	3	4	3	3	83	
WPS Kewaunee						3	4	3	3	1																				14	
WE Port Washington				3	3	3	4	4	4	4	2	4	4	3	4	2	4	4	2	4	2	3	5	3	0	3	4	2	3	79	
WE Milwaukee Valley						4	4	3	2	4	0	0	2	2	1	3	2	0	4	0	3	4	2	3	3	2	3	2		53	
WE Neenah, Minergy										2																				2	
WPS Weston										4	3	1	2	4	2	0	4	0	0	4	4	3	4	2	2	2	3	1		45	
WE Presque Isle, MI															2	2	4	3	3	3	3	2								22	
WE Milwaukee County																	3	3	3	4	4									17	
Yearly and grand totals:	4	5	11	8	14	18	20	21	18	18	20	15	15	14	20	13	19	28	19	19	21	27	23	12	8	11	12	11	9	453	

Note: WE = We Energies, WPS = Wisconsin Public Service

Wisconsin nest site types and production — 2024



Site Type	N	%Total	Site Type	Young	%Total
Power Plants	10	24%	Power Plants	24	22%
Buildings	14	34%	Buildings	45	42%
<i>Elevators/Silos</i>	4	10%	<i>Elevators/Silos</i>	16	15%
<i>Paper Mills</i>	2	5%	<i>Paper Mills</i>	5	5%
<i>Courthouses</i>	1	2%	<i>Courthouses</i>	3	3%
<i>Breweries</i>	1	2%	<i>Breweries</i>	2	2%
<i>Universities</i>	1	2%	<i>Universities</i>	5	5%
<i>Hospitals</i>	2	5%	<i>Hospitals</i>	5	5%
<i>Office Towers/Banks</i>	1	2%	<i>Office Towers/Banks</i>	3	3%
<i>Sewage Treatment</i>	1	2%	<i>Sewage Treatment</i>	4	4%
<i>Churches</i>	1	2%	<i>Churches</i>	2	2%
Natural Cliffs	14	32%	Natural Cliffs	31	28%
Quarries	2	5%	Quarries	4	4%
Bridges	0	0%	Bridges	0	0%
Canal Walls	1	2%	Canal Walls	3	3%
Ore Docks	1	2%	Ore Docks	2	2%
Total Nest Sites	42	100%	Total Young	109	100%

NOTE: Numbers of young represent minimum known production. Percentages are rounded.



Thanks to the following We Energies and Wisconsin Public Service employees for their continued support and much-appreciated help throughout the year.

Individuals

Ilir Aliji	Dan Gibbs	David Lee	Tim Rozumalski
Dan Alt	Jeremy Golding	Steve Liegl	Paul Spicer
Brian Bartoszek	Paul Golomski	Art Link	Kelly Stoop
Madelynn Bernau	Mike Grisar	Cody Maderich	Beth Straka
Bonnie Blair Cruikshank	Dave Groshek	Lisa Maynard	Liz Stueck-Mullane
Ryan Bramen	Julie Hallet	Matt MacKenzie	Alison Trouy
Eric Bump	Brian Hansen	Ed Mahler	Bob Tutkowski
Gerald Buresh	Tanya Holler-Muench	Jerry Meissner	Kyle Von Drasek
Jason Busch	Bill Holton	Mark Metcalf	Jake Williams
Kevin Butler	Mike Hooper	Rob Morgan	Matthew Zenz
Terry Cisewski	Brian Hunt	Rick Moser	Peter Zingelman
Jason Cole	Amy Jahns	Mike Nuss	
Brendan Conway	Gina Johnson	Jamie Nuthals	
Dawn DeJardin	Paul Kessler	Jenny Nygaard	
Tyler Derringer	Mealea Khek	Christopher Pietsch	
Peter Dickinson	Chris Kowalski	Dave Polster	
Phillip Diehn	Mike Kowalski	Dave Reed	
Steve Ensor	Eric Krause	Adam Remiker	
Casey FitzRandolph	Scott Lauber	Len Rentmeester	
Lindsay Focht	Pat Lawlor	Peter Roy	

Organizations

Schlitz Audubon Center
Pettit National Ice Center
Special Olympics Wisconsin
United States Olympic &
Paralympic Committee

For additional information on the Peregrine Falcon Recovery Program, contact:
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