

Woking Peregrine Project update

Since writing the last update at the beginning of February, the Woking Peregrines have starred on ITV local news and exceeded all expectations in the egg laying department. As at the 12th May we have five chicks which are being well fed and brooded by the same adults that enabled the fledging of two juveniles in 2016.

Breeding signs were looking good on 14th February when the tiercel was again seen making a depression in the nest box substrate and both adults were usually seen most days perched together on the north end stairwell ledge or close to the nest box

entrance. The North End web cam started proving its worth when it showed the first reported copulation on the 19th February and on the 23rd February I saw both adults in the nest box calling (via the nest cam). Craig Denford (Project webmaster) reported the website (<http://www.wokingperegrines.com/>) was getting an average of 500 hits per day. The tiercel was again seen making a depression in the nest box.

On the 4th March I spent a few hours on the Peacock's car park adding to my Peregrine photo collection. At 13.25 I got lucky and photographed another copulation on the north end



Woking Peregrines 4 March 2017

stairwell (glad they're not camera shy) followed by both Peregrines feeding on a window ledge. A passing Sparrowhawk could have made some interesting shots but both Peregrines decided to ignore it. From at least the 8th March, the falcon was seen (via web cam) either roosting in or perched at the entrance to the nest box. Copulation was again seen / reported on the 12th, 14th and 15th March as well as a food exchange on the 12th.

The 16th March proved to be lucky for myself and a few colleagues at WWF. Someone noticed the falcon in the nest box becoming more agitated and at 10.45 the first egg was laid! The tiercel must have known things were occurring as he could be seen peering into the nest box. Later in the day, both adults took turns at incubating. The following day, some incubation was seen but there were long periods when the egg was left unattended. On the 18th March, Craig confirmed there was still one egg at 16.00 but whilst I was watching the website at 17.50, the falcon took over incubation duties to reveal a second egg. The evening of the 20th March proved to be very frustrating. At 20.10, the falcon was showing the same agitated behaviour in the nest box and I'm certain she was laying another egg. Trying to get a clear view was not possible. (I stopped watching at 23.43....) The following day, John Bannister confirmed egg number three had arrived.

During the afternoon of the 21st

March, Craig received an interesting email from a researcher at ITV Local News - they were interested in making a report on the Woking Peregrine Project. Thanks to help from Woking Borough Council, Martin Pooley and great co-ordination by Craig, arrangements were made for filming on Wednesday 22nd. A request was made for an interviewee and, as no one else volunteered, I offered to step in front of the camera. (Chris Packham makes it look easy :-]) Martin Stew (ITV Local News reporter and weather expert) did an excellent job filming, conducting the interview (he even made me sound convincing) and editing the report - including our photos and video clips from the website. The news report was then shown at 18.20 on the 28th March. (At the time of writing this update, the news report can still be seen via; <https://www.facebook.com/ITVLondon/videos/10154432313487944/>)



Filming of the Woking Peregrine Project - L to R James Sellen, Martin Stew ITN reporter, James Stanfield WBC, Tracey Haskins WBC (Photo: Craig Denford)



Falcon and five eggs 26 March 2017

On the 23rd March, a helpful web cam viewer posted a screen grab (taken at 06.45) showing the fourth egg. It's probable this was laid earlier on. During my lunch break I was watching the falcon perched at the south west end of Export house when a third Peregrine flew in (the resident tiercel was in the nest box) and approached the falcon. There was much calling before the intruder flew off high to the west followed by the resident falcon. I couldn't see any aggression between the two - could the intruder have been one of last year's juveniles? The fifth and final egg was laid on the 26th March, probably around 11.08.

Both adults were seen, via the website, taking turns at incubating their large clutch during the following days. Then, on the 26th April (at

16.43), Nick Dixon advised he thought he'd heard one or more chicks calling. Had hatching started? I looked at the website at 22.00 and two pieces of egg shell could be seen and the definite sound of one or more chicks. The falcon was intent on incubating so I wasn't able to get a clear view. On the 27th April, there were now numerous screen grabs on the website / Twitter feed showing three chicks - would the the remaining two hatch? A revealing screen grab was posted on the 28th April clearly showing four chicks and one egg but it wasn't until the 1st May that another screen grab confirmed five chicks - amazing result.

Web cam viewing during the following days showed the adults feeding and brooding 5 rapidly growing chicks but one is noticeably

	February	March	April	May
Hits To Falcon Page	1,565	2,803	2,139	991
Dwell Time	00:01:29	00:01:43	00:01:46	/
Bounce Rate	56.67%	55.33%	47.69%	/
Pages Viewed	2.26	2.32	2.33	/

	Facebook	Twitter	Instagram	Total
Reach	103,970	3,106	972	108,048
Clicks	6,234			7,815
Engagement	1,423	46	112	

Woking Shopping Falcon Cam internet feed statistics

smaller. This has been named 'Runty' by website viewers and he/she is getting a growing number of followers! By the 9th May, the chicks are being left alone for long periods whilst the adults presumably go hunting or take a break from their nest box duties. Richard Denyer and Jeremy Gates have arranged to ring the chicks on Thursday 18th May - exactly a year since last year's juveniles had their leg rings fitted.

Rowen de Grauw (Woking Shopping) has provided some statistics on the Woking Shopping Falcon Cam feed which was embedded into the Woking Shopping website in February 2017 (see tables above). This shows the success of the Falcon Cam feed as well as the efforts undertaken on social media to drive traffic to the website.

I will try and obtain statistics for the Woking Peregrine Project website for

the next update.

Charlotte Gray has organised a Surrey Bird Club stand in Jubilee Square, Woking on the following dates; 13th, 20th, 30th May and 3rd, 11th June. This an excellent opportunity to show the Woking Peregrines to people visiting the town and promote the valuable work undertaken by the Club. The following Club members have kindly volunteered:

Eric Soden, Tony Cummins, Peter Bryant, Marjan Derakhshandeh, Marilyn Frame, Debbie Hodges, Carolyn Watkins, Joan Bingley, Carey Lodge, Michael Gore, Ken Anckorn, Sarah Bunce, Penny Williams, Richard Denyer, Charlotte Gray, Rich Mooney, Pauline Taylor, James Sellen, Matt Phelps, Steve Chastell

James Sellen
Woking Peregrine Project

Woking Peregrines - Volunteer's View

Tony Cummins (am) and myself (pm) supported Penny Williams and Richard Denyer from the Surrey Bird Club in presenting the peregrines to the Woking public in Jubilee Square yesterday. Thought you would be interested in how it went.

We had the webcam showing on a laptop and a telescope pointing almost vertically upwards to the tower block so we had the chicks to show people if the adults weren't in view. There was quite a bit of action, although the adults were sometimes absent for 30 minutes or so. Busiest period was probably 1300-1430 when the adults brought in a starling and 4 or 5 pigeons (only the first being fed to the young, the pigeons were left on the ledge for later). Some great views of each of the adults on the ledge for 5-10 minutes or flying over the square above our heads. The five chicks remain in the nest and seem to be doing well.

The stand and telescope attracted quite a lot of interest. The morning session had started more into the square but were took shelter next to Barclay's Bank after a short shower. Although some were taken by surprise at what we were doing (although generally very positive), others seemed very well aware of 'their' peregrines - a 9 year old girl told us that they were watching the webcam every Friday in school and she knew lots about the peregrines, how fast they fly etc. There was evident local pride in the celebrity birds - one woman told me that Chichester 'only' had four chicks! Several others mentioned how compelling the webcam had become and how they were rooting for the runt to make it.

Richard was very knowledgeable about these birds and I learned a lot from him about their habits outside the breeding season (e.g. hunting largely at night and waders featuring frequently in their diets, he once found remains of an avocet). He is the licensed ringer, I think the ringing will take place next week.

Most amusing moment of the day came when a man came across and exclaimed "I didn't realise there was a solar eclipse today!".

Overall a very worthwhile event (from the point of promoting birds) and an enjoyable one for me, I will certainly be volunteering again next year. For info the remaining public days are 20/5, 30/5, 3/6 and 11/6.

Peter Bryant