

CHRONOLOGICAL ACCOUNT OF THE PEREGRINES AT THE USF&G BUILDING

1977

Scarlett, at one year of age, was released by Peregrine Fund ornithologists from the Edgewood Arsenal area on the Chesapeake Bay.

1978

Scarlett was discovered at the 37-story USF&G Insurance building near Baltimore's Inner Harbor. She nested on the 33rd floor ledge, outside the Corporate Communications Department office, and was provided a "scrape," or man-made nest, by the Peregrine Fund. This began the cooperation between the Peregrine Fund and USF&G to monitor Scarlett's progress.

1979

The Peregrine Fund made its first attempt to provide a mate for Scarlett. They transported two different males from their labs in Ithaca, NY to the USF&G building. The males, named Blue Meanie and Misha, however, were not compatible with Scarlett. Neither successfully mated with her, and both were returned to Cornell's labs. After Scarlett laid three infertile eggs, ornithologists replaced them with three eyases born in their labs. Scarlett became their adopted mother, and raised the chicks to maturity.

1980

A USF&G employee and former Smithsonian Institution ornithologist, John Barber, became liaison between The Peregrine Fund and USF&G. Peregrine Fund ornithologists brought another male to Scarlett from their labs. This one, named Rhett, seemed more compatible with her and the two "paired," or began the courting behavior characteristic of Peregrines. However, his arrival apparently came too late in the spring for successful mating, and Scarlett's eggs again were infertile. Nonetheless, when ornithologists replaced the eggs with four new "adopted" eyases, Rhett remained with Scarlett to help raise them. Scarlett and Rhett were together until November, 1980, when he was found dead from strychnine poisoning. He ate a pigeon that had been poisoned.

1981

No new attempts were made to mate Scarlett this year, but she successfully raised five adopted eyases to maturity.

1982

A fourth male was brought to Scarlett from the Peregrine Fund labs. Percy, as he was called, flew away when he was released near Scarlett's nest. While attempts were made to recapture him and return him to the labs, another male, Ashley, was transported from Cornell to USF&G. Percy was recaptured and sent back. This year was another in which Scarlett laid only infertile eggs, and was given yet another four adopted chicks to raise. Ashley remained and helped raise them.

1983

In early 1983, Ashley was injured by a shotgun blast. After more than a month of convalescence, Ashley was released from the top of the USF&G building amid considerable press coverage. A week later, he was found dead on Baltimore's Key Bridge, a few miles away, hit by a vehicle.

Later that spring, ornithologists brought Scarlett two eyases to raise. Both died within the next five weeks; one when it flew into a building window, the other after eating a poisoned bird.

In July of 1983, a wild male peregrine was spotted in the vicinity of the USF&G building for the first time. Named Beauregard, the bird remained in the area through the following winter, when USF&G employees noted his companionship with Scarlett.

1984

By February, Beauregard was bringing food to Scarlett, a sign that the two had paired. When Scarlett laid four eggs that spring, ornithologists suspected the birds had mated and the eggs were fertile. Beau shared in Scarlett's incubation duties, tending the nest periodically while Scarlett made short flights.

The ornithologists' hopes were confirmed on April 6, when the first of four eyases pipped its way out of an egg. The other eyases hatched on April 7th and 8th. History was made.

The eyases, three females and a male, all fledged successfully, and left the USF&G building to seek their own territories by fall.

In September, 1984 Scarlett died from starvation caused by a severe throat infection.

Beauregard mourned Scarlett loudly from the ledge on the 33rd floor. Blythe appeared four days later. Blythe was a banded bird, born in New Jersey in 1982. She began forming a pair bond with Beauregard, and remained at USF&G all winter.

1985

Blythe and Beauregard renewed their courtship which resulted in four fertile eggs. One female and three males were hatched. The female and one male were killed after flying into reflective glass. The remaining two males fledged successfully.

1986

Blythe and Beauregard did it again. This time only three eggs were laid--two fertile and one infertile. Because of a 90 percent mortality rate in the Peregrine Fund hatching program, ornithologists took one of the eyases to be placed in an urban setting in Albany, NY. The remaining eyas fledged successfully.

1987

This year proved to be better than last. Blythe laid four fertile eggs in late March. In late April the four eggs hatched and Blythe and Beauregard were once again the proud parents of four eyases, three females and a male.

One male and one female fledged successfully from the USF&G ledge. A pair of birds from an earlier USF&G nesting was found nesting on Baltimore Harbor's Key Bridge, bringing to six the number of pairs of peregrines nesting in Maryland.

1988

In March, 1988, Blythe laid four eggs, two of which did not hatch because they were infertile. The two eyases on the ledge, a male and female, fledged successfully.

1989

In March, 1989, Blythe laid four eggs. One male and three females fledged successfully, bringing to 37 the number of young falcons raised on the USF&G building in eleven nesting seasons. The adult falcons continued to drive any other hawks or falcons out of their territory, including two red-tailed and two red-shouldered hawks.

1990

Just after her average first egg date, March 14th, Blythe laid four eggs. Only 3 eggs hatched, producing 2 males and 1 female. Forty young falcons have been raised on the USF&G building. The lone female eyas died only two weeks after fledging when she somehow landed in hot roofing tar. The two young males left Baltimore in late June to search for their own mates and territories.

1991

In March, 1991, Blythe laid four eggs. All four eggs hatched during Earth Week in April, 1991. Three males and one female fledged successfully.

1992

Blythe disappeared early in March and was found dead (of unknown causes) in April on a rooftop northeast of the USF&G Tower at War Memorial Plaza. A new female, named Felicity, appeared in mid-March, without a band and formed a pair bond with Beauregard. Four eggs were laid in May. During the second week of June three eggs hatched, the fourth egg was infertile. Two young survived to fledge, one young female blew off the ledge in a violent windstorm.

1993

Felicity laid four eggs, beginning March 31st. Two (2) males and two (2) females hatched between May 7th and 10th.

1994

On April 3, 1994, Felicity laid her first egg of the season. It was removed on April 15th and found to be infertile. She laid 4 more eggs beginning on April 26th. Two of the eggs hatched May 31st. On June 8th, the remaining two eggs were collected and found to be infertile. Both hatchlings were males, and fledged successfully.

1995

On March 27 Felicity laid her first egg of the season. By April 5 we had five eggs in the nest. During the weekend of May 5 three eggs hatched. The fourth egg hatched on May 10 and on May 11 the fifth egg was pulled from the nest and found to be infertile. On May 31, 1995, the young eyases were banded. All four hatchlings were males.