

Fantastic Peregrine Falcons

A Raptor Trust Story & Workbook

Peregrine Falcons are a type of falcon that can be found across North America. They are the **fastest animal in the world** and can reach speeds of 200 mph when diving to catch their prey! Peregrine Falcons belong to a group of birds called "raptors." Raptors are predatory birds who hunt for their prey. All raptors have **excellent eyesight, hooked beaks, and strong talons**. Falcons are raptors that like to hunt other birds.



The Raptor Trust is home to two peregrine falcons, and one of them is an educational ambassador. Hampton arrived at the Raptor Trust as an adult with an eye injury and a wing injury. The injury to the eye was very severe, and the vet had to remove the entire eye. She is unable to fly well and would not be able to hunt with only one eye. So, Hampton lives at The Raptor Trust, where she helps to educate visitors and students.

The word "peregrine" means "**wanderer**" or "**pilgrim**", which is fitting because peregrines are found across the world. They prefer open landscapes with cliffs they can nest on. They lay their eggs on the ground, in a **scrape**. In New Jersey they have moved into cities, using skyscrapers and balconies as makeshift cliffs to nest on! Most peregrines in New Jersey remain here year-round and stay near their nest sites.



Peregrines are unique in their hunting style. Many raptors hunt by diving feet first to catch their prey, a dive which is called a **stoop**. Peregrines actually dive head first, plummeting at speeds of up to 230 mph, and at the last second put their wings out to brake and strike their prey with their feet. This impact is what usually kills their prey. They also have a special notch in their beak, called a **tomial tooth**, which can deliver a fatal bite to their prey.



Peregrine Falcons are considered breeding **endangered** in New Jersey. In 1964 there were no Peregrines left in NJ, due to a chemical called DDT. It was used widely to control mosquito populations, but was poisonous to animals. Peregrines were poisoned when eating prey that had DDT in its system. The DDT caused their eggshells to become very thin, so the eggs broke when the females tried to incubate them. DDT was banned in 1972, and scientists took extreme measures to help the peregrine population. Peregrines were bred in captivity and released back into the wild in New Jersey. In 1980 the first wild nesting occurred, and since then peregrines have been slowly, but steadily increasing in New Jersey.



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Circle the words from the word bank.

N A C R R T E Q A U L S T F M
E Z M Z F A V T N V H I F C D
S Z R S T L J J A C Z V P J P
T C X W K Y F U O L L O E Y R
O F Y K A Y M N U O O I X K E
K H O D Y N S F V T M N F O Y
M K L K Y R D C S L W Q S F L
F H I K S S P E R E G R I N E
P A K C D V Z N R A T U S C A
P M L D W Y P M P E P G B E B
T P Y C P W X S W Q R E I O E
Z T M R O P R E D A T O R X A
A O Z B I N F B J S T J D N K
U N L T C G P F N F C X M G N
E S T V P Y J S C R A P E Z A

PEREGRINE
NEST
STOOP
PREY
BEAK

WANDERER
CLIFF
HAMPTON
PREDATOR
SKYSCRAPER

FALCON
TALONS
SCRAPE
BIRD

Fantastic Peregrine Falcons

Pick the things a Peregrine Falcon would need for a perfect habitat.

Landscape:



Nest Placement:

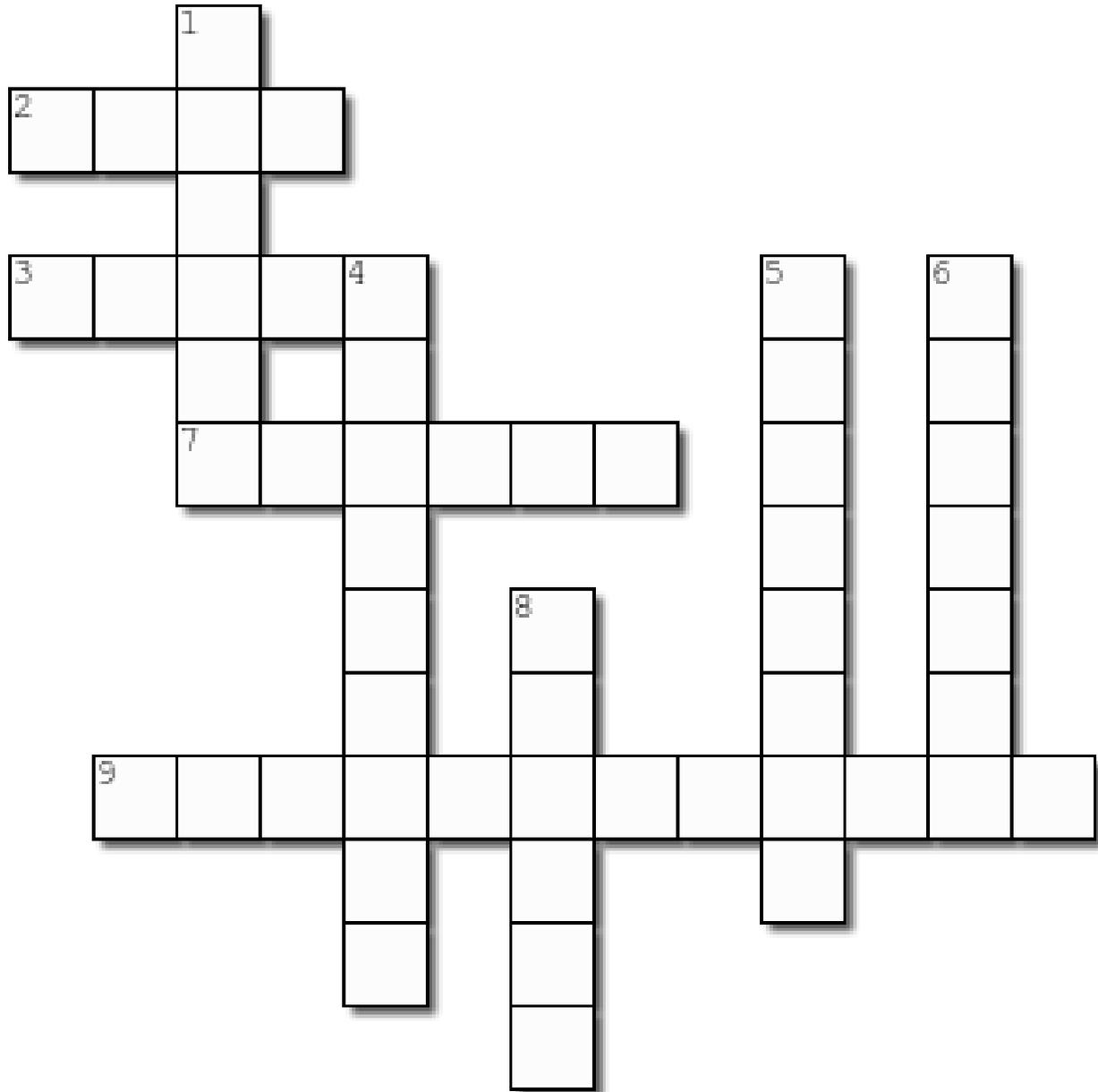


Food:



Fantastic Peregrine Falcons

Fill out the crossword puzzle using the clues.



Across

2. a bird's mouth
3. a falcon's hunting dive
7. a type of bird nest on the ground
9. a special part of a falcon's beak to kill their prey

Down

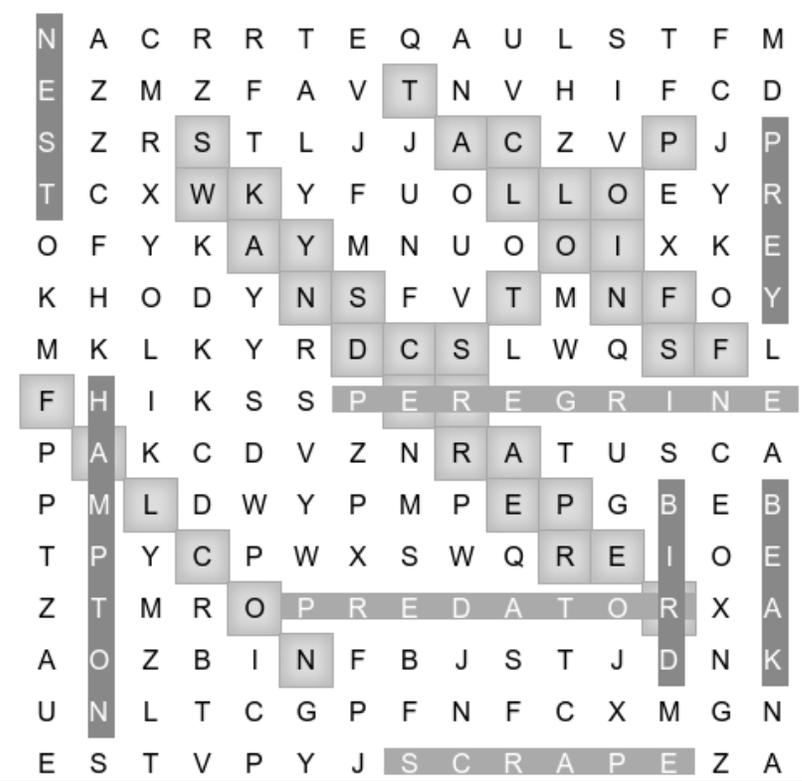
1. the claws on a raptor
4. means wanderer or pilgrim
5. an animal which hunts for its food
6. to dive quickly
8. a bird of prey that hunts for other birds



**Draw a
Peregrine
Falcon**

Fantastic Peregrine Falcons Answer Key

Word Search:



Habitat Search:

Landscape:



Nest placement:



Food:



Crossword Puzzle:

