

Live on the Internet: Peregrine falcon lays an egg

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GORHAM, Maine—Live streaming online video recorded a rare peregrine falcon laying an egg Friday at an undisclosed location.

Biologists from the Biodiversity Research Institute confirmed that the falcon dropped the egg at 1:30 p.m. The location was kept secret to avoid attracting visitors.

"This is amazing," said senior research biologist Wing Goodale. "We have all been watching with bated breath for the last three days. I haven't been getting much sleep."

On Tuesday, the female spent the night on her nest for the first time, leading Goodall to suspect that an egg was imminent. But it wasn't until three days later that the egg finally appeared.

"She looked as exhausted as I would under the circumstances," the biologist said. "She immediately settled down and fell asleep."

After the egg came down, the video showed the male looking in at her in what Goodale described as "a wonderful familial moment."

Peregrine falcons typically will lay three to four eggs each spring. The eggs usually come 12 to 24 hours apart, so that "by Monday or so, we should have close to a full clutch," he said.

The nonprofit institute, which is based in Gorham, said breeding peregrine falcons are listed as a threatened species in Maine, with only 23 known pairs nesting in 2008.

The camera was set up in December, and the streaming video was opened to the public in early February, two weeks before the pair showed up at the nest.

Since then, the birds have been spending more time there.

The video included moments in which the male called to the female, inviting her to land in the perch and come to the nest. "They would bow to each other and put their beaks together. He's enticing her in and telling her, 'This is a really neat place,'" Goodale said.

Peregrine falcons usually nest later in the season, around mid-April. Goodale suggested that the pair caught on camera did not migrate south as most of the species do but remained near the nest for the entire winter.

He said the camera will remain at the site indefinitely. The institute's bald eagle camera at a site in Hancock County has been running for four years.

On the Net: <http://www.briloon.org/watching-wildlife/peregrine-cam.php> ■