

# Seventh season of Ameren Missouri's 'Falcon Cam' launches with mother bird's first eggs

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ST. LOUIS – Missouri is home to about 340 bird species in a common year, and thanks to their distinctive dive-bombing hunting technique, peregrine falcons are among the most fascinating. For the seventh year, Ameren Missouri, in partnership with the World Bird Sanctuary (WBS) and the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC), is providing a [live feed](#) of a pair of nesting peregrine falcons from 160 feet above Ameren Missouri's Sioux Energy Center. The female falcon has just laid several eggs, triggering the start of the 2018 Falcon Cam season.

Peregrine falcons usually mate for life, and typically a nesting pair will lay 3-4 eggs, though last year the Sioux pair produced five. For the next few months, the adult birds will take turns incubating the eggs, tending the chicks, and hunting to keep themselves and the chicks well fed. The near-apex predators generate ongoing interest among the many fans around the world who watch the live camera feed. In 2017, the live stream was viewed hundreds of thousands of times and peaked in early May when the chicks hatched.

“Peregrines are such amazing birds, and seeing them through the Falcon Cam makes you want to learn more about them,” said Kevin Kersting, manager of technical services at Ameren Missouri. “Everyone here at Sioux Energy Center, and across Ameren Missouri, enjoys the opportunity to bring greater knowledge of this bird to the public, and we're proud to provide a safe place for the falcons to raise their chicks every year.”

“The Falcon Cam has really expanded our knowledge of peregrines,” says Jeff Meshach, director of administration and external programs at the World Bird Sanctuary. “Every year, we band the chicks to aid tracking and study, but the live feed and archived footage give us invaluable insights we wouldn't otherwise have. Thanks to the generosity of Ameren Missouri and the Missouri Department of Conservation, we can share these wonderful creatures with bird lovers no matter where they live.”

Over the past six nesting seasons, members of the general public have been able to watch an adult pair of falcons raise a total of 25 chicks. The chicks will begin to fly about 42 days after hatching, but remain dependent on their parents to learn how to hunt for several more weeks. The technique takes practice – peregrines dive down at their prey from great heights, tucking in their wings to reduce drag and achieving speeds well over 200 miles per hour.

“Providing Missourians the opportunity to observe these awesome birds up close is a great way to boost awareness of conservation efforts for this and other threatened species,” said Sarah Kendrick, state ornithologist at the Missouri Department of Conservation. “Peregrines were once nearly eradicated because of the effects of DDT. They are no longer on the federal endangered list, but they are still state-endangered. Programs like this one with Ameren Missouri and the World Bird Sanctuary are helpful in terms of helping their population rebound and as an educational tool.”

Peregrines once nested exclusively on the many bluffs along Missouri's rivers. Today's birds often make their homes on tall buildings and structures such as the ones at Ameren Missouri's Sioux, Labadie and Rush Island energy centers. Falcon Cam is live from 7 a. m. until 8 p.m. (CDT) seven days a week at [AmerenMissouri.com/FalconWatch](http://AmerenMissouri.com/FalconWatch) until nesting activity is complete and the young chicks have left the nest.

## Falcon Facts:

- Female peregrines weigh on average 2 lbs., 4 ounces with a 40-inch average wingspan (wing tip-to-tip). Males weigh about 1 lb., 6 ounces with a 30-inch average wingspan.
- Egg incubation time is approximately 30 days.
- The first glimpses of the hatching chicks usually occur in late April.
- When hunting, peregrines attack from above and dive down on their prey at speeds well over 200 miles an hour, making them the fastest animals on earth.

## About Ameren Missouri

Ameren Missouri has been providing electric and gas service for more than 100 years, and the company's electric rates are among the lowest in the nation. Ameren Missouri's mission is to power the quality of life for its 1.2 million electric and 127,000 natural gas customers in central and eastern Missouri. The company's service area covers 64 counties and more than 500 communities, including the greater St. Louis area. For more information, visit [Ameren.com/Missouri](http://Ameren.com/Missouri) or follow us at [@AmerenMissouri](https://www.facebook.com/AmerenMissouri) or [Facebook.com/AmerenMissouri](https://www.facebook.com/AmerenMissouri).

## About World Bird Sanctuary

In 1977 WBS was founded by the late Walt Crawford, and is currently directed by Dawn Griffard. WBS is dedicated to the preservation of all birds and their habitats, and accomplishes this through rehabilitation, education, propagation, field studies, advocacy and services. WBS has been banding peregrine falcons since 1985. Through captive breeding and release efforts in the mid to late 80's, WBS is responsible for bringing the peregrine back to Missouri as a breeding species.

## About Missouri Department of Conservation

MDC protects and manages Missouri's fish, forest, and wildlife resources. We also facilitate your participation in resource-management activities, and we provide opportunities for you to use, enjoy and learn about nature.