

'Miracle' falcon chick flying away soon

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ST. LOUIS – A Peregrine falcon chick that hatched this spring at Ameren Missouri's Sioux Energy Center will soon leave the nesting box to strike out on her own. In May,

the weeks-old chick fell from the nesting box. Despite that eight-foot fall, the chick was not seriously injured. The World Bird Sanctuary (WBS) nursed her back to health and returned her to the nest within days.

"It was so rewarding to return the chick to the nesting box. As I let her go, she promptly turned around and hissed at me. I knew she'd do well," said Jeff Meshach, deputy director at the World Bird Sanctuary. "This was a very special Falcon Cam season."

More details about that experience can be found in his regular Ask Jeff column. Ameren Missouri has a long history of environmental conservation. Since 2002, Meshach and his colleagues at WBS have banded 62 Peregrine falcons hatched in nesting boxes at Ameren Missouri energy centers. This year's chick was banded in May; the tracking numbers will provide researchers with invaluable data on the bird and its migration patterns.

"Falcon Cam has been very popular again this year," said Kevin Kersting, manager of technical services at Ameren Missouri. "We've continued to see audiences engage with Falcon Cam, from the time we spotted an egg to seeing the chick learn to fly and soon leave the nest."

The mother bird is a four-time resident at Sioux Energy Center. She hatched in 2006 in Minnesota. The male hatched in 2004 and was released in New Madrid, Missouri.

"Peregrines have made a remarkable comeback in the last 45 years," said Sarah Kendrick, state ornithologist at the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC). "The Falcon Cam is a program that spreads interest in these birds and helps educate the public. Nesting boxes like this one at Sioux Energy Center will continue to help Missouri's Peregrine numbers climb."

The Peregrine falcon population remains endangered statewide. Ameren Missouri, WBS and MDC are celebrating the seventh season of providing a live camera feed of the falcons.

Once the chick leaves the nest, the Falcon Cam will be turned off for the season. It is set to return next spring. Until then, viewers can look for falcons in the wild by identifying certain features of adult Peregrine falcons, like their blue-gray feathers, dark head and pointed wings.

"Year after year, we're excited to see chicks grow and leave the nesting box. That means the season has been a success – and we can start looking forward to next year," said Kersting.

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 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.