

reported a juvenal Gyrfalcon in Alaska making abortive stoop attacks on a variety of raptors (not including Snowy Owls), as well as Herring Gulls (*Larus argentatus*) and Red-throated Loons (*Gavia stellata*).

Subsequently, I contacted birders who have observed Gyrfalcons overwintering in the Ottawa area. This produced only one reported instance of a Gyrfalcon buzzing a Snowy Owl (J. Harris, pers. comm.). Stewart MacDonald (pers. comm.) informed that he had never witnessed an interaction between many Gyrfalcons and Snowy Owls seen in close proximity in the Arctic.

Bruce Mactavish (pers. comm.) reported seeing three close range clashes between Gyrfalcons and Snowy Owls overwintering in Newfoundland. In two cases, white Gyrfalcons initiated attacks. The third case saw a Snowy Owl drive a dark phase Gyrfalcon off prey. The first two instances involved much vocalization, and in all three cases there was no physical contact between combatants.

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Reports of Gyrfalcon/Snowy Owl interactions in Ontario are no doubt rare because of the low likelihood of the species encountering one another or being observed. Nevertheless, if the species apparently don't interact on northern breeding grounds perhaps a different set of parameters apply on southern wintering grounds. Dramatic but contact-free displays could involve food territories, the defence of winter territories, or other factors. Whatever the reason, this type of interaction between Gyrfalcons and Snowy Owls warrants further study.

#### Acknowledgements

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#### Literature cited

Cade, T.J. 1953. Behavior of a young Gyrfalcon. Wilson Bulletin 65: 26-31.

## Book Review

**Peregrine Falcons.** 1992. By *Candace Savage*. Douglas & McIntyre, Toronto. (Hardcover) 145 pp. \$35.00.

"Peregrine Falcons" is a slim, beautiful coffee table book detailing the biology of peregrine falcons, and recovery efforts, in Canada. The

colour photographs by a wide variety of wildlife photographers and peregrine falcon researchers are beautiful, breathtaking, and

comprehensive. They present magnificent close-ups of peregrines, panoramic landscapes, and excellent portrayals of peregrines in the natural landscape. The author's fascination with peregrine falcons is obvious, and adds to the book's attraction. The photographs are distributed throughout the text, with relatively few pages of text in three chapters sandwiched between pages and pages of photographs. However the photographs and their accompanying descriptions, which are quite enlightening, do not follow the text in logical fashion according to each chapter's subject. Instead, they randomly but beautifully portray peregrines - their biology, nesting biology and habitat.

The text in this book is definitely secondary to the photographs. It presents a logical progressive description of the decline and recovery of the peregrine falcon population. This includes a fascinating, detailed chronology of the detective work that led to the implication of DDT as a causal agent in the eggshell thinning and subsequent population crashes experienced by peregrines and other birds of prey. I was unaware of the role that pigeon fanciers played in identifying the population crash of peregrines worldwide; the author indicates that this decline was first noted in a study commissioned to look into the complaints of British pigeon fanciers that the peregrine

falcon population was rapidly expanding and killing too many pigeons - control measures were being called for.

This is not a thorough scientific book - there is no mention of the various subspecies of the peregrine in Canada or the world, or a distinction for those which are considered endangered. The massive recovery efforts directed towards the peregrine falcon on an international scale are only superficially addressed - hacking, fostering, inventory, etc., and the intense cooperative efforts of many agencies, organizations and volunteers. The author's research appears to have been primarily carried out with reference to the University of Saskatchewan's involvement in recovery programs; little mention is made of recovery efforts in jurisdictions outside Saskatchewan, including Ontario, or of the initial successes of those programs.

This book also carries a warning. The author makes many references to the need for us to improve our environmental ethic. She is particularly concerned about the future effects of our continued reliance on the many synthetic chemicals in use today.

This book is first and foremost a celebration of beauty and majesty of peregrine falcons. The photographs alone make it a welcome addition to any bird lover's library.

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