

**On the decrease of northern Peregrine Falcons Falco peregrinus
"scandinaviae" and/or F. p. calidus in Belgium.**

In the Belgian ornithological journal "Oriolus" (1993, 59: 65-66) a description was given of a sight-record of a Peregrine Falcon from probable northern origin, observed near Asten (southern Netherlands) on December, 4, 1992. Individual Peregrines are not considered to be subspecifically identifiable in western Europe because of an important intraracial variability (Hens et al., 1962, Ardea 50: 118; Weick, 1989, Ök. Vögel, Beihefte 1). However, experienced falconers do not entirely share this opinion and claim that Peregrines from northern origin can be recognized in the field. The findings of Mr. Ch. Kruyfhooft, a former correspondent of the late Prof. G.P. Dement'ev, are fairly convincing with regard to the former presence in Belgium of birds belonging to northern populations. During the autumn and winter seasons of the period 1938-1954 he examined some hundreds of Peregrines in the hand and in the field in the north of Belgium. In these large series, he found 10 - 20 % long winged birds, with, in general, a narrow moustache. They were robust, paler and less heavily streaked than other Peregrines at that time. Mr. Kruyfhooft regarded these birds as belonging to the subspecies "leucogenys", and German falconers confirmed these determinations. The reason of the sudden disappearance of northern Peregrines, during the first half of the fifties remained mysterious for many years.

Raptor-link gave the first informations about the bad

situation of Peregrines in northern Eurasian regions. Potapov (1993, Raptor-link 1(1):5 and (3):1-2) described on the Lower Kolyma River a catastrophically low reproduction rate, nervous symptoms in the parents, high chick mortality and high DDT levels in the eggs. Henny (1993, 1 (3): 2-3) informed about high concentrations of PCB congeners in Peregrine eggs from the Kola Peninsula. The existence of a link between these first communications and the reported decline in western Europe seems likely.

Jacques Van Impe, Dr. Van de Perrelei 51B, B-2140, Borgerhout/Antwerp, Belgium.