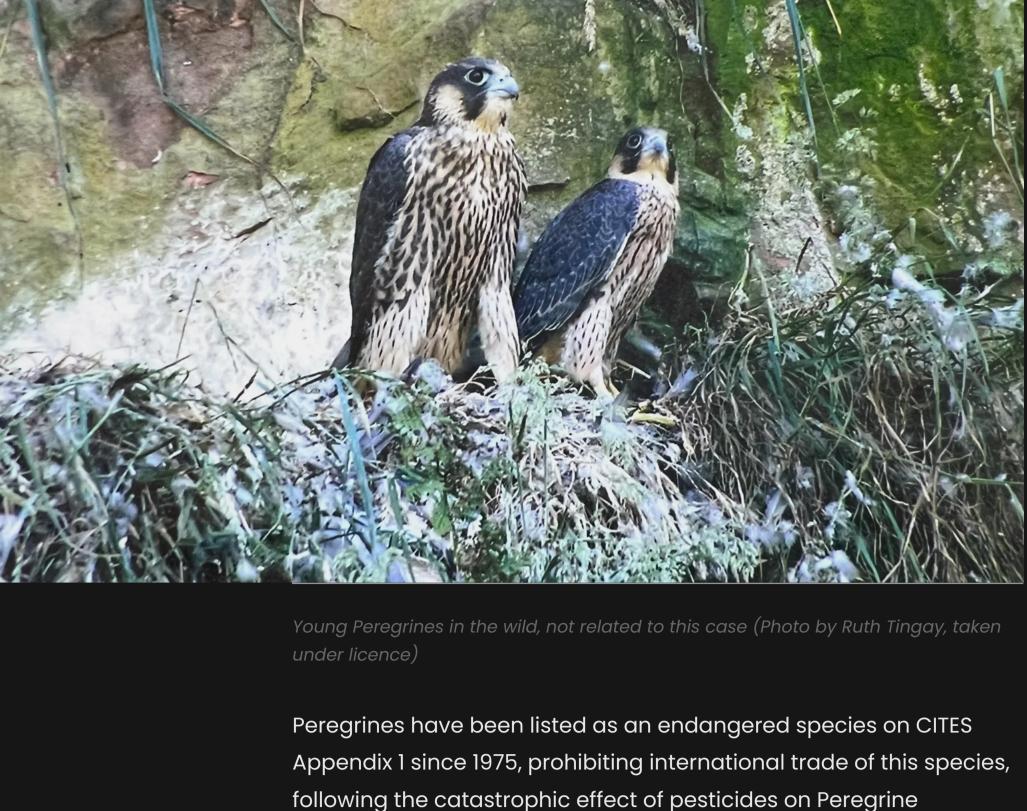
## Raptor Persecution UK

Falcons (to allow international trade) is thwarted at CITES conference To the relief of many raptor conservationists, a proposal to downlist RaptorPersecutionUK the Peregrine Falcon from Appendix 1 to Appendix II of CITES December 4, 2025

Attempt to downlist conservation status of Peregrine

News peregrine

(Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species), which would allow the capture and trade of wild Peregrines) has been thwarted at the 20th Conference of the Parties on CITES (CoP20), currently taking place in Uzbekistan.



Since then, many populations have 'recovered' after significant conservation effort over many decades, although recent declines of

'recovered' populations are reported in a number of countries, and the species' status is still poorly understood in many other countries. Canada and the USA proposed downlisting the Peregrine from Appendix to 1 to Appendix II to allow capture of wild Peregrines and

international trade to meet demands for falconry. Here's a copy of

the proposal to the CITES Conference of Parties:

Original language: English CoP20 Prop. 17 CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES OF WILD FAUNA AND FLORA

> Twentieth meeting of the Conference of the Parties Samarkand (Uzbekistan), 24 November – 5 December 2025

CONSIDERATION OF PROPOSALS FOR AMENDMENT OF APPENDICES I AND II

<u>Proposal</u> To transfer Falco peregrinus from Appendix I to Appendix II in accordance with the Precautionary Measures of Resolution Conf. 9.24 (Rev. CoP17) Annex 4. <u>Proponent</u> Canada and United States of America C. <u>Supporting statement</u> 1. <u>Taxonomy</u> 1.1 Class: Aves 1.2 Order: Falconiformes 1.3 Family: Falconidae 1.4 Genus, species or subspecies, including author and year: Falco peregrinus Tunstall 1771 1.5 Scientific synonyms: 1.6 Common names: English: Peregrine Falcon French: Faucon pèlerin Halcón blancuzco, Halcón real, Halcón viajero, Halcón peregrino. Halcón común 1.7 Code numbers: A-213.005.002.020 and A-213.005.002.027 2. Overview The Peregrine Falcon has an extremely large global range distribution, a large global population size (248,000 to 478,000 mature individuals) and an increasing global population trend. (Sections 3 and 4, E-CoP20-Prop-17\_0 DOWNLOAD However, a large number of raptor biologists and conservationists from around the world, many of them specialising in Peregrine research, opposed the proposal and warned of the high risk to some populations. This excellent paper published recently in the scientific journal

**Animal Conservation** 

Animal Conservation explains those concerns:

LETTER FROM THE CONSERVATION FRONTLINE Peregrine Falcon Populations Under Threat Again Miguel D. Saggese<sup>1</sup> 📵 | Knud Falk<sup>2</sup> 📵 | Iñigo Zuberogoitia<sup>3</sup> 📵 | Roberto Sánchez<sup>4</sup> 📵 | David H. Ellis<sup>5</sup> 📵 Jaume A. Badia-Boher<sup>6</sup> 📵 | Skip Ambrose<sup>7</sup> | Mátyás Prommer<sup>8</sup> 📵 | Marc Kéry<sup>6</sup> 📵 | Tuomo Ollila<sup>9</sup> | Eetu Sundvall<sup>10</sup> 📵 | <sup>1</sup>College of Veterinary Medicine, Western University of Health Sciences, Pomona, California, USA | <sup>2</sup>Peregrine Working Group, BirdLife Sverige, Stockholm, Sweden | <sup>3</sup>Estudios Medioambientales Icarus, Logroño, Spain | <sup>4</sup>Fundación Ecología Neotropical, Quito, Ecuador | <sup>5</sup>Institute for Raptor Studies, Oracle, Arizona, USA | 6Population Biology Unit, Swiss Ornithological Institute, Sempach, Switzerland | 7US Fish and Wildlife Service Retired,  $Fairbanks, Alaska, USA + ^8Mad\acute{a}rvil\acute{a}g \ Nonprofit \ Ltd, Esztergom, Hungary + ^9Peregrine \ Working \ Group, Finland + ^{10}Nature \ Conservation, Parks \& Parks \ Alaska, USA + ^{10}Nature \ Conservation, Parks \ Alaska, USA + ^{10}Nature$ 

Wildlife, Rovaniemi, Finland | 11 International Avian Research, Krems, Austria | 12 Department of Biological, Chemical and Pharmaceutical Sciences and

Technologies, University of Palermo, Palermo, Italy | 13Hawk Conservancy Trust, Hoedspruit, South Africa

**Keywords:** CITES | conservation | *Falco peregrinus* | populations | threats | traffic | wildlife

Correspondence: Miguel D. Saggese (msaggese@westernu.edu)

Accepted: 19 November 2025

The recovery of the Peregrine Falcon, Falco peregrinus, is one of Peregrine populations in South America, Africa, and Australasia, the best-known wildlife conservation successes of the past centheir distribution range, productivity, numbers, breeding, and tury (Cade and Burnham 2003). By the 1970s, many populations conservation status are poorly known (Zuberogoitia 2023). Of across North America and Europe were on the brink of extincthe world's 19 currently recognized subspecies of the Peregrine tion caused by environmental contaminants (White et al. 2013). (AviList Core Team 2025), data gaps persist for at least 11 sub-Subsequent recovery was a result of decades of intensive, coopspecies, and some are critically endangered such as the Cape erative international conservation efforts to halt the release of Verde Peregrine, F. p. madens, historically estimated to be 15–20 chlorinated hydrocarbon pesticides and encourage repopulation pairs (Hazevoet 2001) and likely with very low genetic diversity (Johnson et al. 2023). Moreover, in some well-known cases, data and population trends presented in the database of IUCN are As an endangered species, the Peregrine was listed in the wrong (e.g., for Spain, Zuberogoitia 2023). In the overview of Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species population sizes in the CITES downlisting proposal, the larg-(CITES) Appendix I in 1975, prohibiting international commerest contribution (15%) to the population estimate for Europe is cial trade of wild birds. Following the recovery, it is globally from Greenland, but Greenland Peregrines migrate through the United States and are double-counted as part of the "northern classified as "Least Concern" in the IUCN Red List (BirdLife International 2021). Wildlife agencies in Canada and the USA management population" in the estimate for North America. in 2025 propose moving it from CITES Appendix I to Appendix Secondly, while most populations in Europe and North II (CITES 2025), allowing the trade and capture of wild peregrines. However, we believe "downlisting" now is premature America have recovered, the species still suffers regional hazand problematic for the reasons listed below. ards that jeopardize some populations (USFWS 2023; Kéry and Zuberogoitia 2020). In recent years, sudden drops in critical de-Firstly, the CITES downlisting case leans heavily on informamographic parameters have been recorded (Figure 1), possibly tion from a few relatively well-studied populations in Europe caused by avian influenza (Caliendo et al. 2024; Smith et al. 2025). and North America and ignores the vast data gaps from the Examples from North America include: (i) a 48% reduction in the number of breeding pairs along the Yukon River, Alaska, accomrest of the world. A review of the IUCN database (BirdLife International 2021) reveals that the Peregrine's status is "unpanied by a large increase in lone birds at recent breeding sites Animal Conservation 2025 Saggese et al Peregrine Falcon Populations Under Threat Again DOWNLOAD A vote on the downlisting proposal took place at the CITES Conference yesterday (3 Dec 2025) and did not receive sufficient support to pass and the proposal was rejected. Here is a note of what happened, published by the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) in its Earth Negotiations Bulletin as part of its daily CITES Conference reporting: **Peregrine falcon** (*Falco peregrinus*): CANADA introduced CoP20 Prop.17 to

By a secret vote of 61 for, 74 against, and 7 abstaining, Committee I rejected the proposal.

KUWAIT, the UK, CHINA, and others supported the proposal, asserting that the

species no longer meets the Appendix I biological criteria. DJIBOUTI, the EU,

ARGENTINA, and others opposed, citing insufficient global data to justify the

downlisting. As a compromise, NEW ZEALAND proposed adding a zero annual

export quota for wild-taken specimens traded for commercial purposes, which

BIRDLIFE INTERNATIONAL clarified that while some metric data used in the

International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List in 2021 was of

poor quality, current data still suggest that peregrine falcon is of least concern

downlist Falco peregrinus from Appendix I to Appendix II.

was accepted.

globally.

Even if the proposal had been agreed at an international scale, national governments would still retain responsibility for regulating 'wild take' in their own countries. You may remember in March this year, Defra endorsed Natural England's recommendations for a presumption AGAINST the issuing

> Share this: X X Facebook in LinkedIn **Bluesky**

of licences for taking wild birds of prey for falconry (see here).

The theft of wild Peregrines in the UK for trade continues to be a

problem. Recent prosecutions include the conviction of two men

found guilty of laundering wild Peregrines stolen from nest sites

man in Worcestershire accused of 21 charges relating to the

possession and trade of wild Peregrines (here).

2 thoughts on "Attempt to downlist conservation status of Peregrine Falcons (to allow in-

"The UK is represented by a delegation from several government and scientific bodies at the

• The **Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)**, which serves as the UK's

20th Conference of the Parties (CoP20) on CITES, rather than a single individual.

ternational trade) is thwarted at CITES conference"

across south Scotland (see here) and an ongoing prosecution of a

December 4, 2025 at 9:23 pm

**Keith Dancey** 

Me too!

Flora.

caused repeated

species,

breeding

North

rewilding-drive/

Google tells me this:

Members of Parliament (MPs) from different parties also form part of the broader UK presence, with a specific delegation to CoP30 also noted. CITES CoP20 is being held in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, from November 24 to December 5, 2025. "

https://www.facebook.com/JNCCUK/posts/jncc-experts-are-proud-to-support-the-uk-

delegation-at-cites-cop20-pictured-are-/1150145257330200/

• The Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA), responsible for issuing permits and certificates.

• The Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, which acts as the UK's independent Scientific Authority for

The proposers even mention HPAI as a threat: "At a global scale, Peregrine Falcon populations are considered secure" but, are they?

"The latest (i.e., 2020–2023) highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) H5 virus has recently

mass mortality events among wild birds and infection has been detrimental for a variety of bird

including the *Peregrine Falcon* (Couty et al. 2025; EFSA et al. 2023). The number of wintering and

The World Animal Health Information System has reported 392 Peregrine Falcons infected by avian flu from 2017 to June 2025. By region, most of these infected falcons were found in Europe with 236 cases and in

Peregrine Falcons in the Netherlands for example has recently declined (Caliendo et al. 2024).

https://www.bto.org/potential-effects-hpai-occupancy-rates-breeding-success-age-andturnover-breeding-peregrine-falcons

The vote, itself, was secret, so we may never find who and why the "UK and others supported the proposal". On the other hand, all may be revealed when the official reports and documents are published?

https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2025/09/23/peregrine-falcon-numbers-plummet-

trade and illegal trade, and species management such as population monitoring. This information was used to support

Illegal trade in CITES listed raptors is currently a UK enforcement priority and a down-listing to

Reply

Appendix II would not have an effect on this process in itself (J. E. Malpass, Policy Officer, in litt. to ECCC, Dec. 23, 2015)." https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/cop/17/InfDocs/E-CoP17-Inf-5.pdf

**United Kingdom** 

Key traders provided information concerning effectiveness of legislation in controlling legal development of sections 7 and 8 of CoP17 Prop. 17.

December 6, 2025 at 1:10 pm

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**Simon Tucker** 

troduction Project

Peregrine found with shotgun injuries in Peak District National Park

populations globally.

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This is good news for Peregrines globally, but I haven't seen, nor do I understand, the UK's rationale for supporting the proposal. If any • April 2019 (30) blog readers have information about that, it'd be interesting to read.

"This is good news for Peregrines globally, but I haven't seen, nor do I understand, the UK's rationale for supporting the proposal."

• The Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), which provides scientific advice. • Border Force, involved in compliance and enforcement.

CITES Management Authority for policy.

The delegation includes experts from:

427 from Poland:-( The UK also has a CITES-registered captive breeding programme. The RSPB report about 1500 breeding pairs in the wild in UK today. The BTO say the Peregrine has declined by 48% from 1995 to 2023, but their most recent data is 1768 pairs in just 2014.

I see that, according to the proposers, the United Kingdom exported 2031 Peregine Falcons to

Saudi Arabia between 2015 and 2024 – the third highest exporter in the world – whilst importing

America with 110 cases. Asia declared 37 cases, Central and South America and the Caribbean had 7 cases and only 2 cases were reported in Africa." Yet they wanted to start up capturing wild birds for trade? There is a local study on the effects of HPAI on Peregrines:

"D. Effectiveness of legislation and management measures

The Telegraph report 'plummeting' numbers of UK Peregrine Falcons:

https://cites.org/eng/cop/20/amendment-proposals

The UK response to this proposal in 2017 was equivocal:

I note that it was the USA and Canada that applied for the lifting. I am not too confident that the current USA administration will not except themselves from CITES. Reply

**PREVIOUS** More detail on Natural England's decision to close Hen Harrier Southern Rein-

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