



Lin Murray  
Press Officer  
Hawk and Owl Trust  
Sculthorpe Moor Nature Reserve  
M: 07881 657 944  
E: [lin.murray@hawkandowl.org](mailto:lin.murray@hawkandowl.org)  
W: [www.hawkandowl.org](http://www.hawkandowl.org)

## Working for wild Birds of Prey and their Habitats

### Press Release

### First two chicks of 2015 hatch together at Norwich Cathedral Urban Peregrines Project

The first two peregrine chicks at Norwich Cathedral have hatched overnight on 27/28 April, the first at around 21:56 on the 27<sup>th</sup>. The female was glimpsed nibbling on a piece of eggshell at that time but she kept eggs and chick well covered. More, fresh, eggshell nibbling was seen at 00:04 on 28<sup>th</sup> (today) and it looked too big to be the remnants of the first egg hatch. Again she kept the brood well covered, right through the night until 05:30 this morning.

The chicks were not revealed to the camera until 05:30 this morning when the male brought beautifully prepared food to the nest. The female, stiff and hungry from her long overnight vigil, took it away for a brief spell while the male, quick to take the opportunity to bond with his offspring, kept the chicks and two remaining eggs warm. On her return, with the food, she feeds the chicks and eventually settled on them again. Both chicks look strong at this stage. There are another two eggs still to hatch.

Here is a video link and an .avi link to the key stages of the hatching:

<https://youtu.be/rkuxd4dnZ3M>

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/nj40cqsxhym6o7e/20150418%20The%20first%20%20chicks%20hatch%20and%20reveal.avi?dl=0>

There are some still images attached: Copyright Hawk and Owl Trust.



Lin Murray  
Press Officer  
Hawk and Owl Trust  
Sculthorpe Moor Nature Reserve  
M: 07881 657 944  
E: [lin.murray@hawkandowl.org](mailto:lin.murray@hawkandowl.org)  
W: [www.hawkandowl.org](http://www.hawkandowl.org)

## **Working for wild Birds of Prey and their Habitats**

This year our Norwich Cathedral peregrines laid four eggs in the nest platform at the top of Norwich Cathedral spire, a typical clutch for this species. Laying dates/times are shown below with intervals between layings. Very consistent intervals, possibly indicating that the female bird is in fine condition and in prime of life.

The first egg laid was just one day later than last year but a couple of days earlier than the previous years.

Peregrine falcons, the fastest bird in the world, do not start incubating their eggs until the 3rd or 4th egg is laid. This ensures that the eggs hatch close together with all four expected to hatch within 2 days or so, even though they were laid over 7.5 days. Incubation takes about 32 days after the last egg was laid, +/- a day or so.

The chicks will grow fast. It will take only 40 days for the newly hatched chicks, weighing in at 40 grams to grow into a bird weighing close to 1000grams (a bag of sugar!) and ready for flight. During this time the adults will work hard to feed their brood and look after them. They have been shown to be good parents in the past and are now well experienced at doing it.

After the chicks fledge – fly for the first time – the parents still need to feed them and teach them to hunt for themselves. It is during this time that they can be seen making spectacular aerial manoeuvres above the Cathedral as a parent passes prey to a squabbling gaggle of pursuing youngsters in mid-air.

The nest on the spire replicates a natural nest on a cliff face. It is 80m above ground. This is the 4th season the pair have nested at Norwich.

**Egg 1 laid 19 March 2015 at 06:17**

**Egg 2 laid 21 March 2015 at 17:12, 2.45 days after the first egg was laid**



Lin Murray  
Press Officer  
Hawk and Owl Trust  
Sculthorpe Moor Nature Reserve  
M: 07881 657 944  
E: [lin.murray@hawkandowl.org](mailto:lin.murray@hawkandowl.org)  
W: [www.hawkandowl.org](http://www.hawkandowl.org)

## Working for wild Birds of Prey and their Habitats

**Egg 3 laid 24 March 2015 at 05:28, 2.51 days after the second egg was laid**

**Egg 4 26 March 2015 16.44 2.47 days after the third egg was laid**

Ends

For more information, quotes, images or interviews please contact: Press Officer Lin Murray 07881 657 944 [lin.murray@hawkandowl.org](mailto:lin.murray@hawkandowl.org).

### Notes to editors:

Founded in 1969 to help save the peregrine, the Hawk and Owl Trust ([www.hawkandowl.org](http://www.hawkandowl.org)) is a national charity which now works for the conservation and appreciation of all wild birds of prey and their habitats – both in its nature reserves (such as its 7500 acre grouse moor, Fylingdales on the North York Moors) and in partnership with others. Working with communities and other organisations, farmers, foresters and landowners, the Trust researches, restores and manages nesting, roosting and feeding habitats and encourages greater understanding and appreciation of these very special birds.

### Notes

#### Norwich Cathedral Peregrines A Potted History

The peregrine falcon, the fastest bird on earth, was once a regular sight over the sky's of England but the combined effects of persecution, loss of natural habitat and, in the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century, the widespread use of the pesticide DDT, had brought the UK population to near extinction levels.

Consequently the sighting of a pair of peregrines in Norwich in 2009 was something of a landmark event. The pair did not breed that season but returned the following year. Worryingly they were still unable to find a suitable nest site but it was obvious that they favoured the Cathedral as a potential location.

After discussions the Hawk and Owl Trust formed a partnership with Norwich Cathedral and together they obtained approval for the erection of a nest box on the spire some 80m (~250 feet) above the ground. In February 2011, with help from volunteers from the Norfolk Fire Service, the nest box was installed together with 2 webcams. A few days later the platform attracted the attention of the peregrine pair who soon claimed it as their own.



Lin Murray  
Press Officer  
Hawk and Owl Trust  
Sculthorpe Moor Nature Reserve  
M: 07881 657 944  
E: [lin.murray@hawkandowl.org](mailto:lin.murray@hawkandowl.org)  
W: [www.hawkandowl.org](http://www.hawkandowl.org)

## Working for wild Birds of Prey and their Habitats

Against expectations, and after some dramatic interactions when another sub-adult female peregrine claimed the nest, a single egg was laid – somewhat appropriately on Easter Sunday. Sadly this egg failed to hatch but indicated the desire of the peregrines to use the platform as a nesting site.

The following year, 2012, the male returned but with a more mature female. They laid 4 eggs, three of which hatched and 2 of the chicks fledged successfully

In 2013 all four eggs hatched and all four chicks fledged although 2 of the birds died within the first few weeks. It is estimated that maybe only 50% of peregrines live to see their first birthday; such are the dangers of life in the wild.

Again, in 2014 all four eggs hatched and four chicks fledged but again, two of the fledglings died shortly after leaving the nest. Learning to fly is a dangerous time for young peregrines. The average surviving fledgling number for peregrines is two.

2015 will be the fifth season that peregrines have used the nest box.

The Hawk and Owl Trust have a Peregrine Watch Point in the Cathedral grounds where the public can see the birds close-up through powerful telescopes and watch their spectacular aerial antics as they fly overhead. The Cathedral is a few minutes walk from the Castle. Why not pop along. Its free.