

FEASIBILITY STATEMENTS FOR PEREGRINE FALCON GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

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Goal: Restore a self-sustaining population of breeding peregrine falcons in Maine.

Population Objective: Increase the breeding population of peregrine falcons in Maine to 15-20 nesting pairs by the year 2001.

Production Objective: Maintain an annual addition to the population of at least 15 peregrine fledglings in Maine through the year 2001.

Habitat Objective: Maintain the quantity and quality of nesting and foraging habitats necessary to support a self-sustaining population of breeding peregrine falcons in Maine through the year 2001.

Information Objective 1: Determine the parameters of a self-sustaining breeding population of peregrine falcons in Maine and limiting factors by the year 2001.

Information Objective 2: Determine the regional population status of peregrine falcons in the northeastern U.S. and eastern Canada by the year 2001.

Information Objective 3: Establish criteria for reclassification of peregrine falcons in Maine from endangered and threatened status by the year 2001.

Desirability: There is widespread public interest and support for conservation of endangered and threatened species, especially in the case of the peregrine falcon. The success of peregrine restorations, the international scale of these efforts, and the high visibility of some re-established peregrines often elevate this initiative to a flagship role among endangered species conservation programs.

Feasibility: Routine management assistance will likely be necessary for achievement of population objectives. Poor nesting success and low productivity typify re-established peregrines nesting in Maine since 1987. This can be offset by fostering and/or reintroductions to fulfill the production objective – 15 or more young peregrines fledged annually. These initiatives, or others necessary to accomplish that level of recruitment, also promote

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attainment of the population abundance objective by 2001. Management to enhance foraging areas appears possible.

Capability of Habitat: There are sufficient potential nest sites to support a peregrine breeding population of 15-20 nesting pairs in Maine – the stated population objective. The quality of adjacent foraging habitats may be limiting at some traditional eyries. However, eyrie selection among breeding peregrines restored in Maine thus far indicates that historical data (i.e., only 16 known eyries) underestimate suitable habitats: four of 7 different eyries occupied since 1987 were not previously documented as traditional nesting habitat.

Possible Consequences: Management interventions have been necessary to prevent disturbances at 4 of 7 Maine eyries reoccupied by peregrines since 1987. The spectacular cliff settings favored by nesting peregrines will likely require continuing efforts to manage incompatible forms of recreational use. Encroachment upon some of the favored, remote sites can be anticipated. The predatory nature of falcons will invite some unfavorable views of peregrine restoration, although these are generally thought to reflect a minority of public opinion.