

UPDATE ON THE REPRODUCTION OF PEREGRINE FALCON *FALCO PEREGRINUS*
ON BERGEGGI ISLAND

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ABSTRACT

This short note describes the first breeding record of Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus*) on Bergeggi Island (Savona Province – Liguria - NW Italy).

KEY WORDS: Bergeggi Island, reproduction, Peregrine Falcon.

SHORT NOTE

There are two subspecies of Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus*) nesting in Italy: the nominal *F. p. peregrinus* (Tunstall, 1771) in northern regions and *F. p. brookei* (Sharpe, 1873) in central and southern regions, along the coasts and islands (Bacci & Brunelli, 2022).

Both subspecies of Peregrine Falcon are present in Liguria where this raptor is considered irregular migrant, wintering, sedentary and breeding (Baghino et al., 2012).

By 2020, at least 70 breeding pairs are estimated in Liguria, of which 3 in the Finale Ligure area and surroundings (Baghino & Cottalasso, 2021), nearly 20 km far from the Bergeggi Island.

The searches carried out in the Natura 2000 site "IT1323202-Island of Bergeggi-Punta Predani", such as those aimed at drafting the management plan (Ce.S.Bi.N., 2020 - technical report) or those aimed at improving and updating the knowledge on biodiversity of the Regional Nature Reserve of Bergeggi (Ariello et al., 2005), had until now documented the frequentation of the island and its surroundings by the species exclusively for food purposes.

In 2024, during the birds census of the marine protected area carried out by Ce.S.Bi.N. (Centro Studi BioNaturalistici), the regular presence of a Peregrine Falcon on the southern slope of the island (Zone A of the Marine Protected Area) was recorded. This site is characterized by rocky cliffs with the presence of shrubs and trees typical of the Mediterranean environment (Figure 1).



Figure1. Nesting site (Photo by Ce.S.Bi.N.).

The sightings of the species were made from the boat during the winter 2023/24 and the following spring (on January 31st, February 15th, March 21st, April 5th, April 19th and May 21st). Generally, one or two adults were observed perched on a tree or on a cliff (always in the same site – Figure 2 and 3) or displaying territorial defense behavior (e.g. attacks on yellow-legged gulls *Larus michahellis*, alarm calls). On May 21st, vocalizations of juveniles were also heard.



Figure 2. Peregrine Falcon female (19th April 2024 - Photo by Ce.S.Bi.N.).



Figure 3. Peregrine Falcon male (19th April 2024 - Photo by Ce.S.Bi.N.).

On May 26th, one of the young was attacked by a yellow-legged gull during one of its first flights. The young falcon was rescued by some canoeists and handed over to Ente Nazionale Protezione Animali - ENPA (National Animal Protection Agency).

These observations confirmed the successful breeding of the species on Bergeggi Island, where it was not known to date.

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