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LETTERS

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EASTERNMOST RECOVERY IN EUROPE OF A PEREGRINE FALCON Banded IN NORTH AMERICA

KEY WORDS: *Peregrine Falcon*; *Falco peregrinus*; band; migration; recovery.

The tarsus of a female Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus*) banded on the Wisconsin shore of Lake Superior was found in the Ticino Mountains near Cima Crocetta, Switzerland. The reported location was the top (1350 m) of Mount Crocette (Point Crocette; 45°56.63'N, 09°00.73'E). On 27 April 2008, the falcon's tarsus and metal band (#987-91907) were turned in by a third party to R. Sartori, a Swiss bird bander (J. Laesser pers. comm.). The band was then sent by mail from R. Sartori to N. Zebiden at the Bird Ringing Center, Swiss Ornithological Institute, Sempach, Switzerland. The official correspondence between the Swiss Ornithological Institute and the United States Geological Survey (USGS) Bird Banding Laboratory, Laurel, Maryland, was between E. Wiprachtiger and J. Lutmerding, respectively. The band was on a bare-boned tarsus (dry, no tissue, no talons or joints) so an accurate time of death could not be ascertained. There were no other skeletal remains found. An inquiry by the Bird Banding Laboratory, Laurel, Maryland, found no evidence that the falcon's tarsus got to the recovery location by human-assisted means. USGS issued the recovery report to TCJD on 26 January 2009.

This Peregrine Falcon was banded on 29 September 1993 as a hatching-year female on Outer Island, Apostle Islands National Lakeshore, in northern Wisconsin (46°59.55'N, 90°28.07'W) and was one of 20 Peregrine Falcons banded between 30 August and 30 September 1993 as part of a National Park Service color-marking study to determine turnover rates of raptors observed on Outer Island during fall migration (Van Stappen and Doolittle 1995). This falcon was observed once the next morning hunting on the Outer Island sand spit and was recaptured 1 d later (1 October 1993) 427 km south of Outer Island at Cedar Grove Ornithological Station, Cedar Grove, Wisconsin, (western shore of Lake Michigan [43°39.94'N, 87°43.15'W]). The straight-line distance from initial banding location to its final recovery location in Switzerland was approximately 7030 km.

Although three Peregrine Falcons banded in North America have been recovered/encountered in Europe, to our knowledge this is the easternmost recovery (USGS Bird Banding Laboratory pers. comm.). The first recovery of a North American banded Peregrine Falcon in Europe (#1057-06660) was banded as a hatch-year bird by T. Barry near the Mason River in the Northwest Territories of Canada (16 August 1980) and was found dead by M. Antonia, 25 km NW of Lisbon, Portugal, in the fall of 1981 (J. Lutmerding

pers. comm.). Correspondence from M. Antonia provided to USGS suggested this falcon was shot but no direct evidence was offered to support this claim. However, the specimen was retained by A. Pena, Lisboa, Portugal, for a private collection. This same falcon also had a previous encounter record during the fall of 1981 in Mexico: the falcon landed "exhausted" on a trans-Atlantic fishing trawler somewhere between Mexico and Spain, was fed by the crew and stayed on the ship for 10 d, and flew off within 2 d of docking in Tenerife, Spain (28°16.12'N, 16°36.33'W; J.C. Trillo pers. comm.).

The second encounter was of a peregrine banded as a nestling (#987-27721) near Hasting, New Brunswick, Canada on 18 July 1986 and captured by a falconer in Brighton, England on 29 July 1987, approximately 4562 km away. The falcon was color-marked and the auxiliary marker was also reported by the falconer to USGS.

The only other birds banded in North America and recovered in Italy and Switzerland were a Glaucous-winged Gull (*Larus glaucescens*) banded as a hatch-year bird on 27 July 1969 in coastal British Columbia, Canada, and reported dead on 3 November 1969 near Wallisellen, Switzerland (approximately 8330 km) and an American Redstart (*Setophaga ruticilla*) female banded on 30 May 1989 as an after-hatch-year bird at Appledore Island, Maine, that was found dead on 9 May 1991 near Carrara, Italy, approximately 6236 km away (J. Lutmerding pers. comm.).

Among raptor migration patterns, true oceanic migration remains an exceptional form of raptor migration (Bildstein 2006). In a sample of 61 satellite-tagged Peregrine Falcons from the western hemisphere, the average distance of migration was 8624 km southward and 8247 km northward, and some falcons used water-crossing routes: the Davis Strait and the Caribbean Sea (Fuller et al. 1998). Eleonora's Falcons (*Falco eleonora*) repeatedly travelled approximately 1500 km nonstop when crossing the Strait of Mozambique between Madagascar and eastern continental Africa (Mellone et al. 2011). A Merlin (*Falco columbarius*) travelled over water for approximately 1000 km from Iceland to Great Britain (Bildstein 2006). Only the Amur Falcon (*Falco amurensis*) may regularly exceed oceanic migration distances of the Eleonora's Falcon (B.-U. Meyburg unpubl. data, Bildstein 2006). Of additional interest was a satellite-tracked Peregrine Falcon that met a hurricane in its attempt to cross the Gulf of Mexico and was forced back

to the mainland; after the hurricane had passed, it successfully completed the sea crossing (McGrady et al. 2006). Schmutz et al. (1991) noted a Peregrine Falcon banded on the mouth of the Mackenzie River in northern Canada and recovered 12 000 km south near Traiguén, Chile. Another remarkable migration was made by a male Peregrine Falcon banded as a hatch-year bird on 25 September 1975 and encountered alive in the Colville River region of northern Alaska on 15 July 1984, but then shot and killed in Alagoas State, Brazil, in December 1984 (Yates et al. 1988). Cochran (1975) reported following a radio-tagged Peregrine Falcon for 322 km in a single day. Similarly, a radio-tagged spring-migrant adult female Peregrine Falcon was tracked for 4 d (46.8 h of effective flight time) covering 2732 km, with a daily flight distance averaging 708 km (Chavez-Ramirez et al. 1994). Fuller et al. (1998) observed that Peregrine Falcons travelled at an average rate of 172 km/d southward and 198 km/d going north.

Our review of the literature and band encounter/recoveries from Peregrine Falcons originating in North America, as well as the recoveries of a Glaucous-winged Gull and American Redstart in Switzerland and Italy, all support the possibility that Peregrine Falcons can make transcontinental migrations. Human intervention is always a possible explanation for the recovery we report, as suggested by the recovery of a Peregrine Falcon (#1057-06660) in Portugal. However, it's also plausible that this Peregrine Falcon (#987-91907) reached Switzerland without human assistance, even though longitudinal raptor migrations are rare (Goodrich and Smith 2008) and the paucity of Peregrine Falcon transcontinental band records suggests that these migrations are an anomaly.

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