

Name: _____

A Fast Flying Hunter

By Guy Belleranti



Peregrine falcon in flight

Imagine diving from high in the sky or from a cliff or tall building at speeds of up to 200 miles an hour. That's what the peregrine falcon does when it hunts.

The peregrine falcon is built for fast flight. It has pointed, streamlined wings with powerful flight muscles. It also has a very strong heart and lungs. When it spots a bird in flight, it descends in a spectacular dive called a stoop, striking the prey with its talons.



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Those in the Arctic fly to South America in winter. When the weather warms, they return to the Arctic. This round-trip migration is 15,000 miles. That's like flying from Los Angeles, California to New York City six times. It takes a strong flyer to do that year after year!

Peregrine falcons provide a great example of how humans can hurt or help nature. In the 1950's and 1960's human use of insect-killing pesticides like DDT made peregrine falcons an endangered species in the United States. The poisons got into the falcons' prey. When the birds ate the prey, they also ate the poisons. This led to mother birds laying eggs with shells so thin they broke.

Thankfully, the U.S. and many other countries stopped using DDT. This, along with other conservation measures, saved peregrine falcons. Now they're no longer endangered.

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1. Based on the information you read in the article, what physical features help a peregrine falcon dive at speeds of up to 200 miles per hour?
 - a. pointed, streamlined wings
 - b. strong heart and lungs
 - c. powerful flight muscles
 - d. all of the above
2. Where would you **not** find a peregrine falcon?
 - a. at the North Pole
 - b. at the South Pole
 - c. in the mountains
 - d. in the desert



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4. Why do some peregrine falcons migrate 15,000 miles from the Arctic to South America and back?
 - a. They follow migrating schools of fish.
 - b. They follow migrating seabirds.
 - c. They go to the warmer climate in winter and return to the cooler climate in summer.
 - d. They go to the cooler climate in winter and return to the warmer climate in summer.
5. If a peregrine falcon lives in the city, what is it likely to eat?

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Match each vocabulary word from the reading passage with the correct definition.

- | | |
|-----------------------|---|
| _____ 1. streamlined | a. moves downward |
| _____ 2. conservation | b. very tall buildings |
| _____ 3. descends | c. seasonal movement of animals from one place to another |



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- | | |
|----------------------|---|
| _____ 7. migration | g. poisons used to kill insects |
| _____ 8. pesticides | h. a form designed to have very little resistance to air or water, increasing speed |
| _____ 9. prey | i. a vast, treeless region of the Arctic where the subsoil is always frozen |
| _____ 10. endangered | j. eye-catching; breathtaking |

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In the article, "A Fast Flying Hunter," you learned that peregrine falcons live on every continent except Antarctica.



On the lines below, explain why you think peregrine falcons are able to live in so many areas of the world? Give at least three reasons, based on the information you read in the article.



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ANSWER KEY

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pigeons

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