



## ELECTRICAL LINES: A REFUGE FOR THE PEREGRINE FALCON

A Collaborative Project  
between the Regional  
Environmental Office of Valladolid



RED ELÉCTRICA DE ESPAÑA



**RED ELÉCTRICA**  
DE ESPAÑA

P.º del Conde de los Gaitanes, 177

28109 · Alcobendas · Madrid

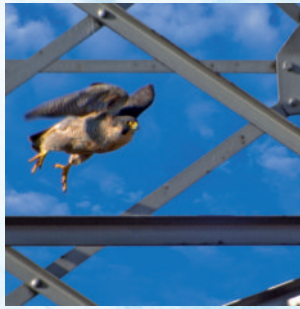
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## Introduction

Within its framework of collaborative activities with institutions and administrations for the purpose of developing research projects aimed at protecting birdlife, Red Eléctrica de España collaborates with the Regional Environmental Office of Valladolid in a study that analyses the role played by electrical lines in protecting the peregrine falcon.

During the course of this study, in which monitoring activities were carried out on peregrine falcons nesting in the electrical pylons in the province of Valladolid, it was observed that in areas with not natural nesting structures, electrical pylons are excellent places for hawks to nest during their breeding cycle, and that they use them, occupying the natural nests of other species inhabiting them.

Following this observation, it was decided to install artificial nests in the pylons to encourage this bird to nest. This action has contributed to recovering the peregrine falcon population in the province of Valladolid.



Hawk's eggs in a natural nest

## The peregrine falcon



The peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*) is a bird of prey with a length of almost 40 cm, weighing almost one kilogram. The females are, however, much larger than the males, which usually weigh less than six hundred grams and are about 30 cm long. The back and head are slate grey in colour, in contrast to the lower part of the birds, which are whiter, with dark stripes.

types of open spaces, which allows them to feed off their prey and nest in the most suitable breeding areas. They feed mainly off birds.

They usually lay their eggs between the months of March and April, in small cavities or sheltered ledges in cliffs. They do not build their nests but simply make a small depression in the earth, to prevent the eggs from falling, or they use the nests of other birds.

## At home

The peregrine falcon remains in Spain all the year round. Its population increases during the winter months due to the arrival of some birds from northern Europe.

The peregrine falcon population in the province of Valladolid is scattered throughout the entire region. However, the location of their nests depends on their ability to find suitable nesting places. They prefer to nest in river gorges but often look for other places in which to nest, such as electrical pylons.

During the spring, these birds live in the electrical pylons, occupying the natural nests built by crows and hawk owls or artificial nests (container-nests and box-nests). The natural nests are usually of poor quality, thereby putting their eggs and chicks in danger. This led to the idea of improving these through installing artificial nests.



Box-nest



Container-nest occupied by a couple of peregrine falcons



Peregrine falcon chicks in a natural nest

**“Placing artificial nests in electrical pylons plays an important part in preserving birdlife in habitats with no natural nesting places”**

## Results of the research project

- Approximately 60% of the peregrine falcon population in the province of Valladolid nests in electrical pylons, rather than in traditional places such as river gorges or cliffs.
- The presence of the electrical lines allows the hawks to occupy areas in the province of Valladolid in which there were no other places for them to nest.
- Installing artificial nests in the pylons improves nesting support for the peregrine falcon, thereby significantly increasing its reproduction and favouring the reproduction of other species of birds of prey.
- The electrical pylons provide safety for both eggs and chicks.

In view of the above results, Red Eléctrica has taken on the commitment to protect this species by adapting the maintenance work carried out on electrical facilities to periods outside the nesting season, and by collaborating in efforts to improve natural nests and install artificial nests in electrical pylons.