

Ms. Jody Pellissey
Chairperson, Conference of Management Authorities
c/o Species at Risk Secretariat
PO Box 1320
Yellowknife, NT X1A 2L9

July 15, 2022

Request for Clarification Respecting the Assessment of Peregrine Falcon

Dear Ms. Pellissey,

Thank you for your letter dated June 17, 2022, requesting clarification on the assessment of peregrine falcon in the NWT. The Species at Risk Committee (SARC) reviewed your request and provides further clarification below.

Request:

“While the [Conference of Management Authorities] understands the assessment and many of the reasons for the assessment, we would like clarification on how the existing and potential threats to peregrine falcon were considered in the assessment, particularly avian influenza.

Please clarify the following details regarding the peregrine falcon assessment and avian influenza:

- Was avian influenza considered in the assessment of peregrine falcon?
- To what extent is avian influenza a current or future threat to peregrine falcon populations in the NWT?”

Clarification from SARC:

Was avian influenza considered in the assessment of peregrine falcon?

At the time of the assessment, SARC discussed avian influenza but did not consider it to be a major threat to peregrine falcon in the NWT.

To what extent is avian influenza a current or future threat to peregrine falcon populations in the NWT?

Population level impact from the current strain of avian influenza (H5N1 highly pathogenic avian influenza, or HPAI) on peregrine falcon is unlikely. Future population level impacts are uncertain.

SARC met on June 29, 2022 and discussed current and future threats to peregrine falcon in the NWT using information provided by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (ENR) of the Government of the Northwest Territories and the Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS). This information is summarized below:

- A new highly pathogenic strain of avian influenza H5N1 virus was detected in wild birds in Canada and the United States in late 2021.
- As of July 8, the Canadian Wildlife Service Situation Report identified 1,083 suspected and confirmed cases of HPAI in wild birds in Canada.
- Approximately 100 species of wild birds have been affected by the 2022 North American outbreak, including peregrine falcon (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, as of July 6, 2022; Canadian Wildlife Service Situation Report, July 8, 2022).
- As of July 3, there are 2 confirmed and 7 suspected cases of HPAI in peregrine falcon in Canada (Canadian Wildlife Service Situation Report, July 8, 2022).

- There are no reported cases of HPAI in the NWT in any species (as of July 11, 2022). CWS continues to monitor the situation with support from ENR.

Peregrine falcons are solitary, therefore they would likely only contract HPAI from eating an infected animal. Currently, large die-offs leading to population level impact are unlikely in peregrine falcon, compared with other species of birds that congregate in large numbers. Future threats related to wildlife health issues are increasing worldwide and the impacts of these future threats are uncertain.

Other helpful websites include:

- [Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza – Wild Birds Dashboard](#) (ECCC/CWHC/CFIA) – Up to date information on suspected and confirmed cases of HPAI
- [Status of ongoing avian influenza response by province](#) (CFIA)
- [Avian Influenza: What You Need to Know](#) (GNWT)

I hope this addresses your questions and concerns.

Sincerely,



Leon Andrew, Chairperson
Species at Risk Committee

Attachment

- c. Northwest Territories Species at Risk Committee
Northwest Territories Conference of Management Authorities