

LEDERER

Cliff-Nesting Raptors in Boulder County,
OSMP Studies 4462

Study



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2000 Status Report**

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CLIFF-NESTING RAPTORS IN BOULDER COUNTY

2000 STATUS REPORT

A Compilation of Data from Numerous Agencies and Groups that Monitor Nests of Golden Eagles, Prairie Falcons and Peregrine Falcons

Compiled by Nan Lederer, Boulder County Nature Association
November 20, 2000

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to bring together and summarize in one document the information from six different agencies and organizations that monitor the nest locations, activity, and success of cliff-nesting raptors in Boulder County.

In 1982 the Boulder County Nature Association (BCNA) began a project to systematically locate and watch nesting golden eagles and prairie falcons in Boulder County, to determine their productivity and to prevent human disturbance to the nests if any was occurring. During subsequent years, these monitoring activities and volunteer coordination were mostly taken on by the agencies who had jurisdiction over the land where the nests were located: City of Boulder Mountain Parks, City of Boulder Open Space, Boulder County Parks and Open Space, the Colorado Division of Wildlife, and Eldorado Canyon State Park. Since 1991, peregrine falcons have been nesting within the study area, and their status has been monitored as well.

2000 NEST STATUS

Golden Eagle

Table 1 summarizes the status of each nesting territory from 1982 to 2000. Figure 1 is a graph of number of young produced from 1983 to 2000.

In 2000, there were 7 territories known to be active. In past reports I have referred to 10 known territories in Boulder County, based on our experience since 1982 as well as other studies going back to the 1940's. However, territories can shift over time, and our reporting has to be flexible as well. For example, this year there was an active nest in Marietta Canyon, long thought by some to be an alternate nest site within the Lefthand Palisades territory, but that was also active this year. As another example, the Eldorado Springs territory, active in the past, has had no known nesting since 1985.

Of these 7 investigated active territories, at least 6 attempted to nest, and 5 of these were successful, fledging a total of 7 young. (One nest failed during incubation.) This represents a good reproductive rate for the county. The highest number of young ever documented in one year in the study is 8 (in 1985, 1990, 1993, and 1998). The average number over the past 18 years is 5.4. Of course there is variation from year to year in the intensity of field work. All numbers of active nests and young produced are minimum numbers.

produced young, with a total of 17 young fledged. This represents very good reproduction compared with previous years, with only three years having had higher numbers of young fledged.

An encouraging observation is that the prairie falcons seem to be continuing their recovery from the impact of the increasing peregrine falcon population. The peregrines began displacing prairies in the Boulder Mountain Parks in 1993. The average number of prairie falcon young produced during the 6-year period 1993 to 1998 was 6.7, much less than half of this year's production.

- **Bull Gulch** (private). Not investigated. This site is actually in Jefferson County, but is sometimes monitored in this study as it is very close to Boulder County.
- **Eldorado Mountain (Mickey Mouse Wall)** (City of Boulder Open Space). Active; once again, the Mickey Mouse Wall proper was occupied by peregrines, but the prairies successfully nested nearby, east of the railroad tracks, fledging four young.
- **Eldorado Canyon** (Eldorado Canyon State Park). Active; three young fledged.
- **Shadow Canyon** (Boulder Mountain Parks). Active; two young fledged.
- **Fern Canyon** (Boulder Mountain Parks). Active; four young fledged.
- **Bear Canyon** (Boulder Mountain Parks). Active; four young fledged.
- **Third Flatiron** (Boulder Mountain Parks). This territory was occupied by peregrines.
- **Mount Sanitas** (private). Not investigated.
- **South St. Vrain Canyon** (Forest Service). Active; pair of adults present but no nest or young seen.
- **Hall Ranch** (Boulder County Parks & Open Space). Apparently inactive.
- **Steamboat Mountain** (private). Not investigated.

Peregrine Falcon

In 2000, four sites were known to be active. Two of them nested, each successfully fledging three young. This species continues to make a very good comeback in Boulder County. **Table 3** summarizes nesting status from 1991 to 2000. **Figure 3** is a graph of number of young produced from 1991 to 2000.

- **Eldorado Mountain** (Boulder City Open Space). Active; three young fledged.
- **Matron** (Boulder City Open Space). Active; three young fledged.

Fig. 1. Golden eagle productivity in Boulder County from 1983 to 2000

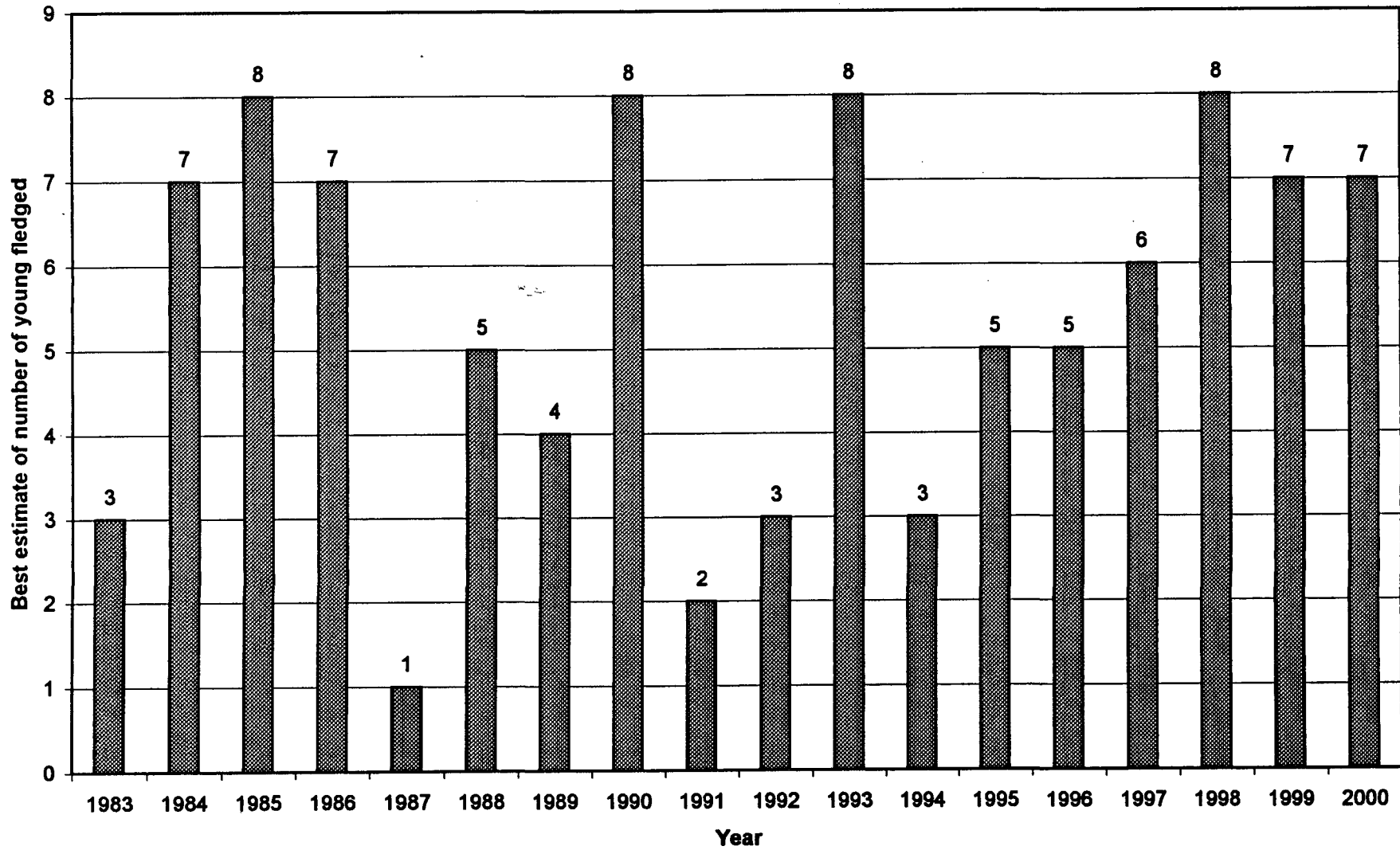
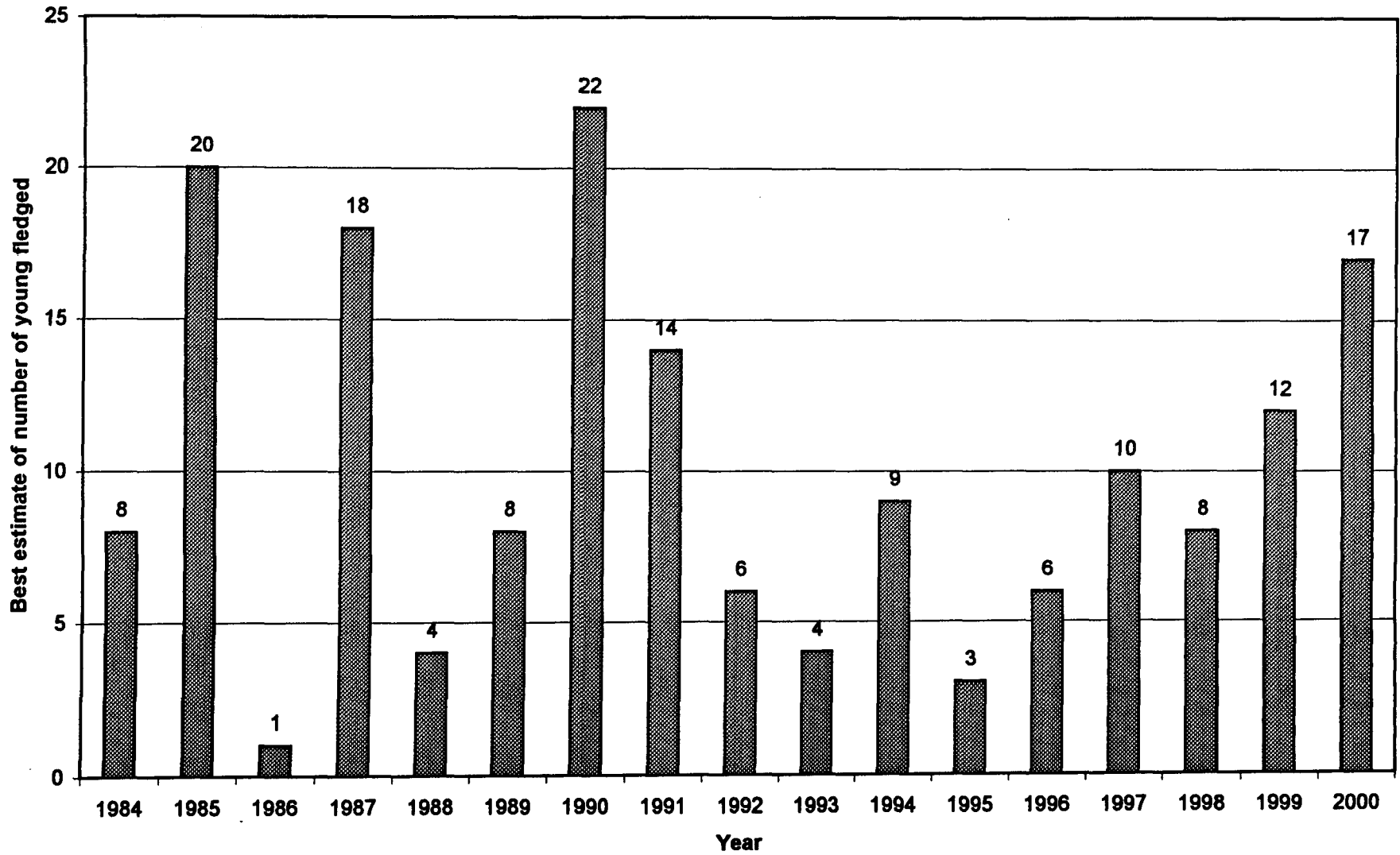


Table 2. Boulder County and vicinity Prairie Falcon nest status

Territory	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	Territory (south to north)
Bull Gulch	Not investigated	Not investigated	Not investigated	Terr. occupied**	3 yg. fledged	5 yg. fledged	Undetermined†	At least 1 yg. fledged	4 yg. fledged	4 yg. fledged	Undetermined	Undetermined	Inactive	Not investigated	Not investigated	Not investigated	Not investigated	Not investigated	
Eldorado Mtn. (Mickey Mouse Wall)	Terr. occupied	Terr. occupied	Terr. occupied	Inactive***	Inactive	Inactive	Inactive	At least 2 yg. fledged	4 yg. fledged	Terr. occupied	Nest active, pro-ductivity unk. fledged	4 yg. fledged	4 yg. fledged	Est. 3? yg. fledged	Est. 4 yg. fledged	Terr. occupied	2 or 3 yg. fledged	4 yg. fledged	
Eldorado Canyon (State Park)	Not investigated	Not investigated	Not investigated	Inactive	Inactive	Inactive	Undetermined	2 yg., Upper	2 yg., Red	Inactive	Inactive	Inactive	Inactive	Inactive	2 yg. fledged	2 yg. fledged	2 yg. fledged	3 yg. fledged	
Shadow Canyon	Not investigated	4 yg. fledged	Terr. occupied	Terr. occupied	2 yg. fledged	Terr. occupied	Terr. occupied	At least 2 yg. fledged	At least 1 yg. fledged	Displaced by peregrines	Terr. occupied	Terr. occupied	Inactive	Terr. occupied	Terr. occupied, suspect	Inactive	3 or 4 yg. fledged	2 yg. fledged	Jam Crack Spire
Sphinx																			New site; nest failed
Fern Canyon	Not investigated	3 yg. fledged	3 yg. fledged	5 yg. fledged	1 yg. on ground; nest not found	3 yg. fledged	Inactive	Inactive	Est. 2 yg. fledged	Terr. occupied	At least 2 yg. fledged	Nest active, pro-ductivity unk. fledged	3 yg. fledged	3 yg. fledged	3 yg. fledged	4 yg. fledged	3 yg. fledged	2 or 3 yg. fledged	4 yg. fledged
Bear Canyon	Not investigated	Terr. occupied	Terr. occupied	4 yg. fledged	Incub.; failed	4 yg. fledged	4 yg. fledged	4 yg. fledged	Nest used by ravens	Inactive	Inactive	Inactive	Inactive	Terr. occupied	Terr. occupied, no nest, Back Forch	Terr. occupied, no nest, Bear Can.	3 yg. fledged	4 yg. fledged	Nest abandoned 4 eggs, Bear Cr. Spire
Third Flatiron	Terr. occupied	Terr. occupied	1 yg. fledged	Not investigated	4 yg. fledged	Terr. occupied	At least 3 yg. fledged	At least 3 yg. fledged	5 yg. fledged	4 yg. fledged	4 yg. fledged	West site	Queen Anne's West site	Occupied by peregrines	Occupied by peregrines	Occupied by peregrines	Occupied by peregrines	Occupied by peregrines	Occupied by peregrines
Mt. Santitas	Not investigated	Not investigated	Not investigated	Not investigated	Not investigated	Not investigated	Terr. occupied	4 yg. fledged	3 yg. fledged	Inactive	Inactive	Inactive	Inactive	Not investigated	Not investigated	Not investigated	Not investigated	Not investigated	Not investigated
S. Sk. Vrain														Terr. occupied	Terr. occupied	Terr. occupied	At least 2 yg. fledged	Terr. occupied	
Steamboat Mtn.	Not investigated	1 yg. fledged	3 yg. fledged	Not investigated	Not investigated	Undetermined	At least 2 yg. fledged	At least 3 yg. fledged	Site occupied by peregrines	Briefly occupied by peregrines	Inactive	Inactive	Inactive	Not investigated	Not investigated	Not investigated	Not investigated	Not investigated	Not investigated
Total young produced from 11 territories	0	8	20	1	18	4	8	22	14	6	4	9	3	6	10	8	11-14	17	

*Territory occupied means frequent sightings of falcons in territory, but no occupied nest found.
 **Young fledged means that either young were observed flying or they were fully feathered and successful fledging was assumed.
 ***Inactive means we saw no falcons during our visits and assumed territory to be unoccupied.
 †Undetermined means insufficient field work to establish territory status.

Fig. 2 Prairie falcon productivity in Boulder County from 1984 to 2000



Territory (south to north)	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Eldorado Mtn.	Inactive***	Inactive	Inactive	Inactive	Inactive	1 yg. fledged; (2 eggs)	3 yg. fledged	1 yg. fledged	3 yg. fledged	3 yg. fledged
Matron	3 yg. fledged**	Alternate	Alternate	Alternate	Alternate	3 yg. fledged	3 yg. fledged	4 yg. fledged	2 yg. hatched, nest failed	3 yg. fledged
Shadow Canyon	Inactive	1 yg. fledged	2 yg. fledged	Alternate	Nest failed	Alternate	Alternate	Alternate	Alternate	Alternate
Third Flatiron	Used by prairie falcons	Used by prairie falcons	Used by prairie falcons	Used by prairie falcons	Nest failed	Active; female hybrid & eggs removed, DOW, re-nest w/ new mate failed (1 of 2 eggs hatched; yg. died)	3 yg. fledged	Nest failed	Terr. occupied	Terr. occupied
S. St. Vrain	Need info from CDOW	Need info from CDOW	Need info from CDOW	Need info from CDOW	Need info from CDOW	Need info from CDOW	Need info from CDOW	Terr. occupied, nest status unkn.	Undetermined	Terr. occupied, nest status unkn.
Steamboat Mtn.	Terr. active*	Inactive	Inactive	Inactive	Inactive	Undetermined†	Undetermined	Undetermined	Undetermined	Undetermined
Total yg. known out of 6 territories	3	1	2	2	0	4	9	5	3	8
*Territory active means frequent sightings of falcons in territory, but no active nest found.										
**Young fledged means that either young were observed flying or they were fully feathered and successful fledging was assumed.										
***Inactive means we saw no peregrine falcons during our visits and assumed territory to be unoccupied by this species.										
†Undetermined means insufficient field work to establish territory status.										

Table 3. Boulder County Peregrine Falcon nest status

Fig. 3. Peregrine falcon productivity in Boulder County from 1991 to 2000

