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Press Release

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[Bridges & Tunnels](#)

IMMEDIATE

### Falcon Chicks Tagged on Throgs Neck Bridge Tower

Three-week old Peregrine Falcon chicks, nesting atop the 360-foot high Queens tower of the Throgs Neck Bridge, were tagged Wednesday by New York City Department of Environmental Protection Wildlife Studies expert Chris Nadareski.

MTA Bridges and Tunnels Maintainer Danny Castoria climbed to the top of the tower to snap the pictures as Nadareski tagged and examined the newborns. After being informed all four were female, the Bridge General Manager Ed Wallace quipped, "Thank goodness I don't have to pay for these weddings." Another set of four chicks, born in early May at the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge's Brooklyn tower, will also be tagged soon.

This is the second set of falcon chicks to be born at the Throgs Neck. The first, from a different set of parents, were born in the 1980s. According to Nadareski, there are a total of 16 Peregrine falcon couples living in New York City atop bridges, church steeples and high-rise buildings.

The Throgs Neck chicks have been growing steadily, and eat about four or five times a day. Their diet consists of pigeons, starlings, blackbirds, blue jays and other small birds caught by their mother. Their talons are already nearly as big as a man's hand. In another three weeks they will begin to practice flying atop the tower but will remain dependent on their parents for protection and food for another eight weeks.

Nadareski said it is not unusual for falcons to choose bridges to build their nests since they historically live on high cliffs where they can watch for prey and have plenty of open space to hunt. MTA personnel work closely with the City environmental agency on efforts such as the tagging and, for example, avoiding any work near the nests during the falcons mating season. Peregrine Falcons were on the endangered list until 1999 and have made a comeback since.

In addition to hosting the falcons, the Throgs Neck Bridge handles 110,000 vehicles a day.

#### Photos by Danny Castoria



DEP Wildlife Studies expert Chris Nadareski holds a 3-week-old Peregrine Falcon chick after tagging it near its nest 360-feet high, atop the Queens tower of the Throgs Neck Bridge.



Four newborn Throgs Neck chicks inside their box nest.



The Throgs Neck Bridge