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Press Release

June 1, 2011

[Bridges & Tunnels](#)

IMMEDIATE

Three MTA Bridges Home To Nine New Peregrine Falcon Chicks

Oh, baby, times 9! That's what they're saying at the Verrazano-Narrows, Marine Parkway and Throgs Neck Bridges where three new sets of peregrine falcon chicks recently hatched.

The newest additions to B&T's feathered family include:

2 girls hatched atop the 693-foot Brooklyn tower at the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge. Verrazano General Manager Daniel DeCrescenzo said they were named Rose in honor of Staten Island's Rosebank neighborhood and Sunset for the neighborhood in Brooklyn.

3 boys born 360-feet atop the Bronx tower at the Throgs Neck Bridge were named Locust, Edgewater and Bayside by Throgs Neck employees in honor of the Bronx and Queens communities near that bridge, according to General Manager Ed Wallace. (Follow the link to see the MTA You Tube video on the Throgs Neck falcons being banded: <http://www.youtube.com/mtainfo>)

Four chicks were also born inside a World War II gun turret 215-feet up on the Rockaway tower of the Marine Parkway-Gil Hodges Memorial Bridge. Rockaway Maintenance Superintendent Michael Finlay said Marine Parkway also chose names with meaning to the communities around the bridge: Rocky for the Rockaways, Floyd for nearby Floyd Bennett field, Marine (for the bridge) and Breezy for Breezy Point.

"It doesn't cost the Authority anything to have the falcons nest here," said Throgs Neck Maintenance Superintendent Carlton Cyrus. "We just give them some peace and quiet and during nesting season make sure that our contractors and maintenance workers don't disturb them. This allows the chicks to hatch and gives them a greater opportunity for survival."

Cyrus, who has been with B&T for almost 27 years, has been involved with nesting falcons at the Verrazano-Narrows, Marine Parkway and Throgs Neck Bridges since 1997. Urban falcons like to nest atop bridges, church steeples and high-rise buildings because they provide an excellent vantage point for hunting prey, including pigeons and small birds.

The three sets of peregrine chicks hatched around the first week in May. Banding takes place about three weeks later when the chicks' talons have grown to adult size. Each new chick receives an identification band for future monitoring by federal wildlife officials.

The banding is done by wildlife specialist Chris Nadareski, of the city Department of Environmental Protection's Wildlife Studies division, which coordinates the city falcon program in cooperation with the State Department of Environmental Conservation.

Peregrine falcons were nearly wiped out in the 1960s because of pesticides in their food supply, and remain on the NYS Department of Conservation's endangered birds list. The peregrine nesting program began in the city in 1983, and the first two established nests were at the Verrazano-Narrows and Throgs Neck Bridges.

Peregrine falcons mate for life and nest in the same spot each year. The young falcons begin flying when they are about six-weeks-old. Nadareski estimates that, as of this year, there are 16 pairs of peregrine falcons who call the city home.

Photo Captions:



Picture 2: Verrazano falcons: Rose (standing to right) and Sunset (left) who were named for neighborhoods near the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge.

Picture 1: (back to front) Throgs Neck's newest feathered inhabitants: Locust (with open beak), Edgewater and Bayside, named for communities near the Throgs Neck.



Picture 3: Mother falcon circles as her chicks are banded 693-feet atop the Brooklyn tower. Fort Hamilton in Bay Ridge is in the background.



Picture 4: 2 of the 4 new Marine Parkway chicks with nervous mama falcon in background.