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Press Release

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[Bridges & Tunnels](#)

IMMEDIATE

Seven New Peregrine Falcon Chicks Call MTA Bridges Home

Talk about a room with a view! Seven new peregrine falcon chicks are living in their parents' nesting boxes high atop three MTA bridges.

The new chicks include four newly hatched peregrines at Marine Parkway-Gil Hodges Memorial, two at Throgs Neck and one at the Verrazano-Narrows. They hatched in early May and were recently banded by wildlife specialist Chris Nadeski, of the New York City Department of Environmental Protection's Wildlife Studies division. To see a You Tube video of this year's banding click [here](#).

The DEP Wildlife division coordinates the city falcon program in cooperation with the State Department of Environmental Conservation. The MTA's falcon couples and their new chicks are part of the nesting program that began in the city in 1983.

Peregrine falcons were nearly wiped out in the 1960s because of pesticides in their food supply, and remain on the State Department of Environmental Conservation's endangered birds list. The Throgs Neck and Verrazano-Narrows were among the first two nesting spots chosen by peregrine couples, who mate for life and nest in the same spot each year.

"We provide the nesting boxes and give the DEP wildlife expert access to check the eggs and band them but our primary goal is to just let them be," said Verrazano-Narrows Maintenance Superintendent Daniel Fortunato.

During mating season through the point where they learn to fly and leave the nest, maintenance workers limit any contact since the parents, particularly the mother, can be very aggressive. Other than providing the nesting boxes, there is no cost to the authority.

This year's newest avian residents include:

- Leif, a male, was named for the Norwegian explorer Leif Ericson who is honored each May with at Bay Ridge's Norwegian Constitution Day. There is also a park in Bay Ridge named for the explorer. Leif's temporary home is atop the Verrazano's 693-foot Brooklyn tower.
- Belle, a female, and Jake, Bennett and Gil, all males, were named for Belle Harbor, Jacob Riis Park, Floyd Bennett Field and baseball great Gil Hodges, whose name was added to the bridge in 1978. The falcon siblings currently call the Marine Parkway Bridge's 215-foot Rockaway tower home.
- Skye and Baysie, two females, named for Fort Schuyler and Bayside can be found 360 feet atop the Bronx tower at the Throgs Neck Bridge.

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.