

ATTACHMENT SS2

REGION 2 SENSITIVE SPECIES EVALUATION FORM

Species: Prairie falcon (<i>Falco mexicanus</i>) (PRFA)			
Criteria	Rank	Rationale	Literature Citations
1 Distribution within R2	A	<p>PRFA distribution is isolated and patchy within the region where suitable habitat is present. This species only nests on suitable cliffs, rocky outcrops, and rock bands. Distribution of suitable habitat in R2 is highly variable and isolated to where suitable nesting sites are present with limited human disturbances and other anthropogenic threats. Distribution is wide where suitable habitat is present.</p> <p>Confidence in Rank High</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tesky 1994 • CO BBA • Craig pers. comm.
2 Distribution outside R2	B	<p>PRFA are isolated yet widespread in their range and breed throughout the west from central British Columbia, southern Alberta, Saskatchewan, Canada, and North Dakota south to Baja California. They winter from northern parts of their breeding range south to central Mexico and east to the Mississippi River.</p> <p>US States: AZ, CA, CO, ID, KS, MT, NE, NM, NV, ND, OK, OR, SD, TX, UT, WA, WY</p> <p>Canadian Provinces: AB, BC, and SK</p> <p>Wintering in Mexico</p> <p>Worldwide population numbers are limited to only 36,000 individuals (for reference peregrine falcon populations are estimated to 1.2 million individuals worldwide).</p> <p>The population is thought to be stable, but is vulnerable due to its small size and the reliance of the species on limited nesting habitat, consisting of cliffs with minimal human disturbance and adjacent open areas that support a prey base.</p> <p>Confidence in Rank High</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tesky 1994 • PIF
3 Dispersal Capability	C	<p>This wide-ranging species has the ability to disperse into unoccupied habitats that are suitable and without substantial human disturbance or other anthropogenic activities.</p> <p>Confidence in Rank Moderate</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tesky 1994 • CO BBA

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4 Abundance in R2	A	<p>Estimates place between 300-1,000 pairs in Colorado, reproductive status, population size and distribution is highly variable and unknown. Suitable habitat (primarily nesting) is limited as discussed in other sections throughout the region.</p> <p>Confidence in Rank Low</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tesky 1994 • CO BBA 												
5 Population Trend in R2	D	<p>Population trends for PRFA are generally stable, although localized declines are shown in some areas. Prairie Falcons occupy a unique habitat type (cliff/rock) in this physiographic area. They are not adequately sampled by BBS surveys within the shortgrass physiographic area, and data collected between 1969 and 1996 are too sparse to allow analysis of trend data ($n = 7$ routes). Prairie Falcons were present on an average of 6.90% (SE = 1.23) of the BBS routes run in Physiographic Area 36 in Colorado during 1988-1997, at an average abundance of 0.08 (SE = 0.02) individuals per route. The mean number of routes run each year was 29.2 (SE = 2.28). This species is monitored by MCB with a statewide census. This species is poorly sampled on BBS, and data may be inadequate to detect existing trends. BBS data for 1966-2004 are:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="436 841 1417 980"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Annual Trend (%)</th> <th>P-value</th> <th>Number of Routes</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>FWS Region 2</td> <td>1.1</td> <td>0.28</td> <td>13</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Western BBS</td> <td>2.7</td> <td>0.36</td> <td>147</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>PRFA is a National Bird of Conservation Concern by the USFWS.</p> <p>Confidence in Rank Moderate</p>		Annual Trend (%)	P-value	Number of Routes	FWS Region 2	1.1	0.28	13	Western BBS	2.7	0.36	147	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Mexico Avian Conservation • CO BBA
	Annual Trend (%)	P-value	Number of Routes												
FWS Region 2	1.1	0.28	13												
Western BBS	2.7	0.36	147												
6 Habitat Trend in R2	A	<p>Suitable nesting areas (cliffs and rocky outcroppings) are limited in the region. Increasing threats from encroaching human development and recreation (see below) are infringing on these limited habitat areas. It is likely suitable nesting and foraging habitats is and will continue to decline throughout R2 and elsewhere due to a lack of consideration and conservation measures in the foreseeable future. Foraging habitat has also deteriorated over the last century with increased fire suppression and ensuing conifer encroachment into meadows and grasslands.</p> <p>Confidence in Rank High</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tesky 1994 • CO BBA 												

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Criteria	Rank	Rationale	Literature Citations
7 Habitat Vulnerability or Modification	A	<p>Partners in Flight ranks the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Population size rank – highly vulnerable • Breeding and non-breeding vulnerability – low to mid • Threats to breeding, non-breeding, and population trends – moderate vulnerability <p>Suitable nest sites and to a somewhat lesser degree foraging habitats are limited and isolated. Substantial threats from a variety of anthropogenic modifications and activities is likely at these sites/areas.</p> <p>Nesting habitats are very similar to that of peregrine falcons, golden eagles, ravens and others and they can overlap with these species where sufficient suitable nesting and foraging habitat exists. Competition from these species has also been documented further limiting nesting habitat for PRFA.</p> <p>Confidence in Rank Medium</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PIF • Tesky 1994
8 Life History and Demographics	B	<p>As discussed above, suitable nesting habitat in particular is severely isolated and limited. Competition from other raptors and avian species can be significant and can displace PRFA from many sites. Anthropogenic factors such as recreation (i.e., climbing on cliffs and rocky outcroppings) and other activities can reduce the availability and suitability of nest sites further. Other threats such as legal and illegal taking of nestlings, nest sabotage, disturbance from climbers, illegal hunting, destruction of nesting habitat and foraging habitat.</p> <p>Confidence in Rank High</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tesky 1994 • PIF • CO BBA
<p>Evaluator(s):</p> <p>Mike Wrigley, Wildlife Biologist - San Isabel NF</p>			<p>Date:</p> <p>January 21, 2009</p>

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National Forests in the Rocky Mountain Region where species is KNOWN (K) or LIKELY (L)¹ to occur:

Species Name:											
<u>Colorado NF/NG</u>		<u>Kansas NF/NG</u>		<u>Nebraska NF/NG</u>		<u>South Dakota NF/NG</u>		<u>Wyoming NF/NG</u>			
Known	Likely	Known	Likely	Known	Likely	Known	Likely	Known	Likely	Known	Likely
Arapaho-Roosevelt NF	X	Cimarron NG	X	Samuel R. McKelvie NF		Black Hills NF		Shoshone NF			
White River NF	X			Halsey NF		Buffalo Gap NG		Bighorn NF			
Routt NF	X			Nebraska NF		Ft. Pierre NG		Black Hills NF			
Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre, Gunnison NF	X			Ogalala NG				Medicine Bow NF			
San Juan NF	X							Thunder Basin NG			
Rio Grande NF	X										
Pike-San Isabel NF	X										
Comanche NG	X										
Pawnee NG	X										

****Note – the author is unaware of the existing data of PRFA distribution on many of the above units within the region.

¹ Likely is defined as more likely to occur than not occur on the National Forest or Grassland. This generally can be thought of as having a 50% chance or greater of appearing on NFS lands.