

# ODYSSEY OF A PEREGRINE

## I. *Injury in Lawton*

BY JACK D. TYLER

On the morning of 26 September 1984, I entered my office at Cameron University in Lawton, Oklahoma, to find a large box on my desk containing a live bird and a note to the effect: "Here is a sick hawk, now he's your problem!" After some investigation, I found that Charles R. Reick, an instructor in the Agriculture Department, had been presented this bird earlier by someone whose name he could not remember. It had apparently been struck by a moving vehicle the previous day and was found alongside Interstate Highway 44 in northeast Lawton. The bird was an immature male Peregrine Falcon, *Falco peregrinus*. It was alert and neither wing was broken, but its legs were so weak that standing was difficult.

Realizing that this falcon is endangered over much of North America, I contacted wildlife personnel at nearby Fort Sill. They, in turn, notified the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Albuquerque, New Mexico, who instructed us to try to rehabilitate the bird, if possible. Fortunately, a couple in Lawton, Art W. and Yolande Breaden, had had several years' experience caring for many species of injured birds and mammals. The falcon was placed in their care.

## II. *Rehabilitation*

BY YOLANDE BREADEN

On the afternoon of 27 September 1984, Jay K. Banta, a biologist at nearby Fort Sill, brought to my home in Lawton an immature male Peregrine Falcon that was incapable of flight. It had apparently suffered a collision with a moving vehicle some two days earlier. I stayed with it almost constantly until early the following morning, offering it bits of raw rabbit flesh. By 0300, it had eaten an estimated 50-70 grams of meat and had drunk a good deal of rabbit blood. That day, it was taken to a Fort Sill veterinarian, who became optimistic of its recovery when X-rays revealed no broken bones.

For the next two months, I continued to nurture this beautiful bird back to health. It had a good appetite and its strength returned rapidly. As soon as it was able, I encouraged it to fly about in the house. One thing worried me: the falcon maintained a limp in its left leg when it walked.

After several weeks, the bird had become strong enough to be safely released from captivity. I contacted Dr. Steve K. Sherrod, director of the Sutton Avian Research Center in Bartlesville, Oklahoma. In late November 1984, the transfer to Bartlesville was made. Not long afterward, Sherrod took the falcon to Tulsa, where an expert falconer could fly it regularly, reinstating hunting skills vital to its survival in the wild.