

CHICHESTER PEREGRINES

Update No. 3 21 May 2020

Last time you heard from me there were 4 eggs and quite a lot has happened since then.

First of all on May 8th (VE Day) our first chick was hatched!



As you can see Mum was very carefully looking after the newly hatched chick and very soon she tucked the chick underneath her breast to keep it warm and safe. By the following morning there was chick number 2 and Maverick was allowed to take a turn at looking after the 2 chicks and 2 remaining eggs. The third egg was hatched on 9th May just before midnight and the 4th on the following day just after 10am. So now we have a full house and the real business starts of keeping the youngsters fed. At first Mum is reluctant to let Maverick anywhere near the chicks but she soon relents and he comes to have a look. Now he starts to bring in little food parcels for little bundles of fluff.



Above: Maverick has brought some food in and as a 'Thank you You are my mate' Mum feeds him a little morsel before she feeds the chicks.

The female peregrine will share the feeding with the male more and more as the chicks grow. They are also very good parents making sure that each chick gets the food it requires. There is never a runt of the litter - all are fed equally even though they hatch over a period of days.

For the next six weeks the parents spend their time feeding the chicks and keeping them warm and dry. At first Maverick does most of the hunting but gradually Mrs M joins the hunt for food for the growing youngsters. When the chicks are very young the food tends to be smaller birds - perhaps because the meat is more tender for the tiny chicks - but as they grow, larger prey is delivered to the nest to feed to them.

As the chicks grow the camera will be zoomed out so that when they start to explore their home turret we will be able to see a lot more of what they are doing.

Our chicks are now almost 2 weeks old and you can already see the beginning of feathers appearing. This photo was taken immediately after they had been fed and they look like they are watching Mum have her dinner now.



At the moment because the weather has been so warm the chicks have been left alone in the nest for quite long periods. This is quite normal in warm weather and Mum or Dad will not be far away - probably perched somewhere on the spire watching the nest and protecting the chicks.



All lined up and fast asleep after a good feed

Sometime in the next week or so the chicks will be ringed. At this point we will be able to say how many of each sex. Please don't worry the camera will be turned off for 1-2 hours while the ringing is carried out. It does not hurt them and it means that we can follow them if anyone spots a bird with our colour ring and number making its own way in life.

Just to let you know - we are cancelling our July Viewing Days as we feel it is not appropriate to encourage gatherings and because almost all of our volunteers, including ourselves, are on the older side!

Hope you are enjoying many happy hours of watching.

All the best and Stay Safe,
David and Janet
Chichester Peregrines