

High drama: Webcam shows falcons on NY smokestack

JAY REY, The Buffalo News

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BUFFALO, N.Y. (AP) — Buffalo's latest reality stars are a pair of peregrine falcons being viewed over the Web as they nest on a chimney stack high above the University at Buffalo South Campus.

UB installed a small camera atop the 135-foot smokestack at the Mackay Heating Plant, where the endangered species first showed up three years ago.

Viewers are logging onto the webcam, which refreshes every six seconds, to follow UB's two resident peregrines, BB and Yankee.

It's a regular soap opera.

You want drama?

How about Tuesday, when viewers saw the couple's three chicks hatch.

You want scandal?

How about when BB's mate from last year returned to the nest to find he had been replaced.

"The camera helps us tremendously to be able to watch the progress of the nest," said **Mark Kandel**, a regional wildlife manager with the state **Department of Environmental Conservation**, which is responsible for protecting and managing peregrine falcons.

"But probably equally as important, or more so, is for the public to enjoy the birds," Kandel said. "It's a tremendous educational tool at all levels."

Check it out at www.buffalo.edu/webcam/falconcam.html.

Four chicks — Kevin, Tori, Athos and Zephyr — hatched when two peregrines returned to UB last spring, said **Al Gilewicz**, UB's assistant director of utility operations.

But when BB arrived at the nest this season, observers discovered she had linked up with a different male — Yankee.

After she produced three eggs, last year's male, Smokey, returned.

He wasn't happy.



There was a big fight, but in the end, Yankee, showed the old beau the door.

It's actually a good sign for the recovery of peregrines, said [Connie Adams](#), a wildlife biologist with the DEC.

"You have more peregrines than you do nests, which leads to fights," Adams said.

"Over the last couple (of) weeks, people were wondering when they were going to hatch," Gilewicz said, "and it happened early this week."

In a few weeks, when the three little peregrines are a little older, someone from the DEC will climb to the top of the UB chimney and band the chicks to help track them once they leave the nest.

While peregrine falcons are still on the endangered species list in New York, they are making a comeback.

In 1965, there were no peregrines nesting in New York, but after many years of preservationists protecting the birds and hatching eggs while in captivity, there are now more than 60 nests around the state, Kandel said.

While the birds are known to make their homes on high cliffs and peaks, the peregrine falcons have fast become urban dwellers, as they have taken a liking to tall city buildings and structures.

There are several in the Buffalo area now, Kandel said.

Besides the pairs at UB and the Statler building, there is a pair each in the Niagara Gorge, the [Central Terminal](#) and an old grain elevator along the Buffalo waterfront, as well as two pairs nesting under the Grand Island bridges, Kandel said.

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