

Section 6 (Texas Non-traditional) Report Review

Attachment to letter dated FEB 08 2005

Project Title: Implementation of Safe Harbor Agreements in Support of the Northern Aplomado Falcon Recovery in Texas

Final or Interim Report? Final

Job #: WER-83

Grant #: B-31

Nontraditional Program (check one):

- ☐ Recovery Land Acquisition
- ☐ HCP Land Acquisition
- ☐ HCP Planning Assistance
- ☒ Safe Harbors / CCAAs

Reviewer Station: Corpus Christi ESFO, Clear Lake ESFO, Albuquerque ESFO, Austin ESFO

Lead station was contacted and concurs with the following comments:

☐ Yes ☐ No ☒ Not applicable (reviewer is from lead station)

Interim Report (check one):

- ☐ is acceptable as is
- ☐ is acceptable as is, but comments below need to be addressed in the next report
- ☐ needs revision (see comments below)

Final Report (check one):

- ☐ is acceptable as is
- ☒ is acceptable, but needs minor revision (see comments below)
- ☐ needs major revision (see comments below)

Comments:

We appreciate all of the work The Peregrine Fund has put into this project. We only have a few minor requests to complete this final report.

We would appreciate maps showing, by year, general area(s) where aplomado falcons have been released and locations of nesting pairs. Please make them at least detailed enough to depict the portion of a county where the activity occurred. Additionally, please (re)submit all maps and figures in black-and-white reproducible formats.



November 16, 2004

FA-TEXAS

GRANT: E-31

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Joyce Johnson, Chief
Division of Federal Aid, Region II
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
P.O. Box 1306
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87103

Attention: Penny Bartnicki

Dear Joyce:

Enclosed is the required Final Report for the above grant (Implementation of Safe Harbor Agreements in Support of the Northern Aplomado Falcon Recovery in Texas). If you have any questions about my request, please contact me at 512-389-4641.

Sincerely,

Neil (Nick) E. Carter
Federal Aid Coordinator

NEC

Enclosure

cc: Craig Farquhar
Christina Williams
Frank Paxton



Take a kid
hunting or fishing



Visit a state park
or historic site

FINAL REPORT

As Required by

THE ENDANGERED SPECIES PROGRAM

TEXAS

Section 6 Grant: E-31

Endangered and Threatened Species Conservation

**WER83: Implementation of Safe Harbor Agreements
In Support of the Northern Aplomado Falcon**

Prepared by: Pete Jenny



Robert Cook
Executive Director

Ron George
Program Director, Science, Research & Diversity

Mike Berger
Division Director, Wildlife

November 12, 2004

FINAL REPORT

STATE: Texas GRANT NUMBER: E-31

GRANT TITLE: Endangered and Threatened Species Conservation

REPORTING PERIOD: September 1, 2003 through August 31, 2004 (Year 3 of 3)

PROJECT NUMBER: WER 83

PROJECT TITLE:

Implementation of Safe Harbor Agreements In Support of the Northern Aplomado Falcon

OBJECTIVE(S):

The two primary objectives of this conservation effort are:

- (1) To provide public outreach, survey and monitoring, and conservation management (stocking) of the Aplomado Falcon.
- (2) To implement Safe Harbor Agreements with private landowners for the conservation of the Aplomado Falcon during a three-year funded period.

Segment Objectives:

1. Public Outreach/Education: Public outreach efforts are being conducted in West Texas with the Davis Mountains Trans-Pecos Heritage Association, Texas Nature Conservancy, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, various landowners in the area, and many others. In addition, public meetings are being held. A live Aplomado Falcon is being used to facilitate these efforts. The public outreach/education efforts provide the opportunity to explain The Peregrine Fund's conservation philosophy, the biology of the Aplomado Falcon, the Safe Harbor program, and to enroll properties. Although labor intensive and time consuming, this diligent groundwork is absolutely vital to the ultimate success of this project.

2. Baseline Surveys: Peregrine Fund biologists have, and will continue to survey West Texas for suitable habitat. These surveys are closely coordinated with The Nature Conservancy, Texas Parks and Wildlife, and others. Since Safe Harbor agreements operate on the premise of baseline population responsibility, it is essential to adequately survey properties to determine population size prior to developing Safe Harbor agreements. Therefore, after suitable habitat has been identified but before the landowner is enrolled in the Safe Harbor program, a survey of the property is conducted to determine the existing population of Aplomado Falcons.

3. Restoration: After the agreements are signed, sites for release towers are identified and, when necessary, the towers are constructed. Young Aplomado Falcons are released from these towers in groups of five to seven. The Aplomado Falcons are raised in captivity at The Peregrine Fund's World Center for Birds of Prey. At approximately 30 to 40 days of age, they are transported to the various release sites.

4. Monitoring: Progress in the restoration of this species is determined by monitoring the establishment of nesting pairs and their subsequent success. The majority of this monitoring effort is conducted during and after the release season. Annually, these results are used in the development of a five-year plan that is presented to The Peregrine Fund's Program Committee for review. Once the Program Committee has approved the plan, it is presented to The Peregrine Fund's Board of Directors for approval.

Summary Of Progress:

Please see Attachment A.

Location:

Although efforts will continue in South Texas to identify habitat and enroll additional properties in the Aplomado Falcon Safe Harbor, the new focus is on developing Safe Harbor Agreements in West Texas around Valentine, Marfa, and Alpine. The habitat type required by the Aplomado Falcon is best described as grassland. In essence grasslands supporting successful and well managed cattle grazing operations will also support Aplomado Falcons.

Cost: \$ 38,999.62

Prepared by: Pete Jenny

Date: November 12, 2004

Approved by: Neil (Nick) E. Carter

Date: 11/16/2004

Attachment A

Final Report to Texas Parks and Wildlife

TPWD Contract #102761

Aplomado Falcon Safe Harbor

Public Outreach and Education:

Public outreach efforts are being conducted in West Texas with the Davis Mountains Trans-Pecos Heritage Association, Texas Nature Conservancy, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, various landowners in the area, and interested individuals. Public meetings have been held at the Marfa Bookstore, Marfa Town office, Trans-Pecos Heritage Association in Alpine, the El Paso Audubon Society, the King Ranch Institute, the Houston Zoo, the San Antonio Zoo, and at schools in Dallas, Houston, and Van Horn. A live Aplomado Falcon is being used to facilitate these efforts. The public outreach/education efforts provide the opportunity to explain The Peregrine Fund's conservation philosophy, the biology of the Aplomado Falcon, the Safe Harbor program, and to enroll properties. Although labor intensive and time consuming, this diligent groundwork is absolutely vital to the ultimate success of this project.

Annual reports and bi-annual newsletters detailing these conservation efforts have been widely distributed. A paper was published in the Wildlife Society Bulletin chronicling our efforts over the last 10 years in restoring the Aplomado Falcon in Texas. Jessie Brown published a paper in the Wilson Bulletin describing pirating behavior, and Alberto Macias published a paper on reproduction, prey, and habitat associated with the Chihuahua population in The Auk.

Baseline Surveys:

Peregrine Fund biologists have, and will continue to, survey south and west Texas for suitable Aplomado Falcon habitat. These surveys are closely coordinated with The Nature Conservancy, Texas Parks and Wildlife, and private land owners. Since Safe Harbor agreements operate on the premise of baseline population responsibility it is essential to adequately survey properties to determine population size prior to developing Safe Harbor agreements. Therefore, after suitable habitat has been identified but before the landowner is enrolled in the Safe Harbor program, a survey of the property is conducted to determine the existing population of Aplomado Falcons.

Safe Harbor properties enrolled represent over 1.6 million acres including the Miller Ranch, Means Ranch, Timothy J. Crowley, McKnight Ranch, Baeza Inc., Ranch del Cielo, Lado

Ranch, Yturria Ranch, San Jose Island, King Ranch, Brownsville Navigation District, Buena Vista Ranch, Kennedy Ranch, Welder Wildlife Foundation, Elliot Bottom, Philip H. Hunke, E.E. Forshage, Jr., Falcon Point Ranch, and the El Sauz Ranch. Additional properties are in the process of being enrolled.

Of the 39 known pairs of Aplomado Falcons currently known to be established in Texas as a result of our release efforts, 15 are on private safe harbor properties.

Species Restoration:

After the agreements are signed, sites for release towers are identified and, when necessary, temporary structures known as "hack towers" are constructed. Young captive-bred Aplomado Falcons are released from these towers in groups of five to seven. The Aplomado Falcons are raised in captivity at The Peregrine Fund's World Center for Birds of Prey. At approximately 30 to 40 days of age, they are transported to the various release sites.

From 25 nestlings collected in Mexico, 1,103 young have been produced in captivity enabling the release of 1,003 Aplomado Falcons in Texas. At least 601 (67%) released falcons have successfully reached independence. Biologists are monitoring 39 pairs of Aplomado Falcons established in Texas where as recently as 1980 there were none. These established pairs are now breeding and have fledged at least 179.

Population Monitoring:

Progress in the restoration of this species is determined by monitoring the establishment of nesting pairs and their subsequent success. The majority of this monitoring effort is conducted during and after the release season. Annually, these results are used in development of a five-year plan that is present to The Peregrine Fund's Program Committee for review. Once the Program Committee has approved the plan, it is presented to The Peregrine Fund's Board of Directors for approval.

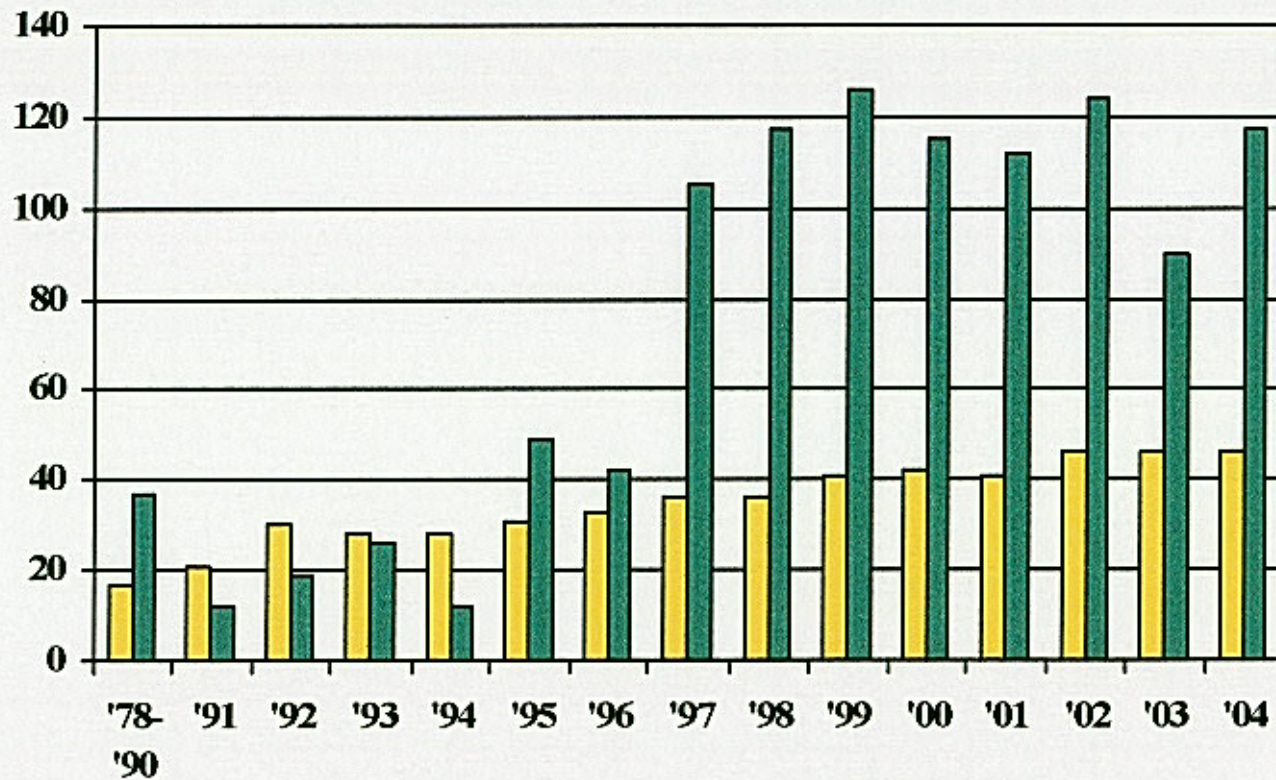
Peregrine Fund biologists are monitoring 39 pairs of Aplomado Falcons in south Texas and adjacent Taumalipas, Mexico. Thirty-two pairs (82%) attempted to breed. Productivity of wild pairs increased 46% from 37 young last year to 54 this year due largely to the use of artificial nesting structures with barred sides. This season we have completed the third year of a concerted effort to individually identify members of all known pairs through band reading. These data have been used to develop a population model to estimate the sustainability of this population resulting from reintroduction. Preliminary results indicate an adult survival rate of 85%, but more detailed results from collected data will be forthcoming. Blood samples were taken from all of the banded young and will be submitted for genetic analysis.

The Peregrine Fund continues to monitor a small population of 18 pairs of Aplomado Falcons in the Mexican state of Chihuahua. This population appears to be declining, most likely as a result of continuing drought.

APLOMADO FALCON REINTRODUCTION SYNOPSIS

YEAR	INDIVIDUALS COLLECTED	CAPTIVE PAIRS	YOUNG PRODUCED	YOUNG RETAINED	YOUNG RELEASED	SURVIVAL (%)	PAIRS OBSERVED	PRODUCTION FROM PAIRS
1978-1990	25	17	37	13	24	16 (66.6%)	0	0
1991	0	21	12	12	0	-	0	0
1992	0	30	19	19	0	-	0	0
1993	0	28	26	0	26	20 (76.9%)	0	0
1994	0	28	12	0	12	7 (58.3%)	0	0
1995	0	31	49	10	39	29 (74.3%)	1	1
1996	0	33	42	13	29	24 (82.7%)	4	3
1997	0	36	105	7	108	68 (69.9%)	4	1
1998	0	36	117	4	113	77 (68.1%)	>4	>2
1999	0	41	126	11	115	86 (74.7%)	>19	>12
2000	0	42	115	5	112	73(65.1%)	>30	>8
2001	0	41	112	5	124	64 (51.6%)	>33	>29
2002	0	46	124	10	110	75 (68.2%)	>37	>32
2003	0	46	90	10	80	62 (77%)	>39	>37
2004	0	46	117	5	112	83 (74%)	>39	>54
Total	25	46	1,103	124	1,004	684 (68.1%)	>39	>179

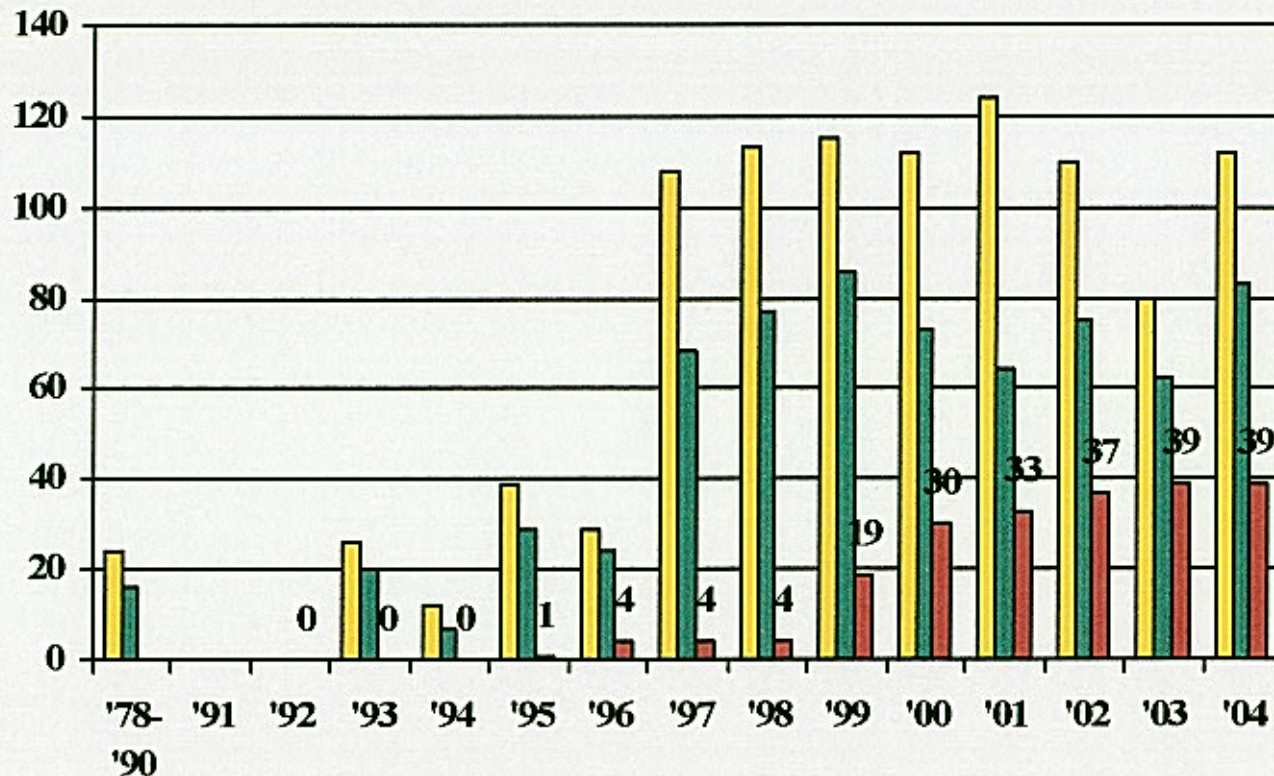
Captive Propagation



■ Captive Pairs

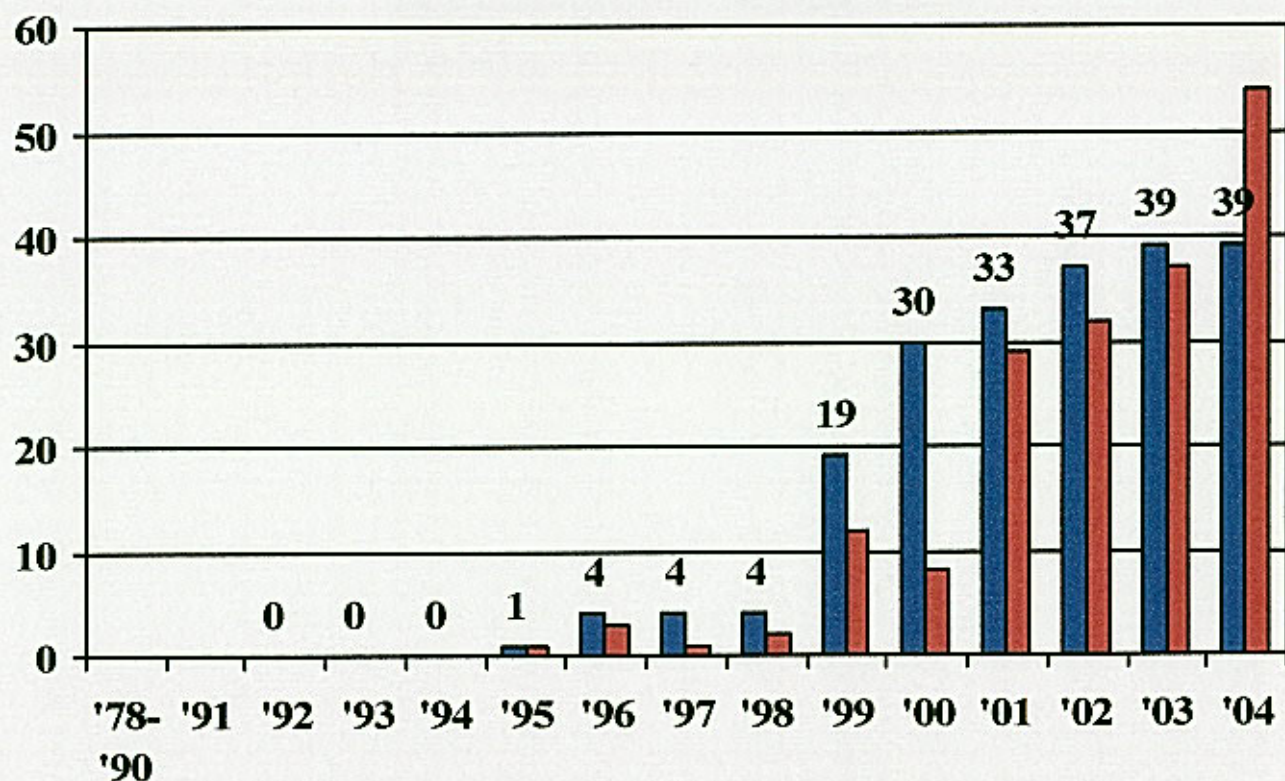
■ Young Produced

Results of Release Effort



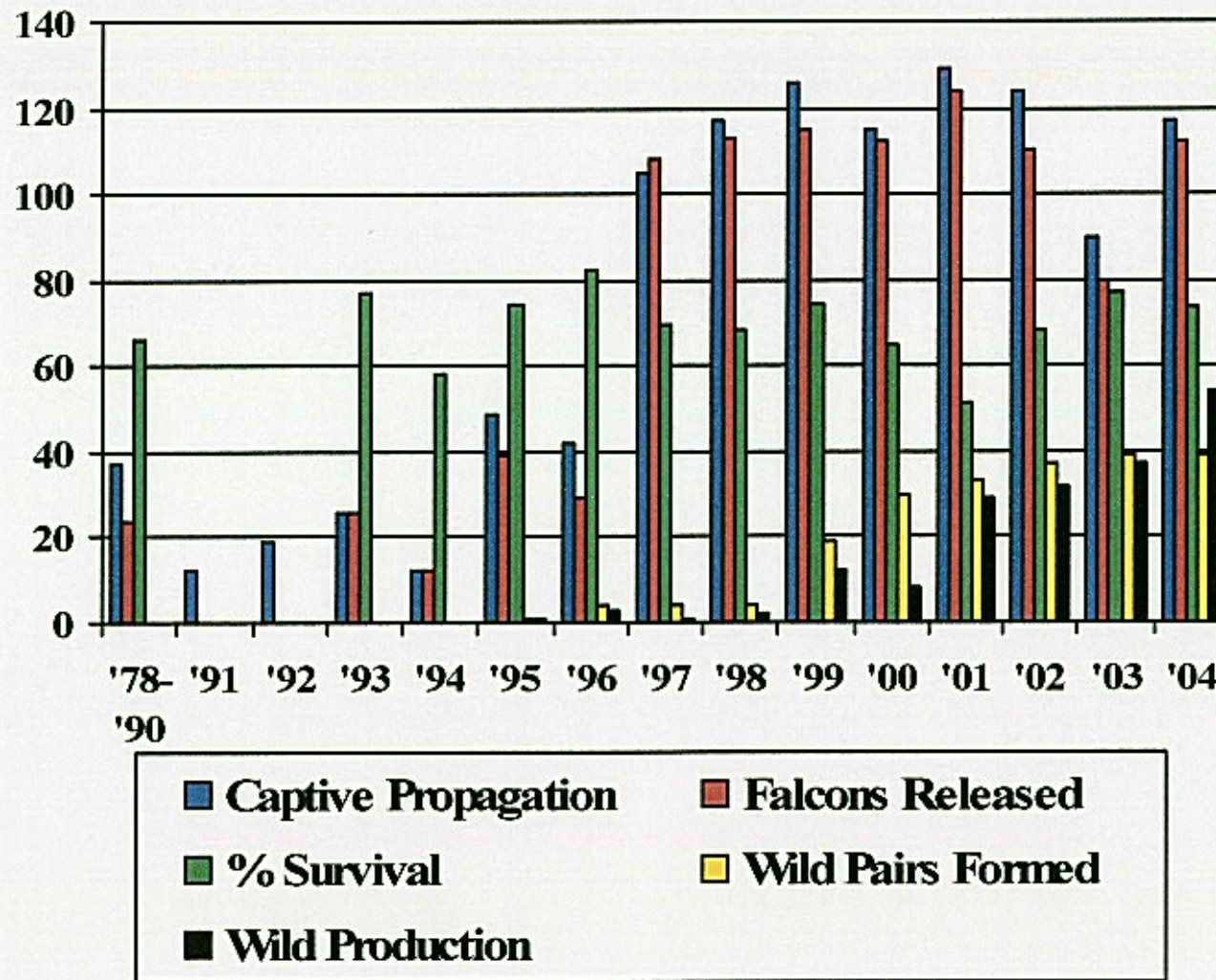
Falcons Released
Survival to Independence
Wild Pairs Observed

Wild Population Resulting From Release Effort

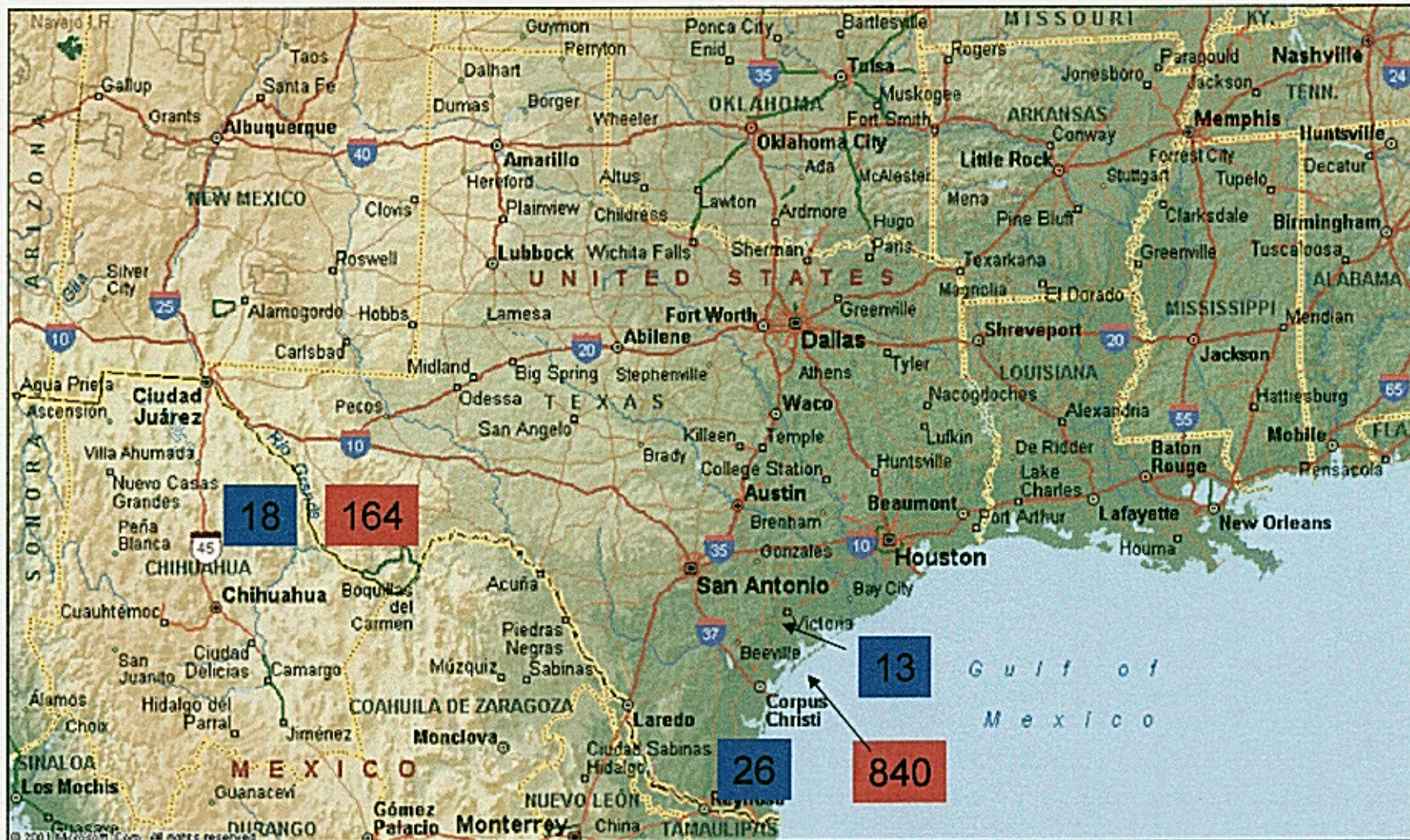


■ Wild Pairs Observed ■ Wild Production

Aplomado Falcon Restoration



Geographic Focus of Restoration Effort



Number of Falcons Released

Number of Pairs Established