

Endangered bird released by UCSC expects chicks

Peregrine falcon named Sadie makes nest atop Oracle '400' building

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When a Santa Cruz-based bird research group released a peregrine falcon named Sadie into the wild in 1998, the top of a 14-story skyscraper might not have been what they had in mind as far as "wild."

Nonetheless, software giant Oracle's "400" building in Redwood Shores is now home to a loving couple of peregrine falcons named Sadie and Jimbo.

Sadie is expected to give birth any day now.

That's good news to the people at the Santa Cruz Predatory Bird Research Group, which recovered Sadie from the Bay Bridge. The group was formed at UC Santa Cruz in 1975 and is now located at the Long Marine Lab.

Brian Walton, the group's coordinator, said Sadie was released at Muir Beach in 1998 after her recovery from the bridge.

Maybe she just likes the city. She was later discovered swirling around Oracle's building, where she now makes her home in a human-made, gravel-filled nest supplied

by the research group.

That shouldn't be surprising. Those kind of tall structures are the kind of places the birds would seek in undeveloped areas, Walton said.

"All they need is a large structure for nesting and birds flying in the air," Walton said.

That kind of adaptability to urban structures is good news for the peregrine falcon, which since 1972, when it was listed as an endangered species, has been making a comeback from near extinction.

Shirley Tesi, building site manager at

Oracle, said Sadie was noticed by employees there. The company contacted the Predatory Bird Research Group, which furnished the nest.

"We used to have a pigeon problem here, but we no longer have one," Tesi said.

The falcon's arrival at Oracle was the beginning of an ongoing relationship between the company and the bird group. A \$25,000 donation from Oracle allows the group to go to area schools to teach about predatory birds.

While the peregrine falcon population

appears to be recovering, the birds remain listed as an endangered species in California; they are listed as a threatened species in the rest of the country.

Walton said there are about 200 pairs in the state, with another 400 or so that aren't paired with a mate.

The falcons at Oracle can be viewed by logging on to www2.ucsc.edu/~scpbgr/field.htm.

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