

The Christ Church Peregrines 2020



Egg 1 and Egg 2 as they first appear. As the egg dries it loses its lustre.



Egg 3 has just appeared



And now Egg 4



Egg 1 April 1 at 5.14 GMT

Egg 2 April 3 at 13.07

Egg 3 April 5 at 23.10

Egg 4 April 8 at 8.13

In 2018 and 2019 the first egg also appeared on April 1st - she must have known 2020 was a leap year!

The male inspects three of the eggs



The male has been taking his turn at incubating the eggs. The female has decided it is her turn now so off he flies



Hatch times. Only approximate because it takes several hours to emerge completely from the egg. Estimates of complete extraction are:-

1. May 9 at 8.27 GMT
2. May 9 at 11.42
3. May 10 at 9.07
4. May 12 at 10.36



The female feeds the 4 young.

When the male takes the prey directly to the young, the female usually comes down from the pinnacles and after a verbal disagreement the male flies away at speed.

Here the male has been allowed to feed the young.



It soon became obvious that there are 3 females and 1 male (the smaller chick second from the left)



Here the female demands that the male leaves the prey he has brought in and goes away and he does – quickly!



The chicks anticipate that food is coming

This is how the four young slept during the day and at night.





The chicks begin to exercise their wings

The 4 chicks always got on well with little squabbling when food was delivered. The 3 females took turns and the male stood aside. Then he would go in front of the females, who stood back and the adults fed him until he had enough.

It is amusing to see the youngsters sleeping but keeping an eye on whether prey is being brought in.

Here they spot the arrival of food and clearly are ready for it.





While Anna Field was putting colour rings on the young, Ed Drewitt, the expert on prey looked at the remains (and also in October). In total Ed identified the following;-

Common or Arctic Tern (the size and pattern of the tern feather suggests Arctic Tern) 1
 Ringed Plover 1
 Greenfinch 2
 Blackbird 3
 Redwing 1
 Starling, 5 juvenile & 1 adult
 Pipit, probably Meadow 1
 Chaffinch 2
 Song Thrush 2
 Swift 2
 Great Spotted Woodpecker 2
 Black-headed Gull (juvenile)
 Wood Pigeon 1
 Teal 1

Also 60 feral pigeons



The females liked to have a "love-in", nibbling each other's bills.



The female brings in prey to feed the young



Here is the one male youngster.

The male is always much smaller than the female.

When they were ringed after 3½ weeks, the average weight of the three females was 930gms while the male was 640gms.

When the young were about 6 weeks old they spent quite a bit of time exercising their wings and looking down to the road below. A strong wind seemed to promote this and it was always a worrying time as a crash landing was a possibility at their first attempt to fly. At ground level there is much less wind and they may not be able to take off again. On several occasions over the years, I have had to catch one and carry it back up again and hope it will wait a few days before trying again.

On June 22, there was bad news that a youngster was found in the road and had been taken to Vale Wildlife. The vet said it would take a week or two for a small wing bone to mend and for some damage to her skin to recover. She spent time in a small aviary to strengthen her wings but was apparently reluctant to fly and when she was encouraged to try she did not fly well.

I collected her in the evening after 15 days and was rather surprised when I introduced her back to the top of the tower that she immediately flew up over the parapet and was last seen dropping down. Oh dear! I could not find her below so went home and was very pleased to see her on the CCTV looking fine and crying for food. She must have doubled back and flown upwards. So all was well!

I was a bit worried whether she would be accepted back by her siblings. The two other young females clearly recognised she had been missing and they each had a "love-in" with much nibbling of each other's bills! The returned bird is the one with slightly less developed plumage (she was the last one to hatch).

All the young were seen flying well and present on the church until at least the middle of July.

Dave Pearce 23 July 2020

