

## Endangered Falcon Hanging Out At Ocean Isle Condo

**BY DOUG RUTTER**  
People who live or work at the west end of Ocean Isle Beach have been shocked, startled and awed by a newcomer to the area.  
A peregrine falcon has taken up seasonal residency at Ocean Point, the high-rise condominium at the secluded west end of the

island.  
The rare bird isn't renting a room, but frequents balcony ledges on the upper stories of the 15-floor building.  
"It's really quite a story," said Mayor Betty Williamson, who lives at the building. "This falcon just started showing up, and apparently he likes the surroundings."

Fred Taylor of Ash, an enforcement officer with the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission, said the peregrine falcon is the only one he knows of on the North Carolina coast.

"It's real rare to have one down here like that," Taylor said. "We're seeing something that very few people see in the wild."

Larry Cartland, groundskeeper at the condominium building, said he first spotted the bird last winter.

It left in the spring when beach visitors starting arriving, but returned a few weeks ago and has been making itself comfortable ever since.

Cartland said the bird usually hangs out on the ninth floor or higher and typically stays on the north side of the building, away from the ocean.

A bird of prey, the falcon eats mostly doves and sandpipers, which it catches in a marshy area between the building and the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway.

Cartland said he frequently finds the remains of the falcon's prey on the upper-story ledges. "Whatever he eats, I have to clean up the feathers and the heads and feet," he said.

Falcons, which are distinguished by their notched beaks, fly with long, pointed powerful wings at speeds of up to 120 mph to capture their prey. They mainly go after other birds.

Taylor said falcons fly faster than any other land bird and kill their prey by flying into them at a high rate of speed. "There aren't any other birds that can swoop in on something as fast as a falcon," he said.

Most falcons don't build their own nests. They prefer to lay their eggs on the ground or on cliff ledges, or used nests abandoned by other birds.

Cartland said the Ocean Point falcon has a wingspan of more than three feet and a pale yellow breast with dark stripes on its feathers. The bird doesn't seem to be afraid of people.

If you don't make a lot of quick movement, he said you can walk to within five or six feet of the bird before it flies away.

"It amazes me," Cartland said. "He acts like he's right at home here on the ledge. It's like he owns the place or something."

Ed and Jane LaFortune of Oregon found the bird in their bedroom one night during a



STAFF PHOTOS BY DOUG RUTTER

**THE FALCON** usually stays on the outside of smoked glass windows on the upper stories of Ocean Point at Ocean Isle Beach. Notice the remains of his last meal.

*"Whatever he eats, I have to clean up the feathers and the heads and feet."*

—Larry Cartland

recent visit to the beach. It had apparently entered through an open door leading to a balcony on the 12th floor.

Peregrine falcons are classified as an endangered species, but they're making a comeback, according to Ron Morris, curator of birds with the N.C. Zoo in Asheboro.

"They are on the upswing," Morris said. "They are rebounding from a much lower point several years back."

A captive breeding program at Cornell University in New York has helped rebuild the peregrine population. Morris said falcons raised in captivity have been released at various spots along the East Coast.

However, Taylor is convinced the Ocean Point bird is wild. Even though it has adapt-

ed to being around people, Taylor said the falcon would have been banded if it was raised in captivity.

"Peregrines do migrate along the coast this time of year, so it's not extremely unusual to see one out there," Morris said.

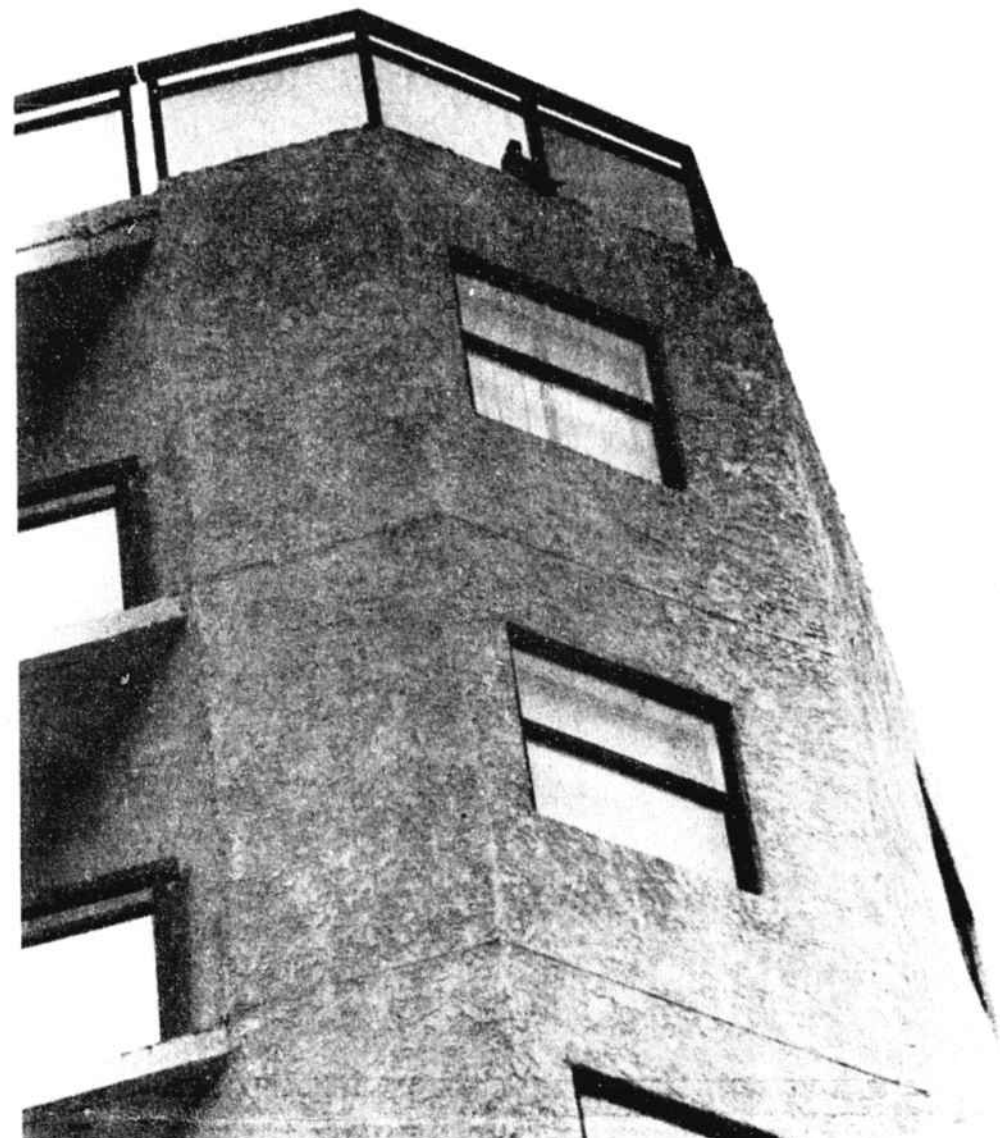
As for the bird's other behavior, Morris said it wouldn't be unusual for a peregrine falcon to hang out on the ledges of a high-rise building.

"That's kind of appropriate for them really," he said. "They are cliff nesters. They take advantage of the air currents along cliffs for soaring."

Taylor said the high-rise building is ideal for the falcon. "That's his cliff," he said. "He gives those shore birds heck when they fly around his corner there."

Cartland said the ledges and outdoor decks give the falcon a great view and make it a prime location to hunt other birds. "He's got it made sitting real high up," he said.

Morris said the state zoo doesn't have a peregrine falcon on exhibit and probably wouldn't be interested in having one. Falcons aren't usually found in zoos, he said, because they are very active and high strung.



**THE HIGH-RISE BUILDING** is an ideal spot for the falcon, which swoops in on shore birds at speeds of up to 120 mph. Balcony ledges offer the bird a great view of the surroundings.

### Market Express is now Express Stop



**2 For 1 Special**  
Buy any Frozen Yogurt Product & Get One Free With Coupon!

Good at all three **ME** Locations  
Cannot be used in conjunction with any other special.  
One coupon per item purchased

### Express Stop

24 Hours A Day—7 Days  
Shallotte-Jct. Hwy. 17 & Holden Bch Rd.  
North Myrtle Beach—S.C. Hwy. 9  
Yaupon Beach—100 Yaupon Dr.



### SAVES SAVES SAVES SAVES SAVES SAVES SAVES

Recliners • Kirby Recliners • Hooker • Bassett

**BY STOCKHOLDERS DEMAND!!**  
We Must Liquidate Over \$100,000 In Inventory!!  
**Immediately!!!**

\* Save Like Never Before! \*

✓ Check Us Out!

**WAREHOUSE FURNITURE Distributors**

Hwy. 90 Nixons Crossroads, North Myrtle Beach  
(803) 249-8874

WE CAN FURNISH OR REFURNISH ANY CONDO, HOME, HOTEL OR MOTEL  
Direct Factory Outlet for Highpoint Bedding  
Ortho Coil Series Mattresses

FINANCING AVAILABLE  
90 DAYS  
SAME AS CASH

Wicker • Rattan • Highpoint Mattress • Bassett

SAVES SAVES SAVES SAVES SAVES SAVES SAVES

SAVES SAVES SAVES SAVES SAVES SAVES SAVES  
Berklene Recliners • Webb • Vaughn-Bassett

SAVES SAVES SAVES SAVES SAVES SAVES SAVES  
Bedroom • Key City Living Room • Berklene

### EDMUND A. "BUDDY" LILES

ATTORNEY AT LAW  
SEASIDE PLAZA  
SEASIDE, NC 28459

No Charge For Initial Consultation

Real Estate and Estate Planning, Civil and Criminal Trials and Family Law and Bankruptcy

Planning To Re-finance?

Re-finance closing fee \$275

CALL 579-1850

### DR. CHRIS MOSHOURES OPTOMETRIST

EYE EXAMINATIONS AND DISEASES OF THE EYE

ONE HOUR EYEGLASSES AND CONTACTS IN MOST CASES

KAREN MOSHOURES, F.N.A.O., LICENSED OPTICIAN

*Eyeglasses*

On Site Laboratory Service • Lenses Duplicated  
Frames Repaired & Replaced • OSHA Approved

*Contact Lenses*

Soft & Hard • Gas Permeable • Astigmatism  
Extended Wear • Bifocal • Tinted Soft

AVANT-GARDE BerDel LUXOTTICA

9 AM TIL 5 PM MONDAY THRU FRIDAY  
FOR APPOINTMENT CALL

579-4020

754-2020

Hwy. 179 Salt Marsh Sq.  
Calabash, NC

Pine St.  
Shallotte, NC



**AFTER HOURS EMERGENCY**  
579-2101



## Express CARE

PROMPT MEDICAL CARE

—HOURS—  
Monday -Saturday 9 am-7 pm  
Sunday 12-4 pm

579-0800

South Brunswick Islands Medical Park  
Hwy. 17, 4 miles south of Shallotte

©1991 THE BRUNSWICK BEACON



Marcus R. Williams, MD  
Michael W. Wilkerson, MD  
Gary D. Ross, MD  
Board Certified Internal Medicine

Samuel W. Kirtley, MD  
Board Certified Family Practice  
emphasis in Pediatrics

579-0707

By Appointment Only

South Brunswick Islands Medical Park  
Hwy. 17, 4 miles south of Shallotte

Medicare Participating • BC/BS Costwise

©1991 THE BRUNSWICK BEACON