# Peregrine falcons at St Albans Cathedral lay new eggs after vandalism setback



# Resilience in Nature: The Return of St Albans Cathedral's Peregrine Falcons

A pair of peregrine falcons, named Alban and Boudica, have defied expectations by laying two new eggs at St Albans Cathedral, mere weeks after their previous clutch was tragically destroyed during a live-streamed incident. The shocking footage, which circulated widely on social media, showed an individual deliberately trampling on the nest's three precious eggs, sparking outrage among bird lovers and wildlife enthusiasts alike.

Chloe Edwards, director of nature recovery at Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust, expressed the collective marvel at this unexpected turn of events. “It shows just how resilient nature can be. Given the right habitat and conditions, species will continue to thrive,” she remarked, emphasising the significant emotional responses this incident evoked within the community. Following the destruction of the eggs on April 7, many had believed that Alban and Boudica would not breed again this season. Yet, their recent eggs, laid on successive days, demonstrate nature’s ability to recover from adversity.

Since their introduction in 2022, the falcons have used a specially designed nesting tray atop the roof of the cathedral, aimed at mimicking their natural cliff-top environment. This initiative is part of the Wilder St Albans project, a collaborative effort between Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust and St Albans City and District Council. The project has significantly contributed to the local recovery of peregrine falcons, who faced drastic declines in the late 20th century due to habitat loss and human interference.

The cathedral has been a significant nesting site, housing one of just five breeding pairs in Hertfordshire. In prior years, live-streaming the nesting process has drawn considerable attention, with 519,882 views recorded in the initial year. On May 9, during a particularly busy viewing moment, the stream peaked with 12,598 simultaneous viewers captivated by the first glimpses of newly hatched chicks.

However, the recent event of vandalism has cast a shadow over these positive developments. Eyewitness accounts describe the harrowing moment the eggs were crushed, with one observer, Beverley, recalling a man casually walking across the camera's view and stepping on the nest, oblivious to the potential consequences. The emotional fallout from this incident was significant, leading many to express their devastation online. The Very Reverend Jo Kelly Moore, dean of the cathedral, lamented the damage inflicted upon these vulnerable eggs, stating, “We are so desperately sad at the harm done to eggs in our peregrine falcon nest here.”

In response to the incident, Hertfordshire Police launched an investigation, while the cathedral temporarily suspended the live stream. Nevertheless, as Alban and Boudica's new eggs signal renewed hope, the live feed has been reinstated with added security measures in place to safeguard the nesting site. This decision has elicited an outpouring of support online, with many commentators expressing their joy at the falcons’ return and their hopes that the birds will now be allowed to build their family in peace.

Peregrine falcons are renowned as the fastest diving birds in the world, capable of reaching speeds exceeding 200 mph. They typically mate for life, returning annually to their chosen nesting site, laying between three to four eggs each breeding season. Following roughly one month of incubation, the chicks hatch, furthering the species' recovery when they thrive in safe environments.

Under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, vandalising or destroying the eggs of wild birds carries a hefty penalty, reflecting the growing legal recognition of wildlife protection. As the storm surrounding this incident begins to calm, the tale of Alban and Boudica serves as a powerful reminder of both the fragility and resilience of nature, igniting hope for their continued success at St Albans Cathedral.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14691949/Peregrine-falcons-St-Albans-Cathedral-eggs-trampled-thug-caught-camera-lay-more.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[7]](https://www.mynewsmag.co.uk/sad-incident-st-albans-peregrine-falcon-eggs-damaged-in-nesting-tray/)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14691949/Peregrine-falcons-St-Albans-Cathedral-eggs-trampled-thug-caught-camera-lay-more.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://www.hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/news/peregrine-falcons-st-albans-cathedral)
* Paragraph 3 – [[2]](https://www.hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/news/peregrine-falcons-st-albans-cathedral), [[4]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c90ejw0xwxzo)
* Paragraph 4 – [[4]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c90ejw0xwxzo), [[5]](https://www.hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/news/peregrine-falcon-chick-hatches-st-albans-cathedral)
* Paragraph 5 – [[3]](https://www.hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/news/peregrine-falcon-chicks-hatch-st-albans-cathedral), [[6]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/czkvj12ddjpo)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14691949/Peregrine-falcons-St-Albans-Cathedral-eggs-trampled-thug-caught-camera-lay-more.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[5]](https://www.hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/news/peregrine-falcon-chick-hatches-st-albans-cathedral)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14691949/Peregrine-falcons-St-Albans-Cathedral-eggs-trampled-thug-caught-camera-lay-more.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/news/peregrine-falcons-st-albans-cathedral> - A pair of peregrine falcons have been nesting at St Albans Cathedral since 2022, utilizing a specially installed nesting tray that replicates their natural cliff-top habitat. This initiative is part of the Wilder St Albans project, a collaboration between Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust and St Albans City and District Council. The project aims to support the recovery of peregrine falcons, a species that faced significant declines in the 20th century but are now protected by law. The nesting tray provides a safe environment for the falcons to lay eggs and raise their chicks.
3. <https://www.hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/news/peregrine-falcon-chicks-hatch-st-albans-cathedral> - In May 2023, three peregrine falcon chicks hatched at St Albans Cathedral, marking the second consecutive year of successful breeding for the pair named Alban and Boudica. The hatching was observed by thousands via the cathedral's live webcam, which had attracted over 130,807 page views. The chicks were tended to by their parents in a specially installed nesting tray high on the cathedral's roof. This event highlights the success of the Wilder St Albans project, which aims to support the recovery of peregrine falcons in the region.
4. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c90ejw0xwxzo> - In March 2024, a pair of peregrine falcons returned to St Albans Cathedral for the third consecutive year, continuing their nesting tradition. The cathedral's live webcam, which had attracted about 378,000 viewers in 2023, was reactivated to allow the public to observe the falcons' activities. The return of the falcons underscores the cathedral's role as an established breeding ground for this species, one of only five breeding pairs in Hertfordshire. The nesting tray, installed to simulate the falcons' natural cliff-top nesting sites, has been instrumental in their successful breeding.
5. <https://www.hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/news/peregrine-falcon-chick-hatches-st-albans-cathedral> - In May 2024, a peregrine falcon chick successfully hatched at St Albans Cathedral, marking the first of the species to be born in the city. The chick was observed via the cathedral's live webcam, which had attracted significant public interest. The nesting tray, installed in 2022, provides a safe environment for the falcons to lay eggs and raise their chicks. This event highlights the success of the Wilder St Albans project, a collaboration between Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust and St Albans City and District Council, aimed at supporting the recovery of peregrine falcons in the region.
6. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/czkvj12ddjpo> - In May 2024, three peregrine falcon chicks hatched at St Albans Cathedral, marking the third consecutive year of successful breeding for the pair named Alban and Boudica. The hatching was observed by thousands via the cathedral's live webcam, which had attracted about 378,000 viewers in 2023. The chicks were tended to by their parents in a specially installed nesting tray high on the cathedral's roof. This event underscores the success of the Wilder St Albans project, which aims to support the recovery of peregrine falcons in the region.
7. <https://www.mynewsmag.co.uk/sad-incident-st-albans-peregrine-falcon-eggs-damaged-in-nesting-tray/> - In April 2025, an incident occurred at St Albans Cathedral's peregrine falcon nest, resulting in damage to all three eggs laid by the pair named Boudica and Alban. The cathedral, in collaboration with Hertfordshire Constabulary, investigated the incident, and a person was assisting with their inquiries. The live webcam was temporarily taken offline following the event. This incident highlights the challenges faced by urban nesting birds and the importance of monitoring and protecting these sites to ensure the safety and success of breeding efforts.