Falcons Return Home

Find the central idea and build an evidence-based summary.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RST.6-8.2 "Determine the central ideas or conclusions of a text; provide an accurate summary of the text distinct from prior knowledge or opinions."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline details that explain the falcons' decline, circle details that explain their recovery, and number 1, 2, and 3 the facts you would use in a short summary.

The Peregrine Falcon's Recovery

1 By the 1960s, peregrine falcons had disappeared from much of the eastern United States. The pesticide DDT built up in the birds' bodies after they ate contaminated prey. It caused females to lay eggs with shells so thin that many broke during incubation. In 1970, the peregrine was listed as endangered in the United States. Scientists, wildlife agencies, and volunteers began tracking nests and collecting birds for captive breeding programs. They hoped to rebuild populations where the species had vanished.

2 Captive breeding centers paired adult falcons and raised chicks until they were strong enough to live outdoors. Starting in the 1970s, workers released young peregrines from towers, cliffs, and city buildings. These sites resembled the high places where the birds naturally nest. At the same time, the United States banned most uses of DDT in 1972. As DDT levels fell and released birds survived, peregrines began nesting successfully in areas that had been empty for decades.

3 Today, peregrines nest on skyscrapers, bridges, cliffs, and other tall structures across many parts of the country. Their return led the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to remove the species from the federal endangered list in 1999. However, recovery does not mean every danger is gone. Falcons can still be harmed by habitat changes, collisions with buildings, and certain chemicals. Monitoring nests helps researchers notice problems and protect places that support breeding pairs in urban and natural areas.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What is the central idea of the passage?

2. What two actions described in the passage helped peregrines recover? Give one action involving DDT and one action involving the birds.

3. How should the fact that peregrines still face dangers affect an accurate summary of the passage?

4. A student adds, "Peregrines are the most impressive birds in cities," to a summary. Why does this sentence not belong in an accurate summary?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 50-to-65-word summary of the passage. State the central idea and include at least three important details, but do not add an opinion or outside information.

ANSWER KEY

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GRADE 7 · RST.6-8.2

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline details that explain the falcons' decline, circle details that explain their recovery, and number 1, 2, and 3 the facts you would use in a short summary. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What is the central idea of the passage?	**Peregrine falcons recovered because DDT use was reduced and people supported breeding and release efforts, but the birds still need monitoring and protection.**
2	What two actions described in the passage helped peregrines recover? Give one action involving DDT and one action involving the birds.	**The United States banned most uses of DDT in 1972, and breeding centers raised chicks while workers released young falcons.**
3	How should the fact that peregrines still face dangers affect an accurate summary of the passage?	**The summary should explain both the falcons' recovery and the continuing need to monitor and protect them.**
4	A student adds, “Peregrines are the most impressive birds in cities,” to a summary. Why does this sentence not belong in an accurate summary?	**It is an opinion that is not supported by information in the passage.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Peregrine falcons disappeared from much of the eastern United States because DDT caused thin eggshells. After DDT was mostly banned, breeding centers raised chicks and workers released young birds. Nesting increased, and the species left the federal endangered list in 1999. Scientists still monitor falcons because buildings, habitat changes, and chemicals can cause problems.

Accept summaries that accurately explain the decline, recovery actions, and remaining threats. Students may use different supporting details if they are drawn from the passage and do not include opinions or outside information.