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Date: 20th August 2013

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Attention Coolum Climbers - Falcon Nesting Season - update

temporary closure of one route

What are we requesting?

ACAQ is asking climbers to not access the **Camp 3 ledge** and **Gothic Architecture** for the period **19th August** through to **11th November**. **All other routes are open.**

What is the reason for the closure?

Under the Nature Conservation Act, we have an obligation, as park visitors, to ensure our activities do not disturb the resident pair of Peregrine falcons. Falcons are not easily disturbed by human activity except during the nesting season, when they will fiercely defend their nest site. If persistently disturbed during nesting, it is possible their eggs will not hatch, and they will fail to raise young that year. Having said that, of all the crags we share with falcons, Mt Coolum is the one case where there is no record of climbers being swooped during the nesting season, and furthermore these birds have successfully raised young every year despite the greatly increased number of visiting climbers. This is likely to be due to these birds being habituated to human presence, and the fact they feel secure within the steep and convoluted structure of the cave. However, with the further development of climbing at the cave, we must allow for the possibility that this state of affairs might not continue, and it would be prudent to put into place management plans based on their observed behaviour.

Thanks for your care to date

We would like to thank the community for supporting our request to close the high climbs at the southern end of the cave at the end of July so that we could be sure the birds were not disturbed while choosing their nest site.

This year the birds have chosen to nest on the Camp 3 ledge as they did last year. We feel this is sufficient evidence to indicate that Camp 3 is indeed their preferred nest

site, and next year it shouldn't be necessary to repeat the temporary July 22th closure of the climbs at the southern end.

What happens next?

The impact of the falcon nesting season on climbing activity will be negligible, with access to Camp 3 via Gothic Architecture being the only restriction necessary for the birds to remain undisturbed.

Last year we observed the chicks were fledged considerably later than the 63-65day incubation and rearing period normally quoted for this species. Based on this timing we are requesting climbers to stay clear of Camp 3 until the 11th of November.



Common falcon on its nest at Camp 3 on 9/9/12

Photo: Ian Elliott



One of the two chicks raised at Camp 3 on 30/10/12

Photo: Ian Elliott