

For Immediate Release:

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City's New and Improved FalconCam Goes Live Just in Time for Valentine's Day

Love is in the Air for Clara's Fourth Nesting Season

SAN JOSE, CALIF. – Falcon fans worldwide once again have the unique opportunity to view live coverage of the renowned peregrine falcons Clara and Esteban Colbert in their newer, bigger, and more protected nestbox on an 18th-floor ledge of City Hall.

The FalconCam has captured views of falcon life since 2007, giving viewers an inside glimpse into the lives of Clara and Esteban Colbert. The FalconCam now boasts two new cameras that provide a panorama view of the area and alternating views into the nest and onto the ledges where the falcons typically roost. The improved FalconCam, which is maintained by the City of San José in partnership with the Santa Cruz Predatory Bird Research Group at the University of California – Santa Cruz, can be accessed online at:

- The City of San José website at www.sanjoseca.gov
- The Santa Cruz Predatory Bird Research Group website at www.scpbrg.org

To support the purchase of the new FalconCam cameras, the San José Peregrine Falcon Alliance raised \$25,000 from individual donors and corporations, including:

Adobe Systems Incorporated	Data Display Audio Visual Co. L.P.
DiscoverVideo	Extron Electronics
Sony Electronics, Inc.	The San Jose Peregrine Falcon Alliance
The University of California at Santa Cruz	

Those who are interested in supporting the San José City Hall falcons and the work of the Santa Cruz Predatory Bird Research Group can do so by making a tax-deductible donation:

- Online through UC-Santa Cruz's website:
<https://npo.networkforgood.org/Donate/Donate.aspx?npoSubscriptionId=7267>
- By check made out to UCSC Foundation/SCPBRG. Checks may be mailed to
Santa Cruz Predatory Bird Research Group
University of California Long Marine Lab
Santa Cruz, CA 95064

Those interested in sponsoring the FalconCam or educational programs related to the City Hall falcons, may contact Michelle McGurk at michelle.mcgurk@sanjoseca.gov or (408) 535-4800.

Background on the San José City Hall Falcons

San José's City Hall employees first noticed a pair of falcons, whom birdwatchers named José and Clara, in the Spring of 2006. The Santa Cruz Predatory Bird Research Group placed a nest box on the south end of the City Hall tower later that year.

First Nesting Season – 2007

In early spring 2007, José and Clara were again regularly observed together in the area and a web camera was positioned near the nest box. By mid-February the birds were observed engaging in typical courtship behavior, and by late March, José and Clara had laid three eggs in the nest box.

All three eggs hatched successfully, an extremely rare occurrence, on April 28, and the world watched the progress of the three young peregrine falcons. The chance of survival for the fledglings was constantly in peril, while they learned to survive in a big city environment. As the three fledged in June 2007, middle school students entered a contest to name them. Hiko (male), Spirit (female), and Esperanza (female) were the winning names. The youngsters left San José over the summer to find territories of their own. They were banded with identification bands and East Bay bird watchers discovered Esperanza frequenting the Siebel building in Emeryville. José was last seen in July 2007. As falcons typically mate for life, birdwatchers were concerned about the disappearance of this devoted mate and father.

Second Nesting Season -- 2008

In late January 2008, it became clear to falcon-watchers that Clara had a new mate, who was dubbed Carlos because he frequently perched on the Marriott Hotel on San Carlos Street. On March 13, Clara laid the first egg of the falcon season and three more followed over the next several days. Three of the eggs hatched on Earth Day (April 22).

More than 130 schoolchildren from throughout San José entered the Mayor's naming contest, with falcon fans voting to name them Cielo (female, Spanish for "sky" or "heaven"), Meyye (female, Miwok for "bird"), and Mercury (male). Young Mercury was the first to fly on May 28. The 2008 offspring were adventurous, taking flight at a young age, according to the SCPBRG scientists, and each one had to be rescued by scientists and volunteers and returned to the roof of City Hall at some point during their initial flying lessons.

Sadly, Cielo died after colliding with a Downtown building. "Her death reflected the realities that are faced by wild and endangered animals," said Glenn Stewart of the SCPBRG. "Many young Peregrine Falcons do not survive the first year in the wild as they crash into cliffs and also face many natural predators. It was an important lesson that real life is not the Disney Channel."

Both Mercury and Meyye went on to great success over the summer of 2008 and were spotted frequently throughout Downtown San José. They have since left for territories of their own.

Third Nesting Season – 2009

Clara and Esteban Colbert's chicks, three girls and one boy, fledged successfully and left in fall to find their own territories. The three female falcons were named Ilahay (derived from Persian for "angel"), Kya (a name of African origin meaning "diamond in the sky"), and Tierra (which is Spanish for "earth"). The male was named Veer, a name of Hindi origin meaning "brave."

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