



DONORS John Seabury, Ken Sterner, Pete and Lucy Widener, Brain and Ruth Mutch, Bob Hollister, Mike and Jocelyn Barker, Dennis and Tammi Crawford, Patrick Martin, Harold Williams, Mr. and Mrs. Ron Schaeffer, Jeanne Konkell, Mr. and Mrs. David Frank, Tom and Kathy Maechtle

In 2000 Chad first assisted The Peregrine Fund by operating a trapping station to capture and tag migrating Gyrfalcons with satellite transmitters on a small uninhabited island near Maniitsoq on the central-west coast of Greenland. Chad's experience and expertise with falcons were vital

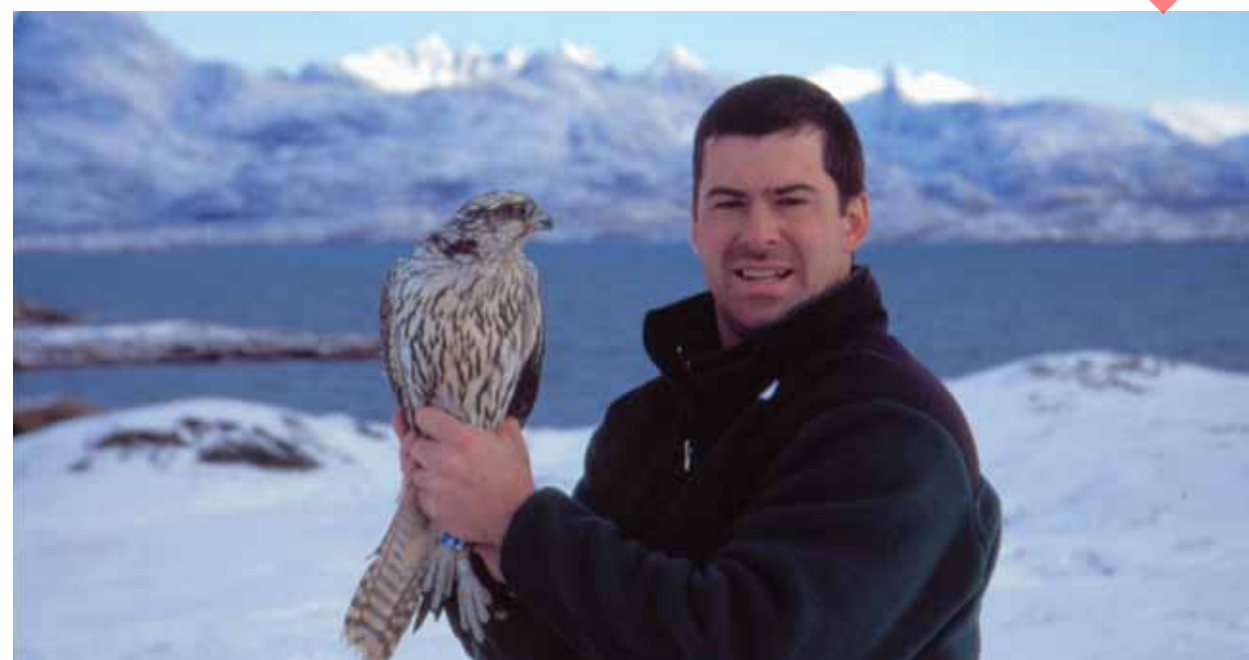


to the success of the project, and as a result of the data collected The Peregrine Fund began a long-term study on the seasonal movements of Gyrfalcons. In 2004 Chad again assisted The Peregrine Fund with Gyrfalcon research, this time collecting genetics samples from both wild nests and wild-taken falconry birds in Alaska. The goal was to get 15-20 independent samples.



Chad managed to climb into and sample chicks at 12 different eyries, along with getting samples from almost every captive Gyr in Alaska, nearly doubling what we had hoped for. Chad's assistance over the years was critical to The Peregrine Fund's research on Gyrfalcons and I credit him for teaching me much of what I know about trapping and handling Gyrs during our time together in Greenland.

—Kurt



Remembering Chad

Chad Hunter Cyrus was born November 21, 1971 and died in a fatal airplane crash on August 18, 2011. Chad was the son of James Michael Cyrus, formerly of Arlee, MT (now living in Panama) and Sunnie (Roxie) Shea, formerly of Ravalli, MT (now living in Portland, OR). Chad was the founder/principal of Big Sky Wildlife Consultants, an avid lifelong falconer, and a licensed commercial pilot with over 3300 hours of flight time. Chad grew up on a ranch in the Valley Creek area near Arlee. As a child, Chad can be remembered riding his beloved pony and playing with his dogs. In his early teens, Chad discovered his lifelong passion for falconry. In 1990, Chad graduated from Arlee High School, where he was a star athlete in football, basketball, and track. After a brief time at the University of Montana in Missoula, Chad moved to Dillon and attended Western Montana College, graduating in December, 1998 with a degree in Secondary Education and a minor in Wildlife Biology. While in both high school and college, Chad pursued his passion for falconry and mastered the art-form of exquisite, hand crafted hoods. He later developed this skill into a successful business called Cyrus Hoods. After college, Chad began his teaching career and moved to Alaska. He spent six years teaching, hunting, and fishing in Kenai and Kotzebue. While living in Alaska, Chad learned to fly and became a highly skilled licensed pilot. In 2003, Chad returned to Montana to teach at the Pine Hills Correctional Facility in Miles City. Soon his love of raptors and wildlife began to take precedence in his life. When he returned to Miles City, Chad founded Big Sky Wildlife Consultants. He ventured to Greenland and northern Alaska to capture and band falcons for the Peregrine Fund. Chad also served as president of the Montana Falconers' Association. He was a recognized authority on birds of prey, grouse, and many species of wildlife. His experience, skill and expertise garnered him many state and federal contracts. In his final moments, Chad was doing what he loved. He was flying and surveying prairie dog towns for Montana FW&P with his close friend and business partner Randy Schwartz. Chad had many dear and valued friends who played a vital role in his life. He enjoyed numerous adventures hunting, fishing, flying, and falconry with his beloved friends and family. Chad was an incredible man who lived an extraordinary life. He had a tremendous sense of adventure and lived his life to the fullest. His energy, knowledge, and zest for life will be missed by everyone he touched in his short forty-four years. Chad is survived by his parents, his loving family, and his beloved English setters, Puppa and Rita.



October 2010 "A great afternoon with best friends ... Chad & Annie and 1st year female peregrine "Sophie". We had many a happy day together." Pete Widener



My Best Friend, Chad

I returned home having just flown the new peregrine I was starting; a beautiful summer evening of August 17. A phone message was being displayed on our machine and I pushed play. It was my best friend Chad calling to give me the latest report on the progress of his new pride and joy; a wild hatched female Peales peregrine given to him by Pete Widener. I had never heard Chad so excited about a new bird and her potential as he kept me informed of this one's progress throughout their brief 29 days together.

The following day, August 18, 2011, I received a call from Pete, and he told me "Chad was killed this morning in a plane crash." I was in shock as were all of Chad's friends as that sad news spread throughout the day. I think every emotion available to the human mind passed through me during the next few moments, and continue to today.

I often think, If only I could turn the clock back to the 17th of August, I'd talk Chad out of going to work that following day. But that's not realistic and Chad is gone. We have lost a great son, friend, falconer, hunter, biologist... Chad's list of accomplishments during his 39 years is nothing short of incredible; he certainly left a permanent mark in this world. It is almost as if Chad may have known he needed to pack a lifetime (5 lifetimes for some) into that brief period of time he spent here with us all. I know of no other person that had the energy, enthusiasm or will to do the things Chad was able to accomplish. If Chad wanted to do something he did it, and he did it well.

I remember pieces of a conversation Chad and I had one winter day while Chad was driving me through the endless hawking country he had discovered near his eastern Montana home. In Chad's truck were his two English Setters and my three, plus two female peregrines and a gyrfalcon. One of those all day hawking affairs we both loved. Chad was talking about his life, we both were, and how things had turned out during the time he and I had met in 1991. Chad was incredibly happy and positive and said there was little he would change. He spoke about the things he'd been able to do, see, the friends he'd made and I realized then that Chad was as happy and content with his life as any human could be. His happiness was contagious for all around him, being around Chad, simply, made me happy.

I think of Chad every day and am strongly reminded of him every moment that I look into the eyes of his English Setter Rita and the big Peales peregrine he was so excited about; I named her Yrus. Ruth and I have given these two the second best home they have known.

Good bye Chad and may we meet again.

I miss my friend.

— B. Mutch

