

Video
MEDIA SPOTLIGHT

Terminal Velocity

Skydivers chase the peregrine falcon's speed

For the complete videos with media resources, visit:
<http://education.nationalgeographic.com/media/terminal-velocity/>

Even in a [sport](#) like speed-skydiving, there are those for whom [terminal velocity](#) is just not fast enough. Join *Wild Chronicles* as one thrill-seeker takes to the skies to learn how to satisfy his need for speed from a bird whose top speed puts humans to shame—the peregrine falcon.

QUESTIONS

- How fast is the fall of a typical skydiver?
A normal skydiver in free-fall hits a speed of about **120 miles per hour (mph)**.
- What materials are used in the lures the falconer, Franklin, makes to train his falcons?
Franklin uses **small cotton bags filled with lead, and topped with a piece of meat**.
- How long does it take the peregrine falcon, Frightful, to catch the lure?
It takes Frightful only **43 seconds** to capture the lure.
- What was Frightful's top speed?
Frightful was clocked at diving **242 mph**.
- Speed-skydivers adapt their clothing to emulate the peregrine falcon in free-fall. What clothes are designed to mimic the bird's feathers?
The skydiver's pants expand near the ankle, allowing him much greater control in free-fall.
- What was the top speed of Mark, the skydiver?
Mark has hit speeds of just **over 300 mph**.

VOCABULARY

| Term | Part of Speech | Definition |
|--------------------------|----------------|--|
| extreme sport | <i>noun</i> | non-traditional athletics that are often considered dangerous. |
| skydive | <i>verb</i> | to jump from an airplane in flight and freefall until releasing a parachute. |
| sport | <i>noun</i> | athletic activity. |
| terminal velocity | <i>noun</i> | maximum constant speed at which a falling body moves, achieved when the force of resistance to the medium (drag) is equal to the force of gravity. |
| velocity | <i>noun</i> | measurement of the rate and direction of change in the position of an object. |

For Further Exploration

Articles & Profiles

- National Geographic News: Skydiving Photographer on Risks, Rush

Images

- National Geographic Animals: Animal Record Breakers

Websites

- National Geographic Kids: Animals—Peregrine Falcons



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