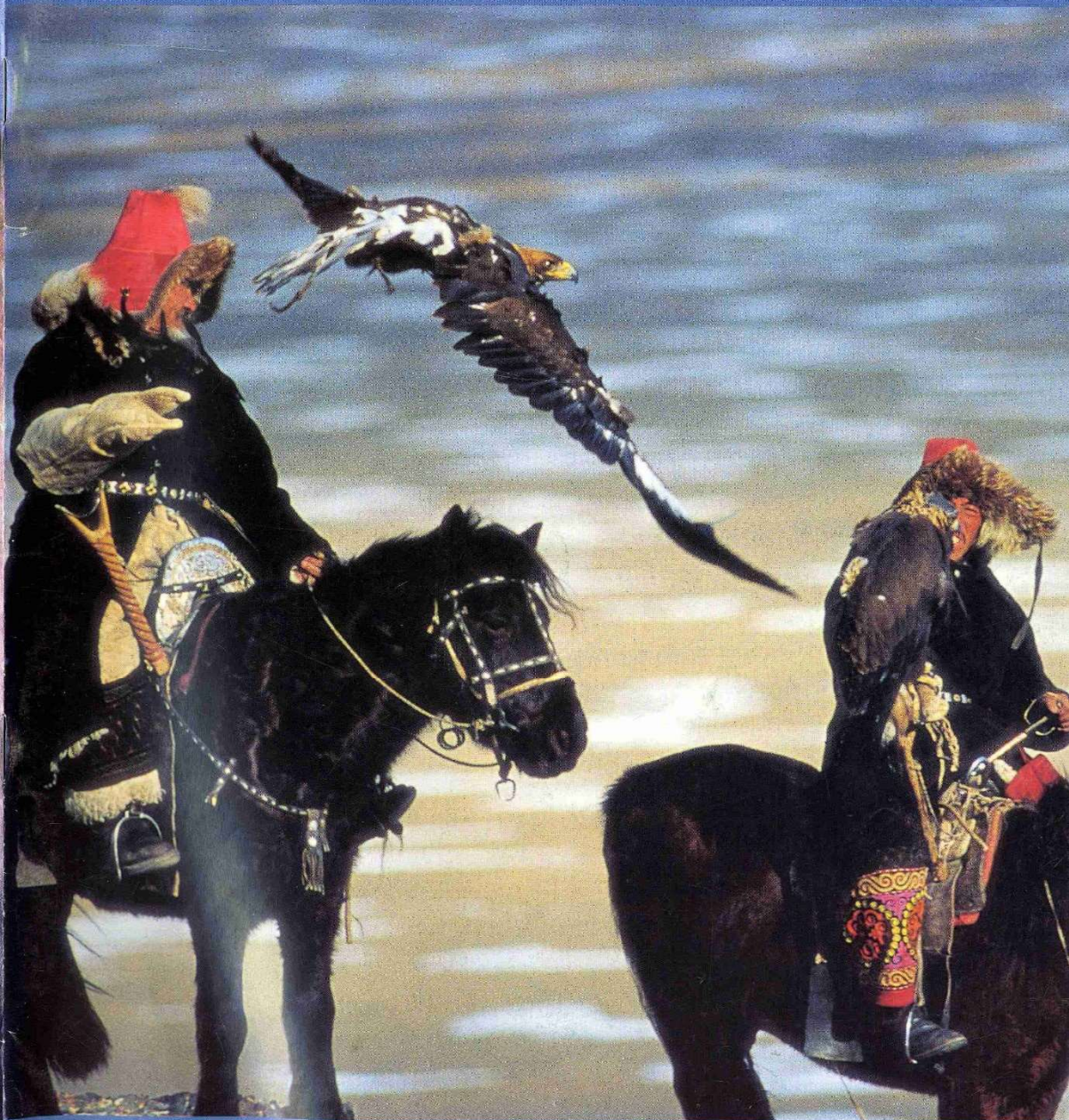


Newsletter



Edition - June 2003



INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR FALCONRY & CONSERVATION OF BIRDS OF PREY



President Patrick Morel addresses the membership



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EDITORIAL

by Anthony Crosswell

The thrill of flying my tiercel Nelson over autumn stubbles in Lincolnshire with Irish setter Jess working below him was profound. It was Woodhall Spa our British Falconers' Club 75th anniversary field meeting, the IAF 33rd AGM and, for me, the fulfilment of many dreams.

Reading minute books of meetings held in the early years of our club brings home how much is unchanging in the hearts of falconers.

Many national clubs like the British Falconers Club have helped and enabled members to share the flying of hawks and falcons in ways that otherwise could not have been. The purpose of a small sporting club is surely to provide the forum, in every sense of the word, for its members to meet and communicate, and to celebrate their shared interest. The sport encompasses more branches than ever before, with the new opportunities which non-native species afford, for instance. But whether falconry is meant to fly rooks on Salisbury Plain in the early years of the last century, or to fly larks on Newmarket heath, to fly grouse in the far north of Montana, to hunt partridges in Spain, to fly a Gos in Hungary or today a Harris on the outskirts of a large city - the passion is still the same and the date and name mere details.

Perhaps the quality of flight has steadily improved but the challenges to our sport do not lessen. Perhaps the challenges do not increase, for our club started without a legal framework in its early years and members had to struggle hard to gain recognition. Perhaps the challenges are simply different. Anthony Jack recalled to me what a challenge it had been for him and how unsettling the atmosphere was for those involved. There was controversy and upset. Cyril Morley in a field in Germany, once told me how he would break out into a sweat at meetings, so agitated was he by events. Some such as Phillip Glasier came and went, and came again with later honour as upsets were forgiven and old passions recognised.

Today things are no less difficult - the affairs of men were ever thus!

Governments today seem intent on drowning us in regulation. One consultation-review follows yet another. We are showered annually with registration changes, with welfare guidelines, EU Birds directives, hygiene regulations, travel restrictions, import regulations and of course the threat to ban hunting altogether. Through all this we try to plot a route.

Meanwhile the true sporting purpose for our club endures. In the field modern falconers produce one amazing hawk after another and the list is almost endless. Dogs today are a delight to see and the standards of performance from our hawks are often awesome. The proud traditions of small sporting clubs flourish still. The IAF supports them all and today moves from strength to strength.

Anthony Crosswell
President BFC, Executive Secretary IAF

Pictures in this edition :

Cover Picture - Javier Ceballos
"Title page photography: Hunting with golden eagles in Bayan-Olgii, Mongolia
© Javier Ceballos adaja@ies.es"

Back cover - Keiya Nakajima, The Falciformes Centre, Japan - jaface@yvw.mmtr.or.jp

Please note that the material within is not IAF policy unless expressly stated as a resolution or position statement or recorded as such in IAF minutes.

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NOTICE OF 34th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2003

Below is notice to the members of the IAF for preliminary information for the AGM in Jerez de la Frontera (Cádiz), Spain in December 2003 at the kind invitation of the Spanish Association of Falconry and Conservation of Raptors (AECCA).

Jose Manuel Rodriguez-Villa

At the time of going to press I'm just making the very preliminary plan for our IAF AGM in Spain. I hope that within June (six months in advance), I'll be ready to provide all the IAF members with a detailed program. In principle the place will be Jerez de la Frontera (The -genuine-Sherry city!, South Spain). The tentative plan is to schedule it in December Sunday 7th (AC meeting) Monday 8th (it's holiday in Spain, IAF's AGM), Tuesday 9th and Wednesday 10th (hawking days in the surroundings for limited number of falconers-plenty of red legs and hares for shortwingers). We better leave the hawking days for working days so we avoid shooting risks plus overcrowded hawking trips. In that weekend famous Ecija's Skytrial is held (one hour and a half car trip from Jerez if someone wants to have a look...). This tentative plan can be changed, but I hope not. All the member organisations will be duly informed of the final program in June.

AGM Agenda

Apologies for absence
Minutes of last AGM
Constitution changes
New member candidatures - presentation and election.
President - report
Vice-president for the Americas report
Vice-president for Europe, Africa, Asia & Oceania report
Treasurer - report
Report by the Chairman of the Advisory Committee
Report of the Research Co-ordinator
Reports of the working groups (finance, hybrid, Saker & Houbara, MERWG).
Election of Officers
Delegates reports -
Any Other Business
Consideration of offers to host the 2004 AGM.
Closure

Election

The following officers posts are due for election in 2003.
President, Vice President for Europe, Secretary, Treasurer, Members of the AC.

Candidatures are invited for these posts to be submitted to the Secretary before November 1st 2003.

From the Treasurer

Dear Member,

The end of 2002 shows a positive result in IAF accounts of 3230.70 euros as you could see in the accounts statement. Beside other activities, IAF decide to give a 500.00 euros contribution to the West Nilus Virus investigation (this amount is showed on the 2003 accounts).

With your contribution we are able to continue the work of defending falconry around the world. Thank you.

In order to ease the effort from some clubs in the last AGM it was decided to exempt from the fix amount, members from countries with GDP (Gross Domestic Product per capita) inferior to \$10.000 (USD), if they ask for it.

The formula to calculate the fees remains the same as 2002;

< 100 members: 100 euro fix amount + 1.75 euro per member

100 to 200 members: 200 euro fix amount + 1.75 euro per member

> 200 members: 250 euro fix amount + 1.75 euro per member

If you have any doubts to calculate your fee amount, please contact the treasurer and give the actual number of members from your club. The fees could be sending to the IAF account:

Banco Comercial Portugues Largo Afonso de Albuquerque, 15B 2710 Sintra - Portugal
Account n.º: IBAN - PT50 0033 0000 0023 6870 9940 5

MEMORANDUM

To: IAF Council Delegates
From: Frank M. Bond, Vice President for the Americas
Subject: Discussion draft of the IAF Constitution for the 2003 AGM.
Date: May 18, 2003

The Advisory Committee met at Woodhall Spa to discuss potential changes to the IAF Constitution. President Patrick Morel had appointed VP Frank Bond to prepare suggested changes for that meeting. Based on the discussions there, the following suggested amendments will be discussed at the 2003 AGM for potential ratification by the Council.

For review, the changes in (*italics*) are the proposed new suggestions for change. The language, which is shown with a (~~strike through~~), shall be deleted.

Please review the proposed changes as follow:

Corresponding Member Organisation and Supporting Member Organisation. Besides the regular Member Organisation and Associate Member Organisation, there is a proposal for new members, called the Corresponding Member Organisation and Supporting Member Organisation. The Corresponding Member Organisation is a falconry club or association, but by virtue of size and economic circumstances cannot pay dues. It may apply by invitation of the President with the approval of the Council. It will not have voting rights and will be exempted from dues. See Arts. 3.1, 3.2.1, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 3.6.2, and 6.1

The Supporting Member Organisation may be a group, association, confederation of a hunting associations, or governmental body which is not a typical falconry club or association but which supports falconry. As noted it will not have voting rights and its representatives may not hold office, but they may be appointed to a working group. A Supporting Organisation may only apply by invitation from the President. See Arts. 3.1, 3.2.1, 3.3, 3.5,3.6, 3.6.2, 6.1, and 15.

Working Groups. The President has had the power in Art. 6.1 to appoint *ad hoc* committees to work on special needs of the IAF. However, the term *working group* seems to be a more universally recognized term of art used by international organizations for the same function. The President may appoint working groups with the "consent", not just "in consultation with" the Advisory Committee. See Art. 6.1.

Definition of Country. A country will be defined as a state recognised for membership by the United Nations. See new Art. 4.3.

Amendment to the Constitution. In Art. 9.3, matters before the Council may be voted on by mail or email in between AGMs if necessary, and as desired by the President. However, the Advisory Committee believes that changes to the Constitution should only be considered by the Council during a regular or special meeting. The Constitution is so important to the IAF that it deserves discussion on amendments in person by the Delegates. See Art. 9.1.

Replacement of President by a Vice President. The Constitution is presently silent on which Vice President should replace the President in the event of the President's resignation or disability before the next Council meeting. The proposed change is that the Vice President who has served longest as vice president will assume the presidency until the next regular or special Council meeting. See Arts. 11.1.3 and 11.2.3.

6. Vice Presidents. Proposed changes to clarify that there are two vice presidents who are chosen by the Council. See Arts. 12.2.1 and 12.2.3.

Advisory Committee. The Advisory Committee shall be enlarged from 6 to 8 members to represent better the diverse interest of falconry in the world. See Art. 13.1. The Council shall appoint the Advisory Committee upon recommendation of the President. The Advisory Committee members will serve for only the term of the President and then may be reappointed with the consent of the Council. See Art. 13.2. Also the Advisory committee will meet at least once per year. See Art. 13.3.



33rd Annual General Meeting of the IAF

AGM – WOODHALL SPA Tuesday 8th October 2002 – 10 a.m.

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

- Opening by the President in which Patrick Morel welcomed delegates to the 34th AGM of the IAF. He thanked the BFC for hosting the meeting at their Woodhall Spa International Field Meeting.

- As President of the BFC Tony Crosswell welcomed delegates on behalf of the British Falconers' Club and hoped that they would enjoy not only the AGM but also the hospitality of the following weeks hawking.

- Approval of the minutes of the AGM 2000 in Amarillo – Exec Secretary Tony Crosswell proposed the minutes for the last AGM these were approved by delegates and signed by the president Patrick Morel.

Candidatures – President

Candidates were proposed by the President, discussed and voted on by the delegates.

Bulgaria - no delegate – fulfils our conditions – accepted as associate member

Belgium - Beefenaers Vluchtbedrijf De Valkenier – no delegate – fulfils our conditions – accepted

Indonesia Biak Falconry and Raptor Conservation Centre - no delegate – fulfils our conditions - accepted

Japan - The Japanese Falconers' Association - no delegate – fulfils our conditions - accepted

Morocco - Moroccan Falconer's Association - Mohammed Nour Eddine Faheti – fulfils our conditions and a presentation made by the delegate.- accepted

Turkey - Istanbul Hunting and Shooting Club - falconry chapter- no delegate so presentation made by Jevgheni Shergalin.- accepted

UK - Hawk Board - Mike Clowes – application withdrawn pending IAF constitutional changes to accommodate this type of organisation.

The IAF is now composed of some 50 Associations from 38 countries.

Vice President Frank Bond was due for election, was proposed for re-election, was unopposed and thus re-elected.

President's Report- Patrick Morel

I'll try to describe you the actions of the IAF during the past 12 months. I will only refer to this period because most of the other actions of the IAF were already reported in the newsletters.

First I would like to explain to you how the IAF functions. You'll remember that we adopt a new constitution 4 years ago, it took some time to adapt ourselves to this new constitution, but since the AGM of Amarillo it is functioning perfectly. With the old constitution, most if not all of the work was done by the president. Now the work is done by a team. Beside the president, there are two vice-presidents covering each a part of the world. Frank Bond is in charge for the Americas and Tom Richter for Europe, Africa and Asia. As officers we have Tony Crosswell as Executive Secretary, Antonio Carapuço as Treasurer and Robert Kenward as research coordinator. The members of the AC beside the officers are: Gilles Nortier acting as Chairman of AC, Tim Kimmel as Substitute Chairman and Herwig Hoedl, Martin Jones, José Manuel Rodriguez-Villa, Janusz Sielicki and Jevgeni Shergalin – so far the AC is accounting 13 members.

How is the work distributed : I created a number of working groups which are dealing with most of the problems we have to face.

I'll try to make a global sketch of the actions of the IAF during the last year, detailed report will be produced later by our 'specialists' and by the chairmen of the working groups.

My strategy is very simple – trying to stick to the objectives of the Constitution I'll invite you to take the Constitution on point 2 :

To represent falconry throughout the world.

IAF is now representing 50 associations and 38 countries.

Representing falconry means attending all conferences where falconry could be discussed or affected. Just to give you an idea of the engagement of the IAF last year and this year, it attended following conferences :

25-29 **September 2001** Robert Kenward, Jevgeni Shergalin and José Manuel Rodriguez Villa 4th RRF Congress on Raptors in Sevilla, Spain

October 2001 Tom Richter - Czech meeting

November 2001 Frank Bond was the guest speaker of the NAFA meeting in Colorado.

December 2001 Robert Kenward Bern Conference in Strasbourg

07-09 **December 2001** Ralph Rodgers - IUCN Workshop on Commercial Captive Propagation and Wild Species Conservation in Jacksonville, Florida

01 **February 2002** Patrick Morel and Christian de Coune - Commission of Europe – DG 11 Environment Brussels. The discussion was centred on the interpretation of the EEC 'Bird Directive'. Help of the IAF was requested for defining the notion of "judicious use".

8-12 **April 2002** Christian de Coune 6th Conference of the parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity Den Haag (NL)

15-19 **April 2002** Patrick Morel and Christian de Coune - Green Week (workshop on hunting in Natura 2000) organised by the European Commission in Brussels

25 **April 2002** Robert Kenward and Jevgeni Shergalin – Conference on Falconry in Arhavi Turkey

2 **May 2002** Robert Kenward, Jevgeni Shergalin, Igor Tavcar General Assembly of CIC in Istanbul Turkey

11-12 **June 2002** Christian de Coune - Expert Group on Bird Conservation of the Bern Convention - Wageningen (NL)

15 **July 2002** Tony Crosswell - meeting with CITES secretariat in Geneva

September 2002 Mongolia : we missed the conference of Ulaanbaatar. because we discovered too late, that the registration deadline for the meeting was 30 June 2002

Conferences or meetings that we are planning to attend this year (budget permitting):

October 2002 Patrick Morel German DFO meeting in Bavaria



October 2002 Tom Richter will make a presentation at the Austrian meeting
November 2002 Robert Kenward Council of Europe Invasive Species in the Azores
November 2002 Robert Kenward Polish meeting
November 2002 Patrick Morel NAFA meeting – Nebraska USA
27-30 November 2002 Robert Kenward Falconers forum in Issykkul – Kyrgisitan
December 2002 Robert Kenward Bern Convention Strasbourg -France

2.1.2. To preserve and encourage falconry within the context of sustainable use of wildlife.

The modern concept of conservation through sustainable use, pioneered by falconers in Southern Africa and especially in Zimbabwe, has much to teach northern countries, especially in Europe. Falconry can boast about a long tradition of falconers who are also leading ecologists, veterinarians and educators.

Falconers simply have to be conservationists, because they require wild species as their hunting companions as well as their quarry.

IAF supports any use of wild natural resources that meets certain vitally important criteria; the use must be sustainable.

It is likely that falconry will only be able to continue to be recognised as a legitimate use of a renewable natural resource in the future wherever scientific evaluation of game populations can demonstrate the existence of a "harvestable surplus" above the number needed to maintain a stable or expanding breeding population.

Falconers have to act as responsible for conservation and wise sustainable use of the wild and do need to be more engaged in conservation programs.

2.1.3. To encourage conservation, the ecological and veterinary research on birds of prey and promote, under scientific guidance, domestic propagation for falconry.

We are living in a world where we are more and more influenced by diseases even if they are only indirectly related to falconry. Sanitary and health problems will probably be one of the major concerns for falconry in the future.

A few examples : **Foot and Mouth disease** coming shortly after the **ESB (mad cow disease)** and **dioxin crisis**, lead the EU authorities to work on stricter sanitary measures : waste proposal and quarantine.

Animal Waste Proposal: You'll remember that a letter was sent by IAF to the European Commission asking to include falconry and breeders raptors to the derogations. Germany, Belgium and the Hawk Board in the UK sent similar letters to their governments. This common effort led the European authorities to recommend the inclusion of falconry raptors in the derogations.

Quarantine Decision : an exemption was asked for falconry birds accompanying their owner and possibility for the falconers to be exempted of the quarantine. Similar contacts with authorities were held in Belgium and Germany. Our wishes were accepted and falconry birds (up to 3) are exempted of the quarantine.

Veterinary aspects are becoming more and more important for falconry as new diseases may appear as it is the case in the USA with the **West Nile Virus**.

As some of you may have heard, the West Nile Virus appears to be spreading significantly across parts of North America and has been killing wild and captive raptors at relatively high levels in recent months. It is believed that the virus is mostly spreading by mosquitoes.

The virus has been in the United States since 1999. Until this year, raptors were no more than occasional casualties. So far, there are only theories, some with disquieting features that suggest potential changes in the virus' transmission pathways. One theory suggests a new insect carrier. Another possibility is that raptors catch the virus from their prey.

But even when a bird sickens from West Nile, the virus alone may not be lethal. Another unrelated germ or toxin may team up with West Nile to weaken the host (for instance Avian Malaria). Another theory is that the virus is spreading by a bird parasite called the Hippoboscid fly best known as louse flies or flat flies. These insects feed on blood in the quill of emerging feathers of large birds.

The IAF is planning to write to all raptor veterinarian and biologists around the world asking to provide some indication of the extent of West Nile Virus in other parts of the world (especially across the NAMEAN region) and impact on raptors and wildlife elsewhere.

Another side effect, more and more countries are requesting **DNA** tests : in Netherlands, Slovak republic – the Flemish Region in Belgium, the result of a DNA analysis is required before issuing CITES documents, most tests are done with a blood sample. The IAF was requested to investigate the possibilities to do it from a feather instead of by blood sample.

Feathers contain very little DNA, so it is necessary to use a technique called Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) to amplify what little there is, the technique requires expensive equipment and much expertise.

We located laboratories in Germany, UK, Switzerland and USA and could provide the requested information.

I would just point out that this is exactly what we suggested with our Mark and Bank scheme: I remember you how does work this system : It would essentially be a process of storing feathers, running a database, handling enquiries and arranging tests.

2.1.4. To develop, maintain and amend national and international laws, treaties and conventions to permit the pursuit and perpetuation of falconry.

That's probably the main objective of the IAF.

There are different types of countries: some have a regulation system – some have even a very good one ; other ones have a less good one and many countries have no regulation system at all.

Globally, the USA, South Africa and Zimbabwe have a good regulation system : they have access both to captive bred birds and birds coming from the wild, they are allowed to keep them, to import and export them, to travel with them and to hunt with them with extended seasons.

Europe has more restrictive legislation – most of the birds are coming from the captive breeding but some countries allow the harvest from the wild – I remember that the Bird Directive do allow the taking in the wild – keeping is generally accepted without restrictions (except in NL where only two species are allowed) – in some countries falconers are restricted to two birds – no major problems for import-export-travelling but hunting laws are not always conformed to our wishes.

Most of the Eastern European countries candidates to join the EU are under the process of reviewing their hunting and conservation legislation to comply with EU Directives. The easiest solution for these countries being to tight the hunting laws or even to ban falconry.

The Czechs asked help of the IAF and thanks to easy communication through e-mail and an outstanding effort of all the AC members, we were able to react in a very short time-scale and to quote international positive precedents and help them with credentials for falconry world-wide.

We set up a working group to study the problem.

IAF put together guidelines for regulating falconry which could be the framework of a "model law" for countries asking our help.

This **REGUIDE** was sent to the authorities of Bulgaria- Lithuania - Poland - Romania - Serbia - Slovakia - Slovenia and to our Danish and Brazilian member. It was a huge work because most of the time it had to be sent to 12 to 15 destinations.

2.1.5. To require the observation of falconry, hunting, conservation and welfare laws, regulations, traditions and culture with regard to the taking, import, export and keeping of birds of prey, the taking of quarry species and the right of access to land in the country concerned.

Taking

Our birds are coming from breeding in captivity or from the wild.

Breeding is the main source of birds of prey for falconry in Europe but not for the rest of the world. Breeding did probably save falconry but in the same time brings it sometimes into unexpected side-effects (hybrids).

IAF strategy is to encourage breeding where harvesting in the wild is not permitted but to fight for such a sustainable use everywhere the raptor populations are sane and allow harvesting.

Import – export

Here we had to deal with problems related to CITES – Tony Crosswell will report you on the problems happening with a ban of import for the AEU.

Travelling

The committee of the IATA proposed a change in the containers used for shipping raptors. Marshall Meyers of the USA representing the Pet Industry Joint Advisory Committee sits on the IATA committee. That change was to discontinue the use of sky kennels and replace it by wooden crates. We made it clear what our position was and retained the use of skykennels.

Taking of quarry species - We were asked help from the UK for an interpretation of the European Union Bird Directive on rook hawking – lark hawking, and the right of access to land (hunting on public habitats where no other hunting is permitted -for instance in Ireland- or extended seasons).

Conservation laws, for instance this year we were asked advice from Slovakia for problems associated with non-indigenous species and in Ireland for possible problems associated with hybrids. Tom Richter will probably say that the hybrids will be one of the major threats for falconry.

Falconry as a hunting art means that there must be **quarry** to hunt and natural habitats. If Falconers want to continue to present enough quarry to their hawks, they have to engage in conservation programs.

IAF must keep its specificity of association both of hunting and conservation, hunting being a tool of use of conservation.

2.1.6. To promote and uphold a positive public image of falconry with specialist organisations which regulate or otherwise affect falconry

Here comes the role of our public relation officer – Tony Crosswell who will present you the results of his work for the **image of the IAF**.

Thanks to our Irish friend Liam o'Broin, we have a fantastic **logo**. Tony chaired the Working Group for Communication and we have a great **web-site**, we edit a quality **newsletter** and have nice **folders**.

Documentary films

We are frequently asked to advise or participate to films :

- Lori Mason Working Animals Productions Oakville, Canada wanting to film in South Africa
- BBC Natural History Unit based in Bristol planned a new BBC series in South Africa
- A Georgian company "Kartuli Pilm" was planning to shoot the feature film "Falconer". The film was aimed to popularise the oldest Georgian tradition of falconry, which is about to the end nowadays. This company was asking to finance the film.
- Faraway Film Productions based in Wales producing Bird of Prey Video Management Series was in the process of developing the 5th film in the series on Captive Breeding.
- Transglobe Films from Madrid, Spain was planing to make a documentary about Falconry and asked our help – we agreed to help them.

- article for IFR Directory
- estimation of value of a shot falcon in UK and France
- interview International Falconer Magazine
- thanks to the help of JM Rodriguez-Vila I signed a 'prologo' of the book of Javier Caballos

Conclusion

It appears that the main threats to falconry are:
restrictive regulations
health and sanitary problems
Problems related to quarry : loss of habitat, dwindling game populations
pressure from anti-groups
and division within falconers themselves.



Financial report 2002; budget for 2003 – Antonio Carapuço

Summary

1. New fees structure
2. IAF funding

IAF is one of the most widespread organisations in the world. Our members belong to 34 countries with different economic realities. Each member represents from 5 to 2600 individuals. IAF is a non-profitable organisation with its main financial support based on the annual dues from its members. It is almost impossible to find a fees formula that can take into consideration all these aspects. The **Financial Working Group** has the task to propose to the **Advisory Committee** a new structure for the financial fees in order to:

- a) Maintain the same income level of the year 2001.
- b) Reduce the small club fees, giving the opportunity to some new clubs, from less rich countries, a full participation on IAF business.
- c) Not to increase other club fees.

Based on 2000 accounts and taking into consideration that a small reduction on the IAF income will not compromise any of our main plans, we have decided to propose (already in 2001 and 2002) a reduction on IAF fees to benefit the small clubs. In fact, there were two main reasons for this proposal: the heavy financial effort of the small clubs (considering the effort per member) and the impossibility of some new members in paying those fees.

At Obernai, the AC has achieved a solution to introduce on the next AGM in order to be formally adopted. A fix amount plus a fee for individual members composes the formula.

Members from countries with GDP (Gross Domestic Product – source Infonation (UN)) less than \$10,000 (USD) per capita could be exempt from the fixed amount if they ask for it.

FORMULA

<100 members: 100 euro per club+1,75 euro per member
100 to 200 members: 200 euro per club+1,75 euro per member
>200 members: 250 euro per club+1,75 euro per member

2. Funding.

It is common knowledge that members are contributing at full capacities. We need to seek for other sources. We have been searching the following possibilities:

- Organisations whose main activity is falconry.
- Donations from individuals that directly or indirectly helped on IAF activities.
- Organisations or individuals whose main activity share common interests with falconry - (ex: hawk food, falconry furniture, hunting associations...).
- Organisations or individuals without direct relationship with falconry (ex: Swarovsky optics)
- Public support to NGOs and support from private foundations (ex: EU funds, IUCN, etc...) – these possibilities (EU funds) were already sought: we need to present well-documented projects in order to gain the funding. This will increase the costs and time consumption with no real gain.
- Individual support to NGOs (ex: Tax deductible donations) - IAF have no status to obtain this support.

Nowadays IAF has little to offer to a potential traditional sponsor:

1. Minor activity
2. Total lack of awareness
3. No representation in highly interesting business where falconry has an important role in decision makers' life. This is the case of some geographical areas (Middle East) of certain economic sectors.

Positive points to potential sponsors:

1. IAF is the only organisation representing falconry (no competition).
2. Good image of falconry as a "green fieldsport" learnt on sustainable use of prey and raptors.

Conclusions:

With fees already stretched and unreliable occasional amounts from benefactors (very welcoming), IAF should define ways to fund its increasing activities by:

- Expressing gratitude towards sponsors for promoting altruistic benefactions.
- Creating a procedure for projects funding, with a maximum transparency for the three parts involved - IAF budget needs for the project, IAF officers involved versus personal benefits and sponsor expectations.
- Enlarging its associated base to other countries/clubs, in order to obtain support to our activities.

2002 Income	
Balance (31-12-2001) carried forward*	7,256.39¤
Members contribution	16,932.90¤
Donations income	1,608.98¤
Total	25,798.27¤
* 18,30¤ in Bank Cantonale Vaudoise	
* 7238.09¤ in Banco Comercial Português	

2002 Expenditure	
Secretariat	6,615.70¤
Travelling expenses and accomodation	9,055.28¤
Subscriptions	- ¤
Donations	- ¤
Bank charges	507.29¤
Non recurring expenditures	2,903.66¤
Total	19,081.93¤
2002 Balance	6,716.34¤

BUDGET 2003	
2003 Income	
1.1 Balance carried forward	116.34¤
1.2 Members contribution	17,000.00¤
1.3 Donations	
Total income	17,116.34¤
2003 Expenditure	
2.1 Secretariat (post+phone+newsletter+site)	6,500.00¤
2.2 Travelling expenses and accomodation	9,700.00¤
2.2.1 Bern Convetion	800.00¤
2.2.2 AGM	6,000.00¤
2.2.3 Bird Life International	600.00¤
2.2.4 4th Russian Raptors Conference	300.00¤
2.2.5 Others	2,000.00¤
2.5 Bank charges	600.00¤
2.6 Non recurring expenditures	
Total expenditure	16,800.00¤
2003 Balance	316.34¤

2002 Annual Report of Frank M. Bond Vice President for the Americas

Throughout the vast region of the Americas, falconry continues to enjoy a favourable and supportive governmental climate. North America, represented by the North American Falconers Association (NAFA), has the majority of the falconers in this region of the world. In Central and South America, several countries are making progress in developing more formal organizations and a closer relationship with their national governments. Mexico, represented by NAFA, has begun efforts to form a national association from its several smaller clubs to represent themselves on a united basis with their national government. Strong efforts by falconers in Peru, Panama, and Brazil should be successful with assistance by the IAF and NAFA to build national clubs as well.

The 2002 AGM at Woodhall Spa was a spectacular success largely because of the extraordinary organization by our Secretary and BFC President, Tony Crosswell. He was assisted by BFC Director Ian Timmons, Council Delegate Andrew Knowles-Brown (Scotland), and former BFC Director and great friend, John Fairclough. The response by falconers from all over Europe was extraordinary. I am always surprised by the large turnout from Holland, led by Delegate Thijs Fleskens. The Spaniards brought a whole film crew who are producing a special documentary of falconry for Spanish National Television.

At the 2002 Annual General Meeting in Woodhall Spa, Juan Carlos Rojo of Mexico represented the three nations of NAFA (Canada, the United States and Mexico) at the Council of Delegates' meeting. Juan Carlos is the first Mexican to represent NAFA at any national or international meeting related to falconry. Juan Carlos is a very accomplished longwinger who lives in Mexico City with his wife and daughter where he works for the international engineering and construction firm, Bechtel Corporation. He is one of the recognized leaders of Mexican falconry.

President Darryl Perkins continues to lead NAFA, assisted by Jim Ince as vice president. Ralph Rogers, a former president and current director at large of the NAFA Board of Directors, serves the US Delegate to the Council of Delegates. Former NAFA president Dr. Tim Kimmel serves on the Advisory committee and is chairman of the NAMEAN Committee. President Morel recognized Tim specially in honor of his extraordinarily hard work in developing relationships with the Arab falconry world. I was honored by the Delegates to have been re-elected to serve another term as Vice President for the Americas. My nomination was proposed by the NAFA Board of Directors, a month later, at the NAFA annual field meeting in Kearney, Nebraska.

NAFA held its annual field meet in Kearney, Nebraska. It was organized and hosted by Ralph Rogers. Kearney is one of the great areas for grouse hawking in

America. Our President, Patrick Morel and Advisory committee chairman, Gilles Nortier, visited the USA for a special holiday in Wyoming and then to attend the NAFA meet in Kearney. Their experiences are reported elsewhere in the Newsletter. We were honoured to have a number of European visitors, particularly the British who outnumber even the Canadians and Mexicans. For one day of hawking I had Belgians, French and Brits in my truck to watch some wonderful prairie chicken flights. The 2003 field meet will return to Amarillo, Texas which was the site of the first IAF AGM held in America.

At the NAFA meet I was paid a very special honour. The Archives of American Falconry and the North American Falconers Association made me the seventh recipient of the Special Edition of NAFA Journals, "given in recognition of outstanding contributions toward the preservation of the History, Heritage, Traditions, and Ethics of Falconry in the Americas." It came as a complete surprise to me, and it was a very great pleasure to have Patrick and Gilles with me at the head table for the occasion.

The US Fish and Wildlife Service continues to have the US federal falconry regulations under review. NAFA leadership has provided considerable suggestions to the Service in order to improve our generally excellent system. Some changes will be beneficial to our system.

I reported last year on the efforts to continue the harvest eyass Anatum peregrines from the wild. The harvest had been discontinued for two years because there was revealed a population modeling error. Also I had reported that there had been a lawsuit brought by the Defenders of Wildlife against the Fish and Wildlife Service. On behalf of NAFA I intervened in the lawsuit. We prevailed in the lawsuit, but the Service withdrew permission for harvest for a year to clear up the modeling error.

In May 2003 the environmental assessment reviewing the new model was released. The Service continues to support a 5% harvest of nestling Anatoms. The IAF's scientific and research coordinator, Dr. Robert Kenward, is quoted as an expert in the assessment. He, with others, will prepare the response of the IAF in support of the environmental assessment.

We anticipate that the Defenders of Wildlife other environmental organizations will again sue to prohibit the harvest. I will once again represent NAFA in federal court to assist the Fish and Wildlife Service support its decision. Then the states, which now permit the harvest of nestling Anatoms Arizona, Utah, Colorado and the newest state, Washington, will renew the take for falconry.

The real prize for North American falconers is to resume the take of passage peregrines. The harvest of passage peregrines must be coordinated with Greenland, Canada and Mexico. We expect to see a proposal for the harvest of passage peregrines later in 2003 or 2004.

Since the change of administration in Washington, DC, NAFA has even closer ties to the national government. Former NAFA President Brian Millsap was appointed as Chief of Migratory Birds of the Fish and Wildlife Service. Many of you met Brian when he opened the 2000 IAF AGM in Amarillo. Brian is head of the division, which oversees all matters related to migratory birds, including falconry. Obviously, we have a man in the position who completely understands what is needed for a well-run system. Also the new Director of the Service is Dr. Steve Williams, the former Director of Kansas Game and Fish. He is a special friend of falconry and a friend of Tim Kimmel's.

On a personal note, this year I prepared the chapter on the falconers' contribution to the restoration of the peregrine falcon in North America. The lengthy book written by many authors will be published by The Peregrine Fund in November 2003. Also I prepared an article for the Anuario (Journal) of the AECCA (Spanish national falconry association) of my recollections of a year spent with falconry legend, Felix Rodriguez de la Fuente in 1964 and 1965. It is a fond recollection of daily hawking with arguably one of the greatest falconers of the Twentieth Century.

Finally I turn to Europe for a final observation. Probably at our next AGM, our dear friend Thomas Richter will announce that he will not remain as Vice President of the IAF. Tom, who has been president of the DFO, the leading falconry club of Germany, and now an important leader of the IAF, has guided us through many issues related to German falconry, eastern European issues, problems associated with the use of hybrids, and falconry welfare issues. He has represented the IAF at many international meetings. Most importantly he has provided all of us with sound advice and very sharp observation. Personally he is a trusted colleague to represent falconry anywhere, a man with broad vision and above all, an excellent and enthusiastic goshawk man. I will count him as a dear and very close friend always. The benefit of service to the IAF is to know great men like Tom Richter.

Juan Carlos Rojo from Mexico on matters in that country. He reported on their last field meeting and the vibrant state of falconry in Mexico, captive breeding to support their needs even though wild taken birds are legal. The Club is growing in numbers and quality of sport. Tim Kimmel added that NAFA is grateful for the more than 30 year service of Frank Bond.

Vice President Report by Thomas Richter - October 2002 Woodhall Spa

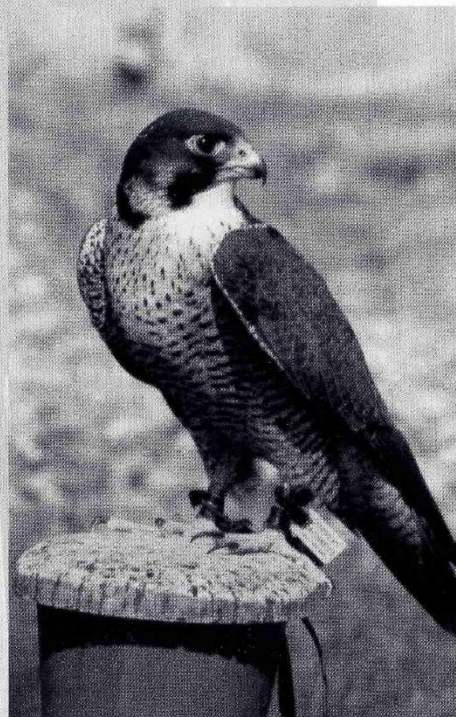
As Patrick Morel has done a good job of compiling all the activities, I will concentrate on some aspects and add a few ideas on politics.

At the moment falconry is a hunting method of good reputation in most of the European States. In Germany the DFO (Deutscher Falkenorden, the club which represents the overwhelming majority of the German falconers) is registered as an NGO Environment Protectionist Group by the Environmental Ministry. We are very close to the German Hunters Organization and of course strongly engaged in the IAF.

On the other hand you must recognize, that most of the citizens in Central-Europe are unfamiliar with nature and have no understanding about the course of natural events. Ideas of protection by emotional and humanizing means, either of nature or of animal welfare, become popular very easily. The German Green Party is especially inclined to support the emotional wellfarists and protectionists. Unfortunately the German parliamentary election in September gave the Socialists and Greens a quite narrow majority. So I am sure, we are standing at the beginning of very severe problems.

In Sweden – where falconry is not allowed, as you know – there had been the beginning of a discussion to legalize it. The freely breeding of a Gyr-Peregrine-Hybrid, that was bred and flown away in Denmark, with a Peregrine from the wild, stopped the discussion at the very beginning. In the Baltic states and in Bulgaria, where falconry is not regulated till now, a discussion started too. On behalf of the IAF, there was written a very clear and sophisticated paper and a supporting letter that can be used from the local clubs. The paper called REGUIDE, describes the benefits, falconry brings to the protection of raptors, the protection of quarry and the society itself. There are proposals made and examples set, how to regulate falconry legally. This paper was mainly worked out by Robert Kenward, to whom I like to thank, not only for this excellent work.

In the Czech Republic there has been a new hunting act promulgated. Hunting brown hares, ducks and pheasants with birds of prey is not allowed now. By accident, how the Czech falconers presume, or by a dirty trick, as my opinion is, nobody knows. However this year the traditional meeting in Opočno takes place without hawking. Our Czech friends are in good hope, that they can turn back the wheel easily till March next year. The meeting in Opočno, by the way was visited by little me in 2001. I took the chance and gave a speech about IAF, its policy and the political surrounding in Europe. I had the impression, that most of the falconers did not think a minute, that there could be a danger for the continuation of falconry at all.



I am convinced, that the animal welfare issue will become more and more important in the discussion on hunting, especially on falconry. I had the chance to point out some ideas on animal welfare and falconry and on hunting ethics. The first at the general meeting of the falconry working group of the CIC in 2000 and the latter on the AGM of the German Foresters Association in 2001. Both papers were printed and reprinted in some contexts, a shot summary in the IAF Newsletter (Robert Kenward, many thanks for translating kindly). The "welfare and falconry paper" (I am sorry, but in German) can be downloaded from our homepage: www.deutscher-falkenorden.de. 14 days from now, I will have the pleasure to talk to the members of the Austrian Falconers Association at their AGM, invited by their board, on "Ethical and Legal Aspects of Animal Welfare in Falconry". By this, I will bring the regards of the IAF to the Austrian friends.

In Germany, as mentioned before, the political situation is every thing else than friendly to falconers. We are visiting hard battles. I am afraid, that this motion, away from nature, away from ratio and away from freedom will raise up in whole Europe and maybe in the whole developed world. Hopefully I am too pessimistic, but I do not believe it.

I think it would be wise for all the clubs in all the countries to start internal discussions to form strategies for this debate and not simply wait until it is forced on them from outside. To reduce risk for our German members, we have taken some voluntary steps. The voluntary approach arises from a conviction that if we recognize a problem and solve it on our own, we can remain in the game, but if we wait in hope of the best, we risk being overpowered. I do not like to bore you with all the activities from Germany. I have pointed them out already in the last newsletter. I will just give the headlines:

First we strongly supported a Working Group on minimum requirements for keeping birds of prey and owls.

The next struggle we had concerned the marking of birds. The chip was supposed to be the only permitted marker. We had to fight hard to get our good old ring recognized again as a fraud-proof marker.

In Germany we have more cases of species-hybrids breeding with wild peregrines reported, than in all other countries (at least 6 cases so far). Thank Heavens that all of the German falconers clubs decided in 1998 voluntarily not to breed or to possess or to fly new species-hybrids anymore. Nevertheless the hybrid problem stays the most important problem we have. It is not only a political problem, this would be serious enough, it is a real biological problem. Even if some people, especially among the breeders, do not recognise this till now. The welfare issue is "just" a political problem, but perilous as well.

But there are not only trouble spots. In some details we have been really successful. For example: the quarantine proposed by the EU was cancelled for private falconers with up to 3 of their own birds for non commercial purposes; and the ban of feeding of day-old-chicks to birds of prey was cancelled as well.



Last, but not least our relation to the CIC is very well. The former Working Group has now been promoted and recognised as a Commission. As Commission it is equivalent to the big Commissions like "Big Game". President of the Falconry Commission is our very good friend Peter Sapara, who has been Secretary of the DFO for a long time and falconry official since 30 years. He is sending out messages on falconry to the public quite often and is doing good advertisement.

Prof. Dr. Thomas Richter
Vice-President

Reports of the chairmen of the Working Groups :

Gilles Nortier (Chairman of the Advisory Committee)

Gilles Nortier then made a presentation to describe the structure of IAF and is working processes through 18 working groups and specialist advice.

He stressed the evolution of IAF to a wider spread of responsibility to enable response to demands as changes occur.

NEWSLETTER – Tony Crosswell

In view of the cancellation of the 2001 AGM the President Patrick Morel asked me to produce a newsletter for circulation to members to keep them up to date with activity and news. This I did and it was circulated to about 300 people and organisations. Gilles Nortier very kindly paid all costs of postage for the Newsletter for which we are again very thankful. What we will do now that he is retired and no longer has a Company to keep him in the manner to which he would be like we do not know – we suspect he will not be so generous in the future.

E-NEWSLETTER

I was impressed by the effectiveness of various e-newsletters in circulation and so drafted an IAF E-newsletter for easy distribution to members. This was approved by the President and AC members and so was started. The second edition was distributed last week.

WEBSITE

The newsletter was installed on the website by Ray Cooper who continues to do an outstanding job on our behalf.

WG Eastern and European Issues (RFQUIDF) –
Robert Kenward
Report for 2002 of the IAF Research Coordinator

The role of the research coordinator in IAF is to identify issues that require research, arrange that research and disseminate the findings for the good of IAF and falconry as a whole, and to represent IAF in fora where scientific knowledge is advantageous. Over the years, that work has involved arranging conferences on breeding and management of raptors, conducting surveys to gather data from IAF members, producing internal reviews and publications. It has also involved attending meetings, and arranging or modifying resolutions and other statements, of Raptor Research Foundation, World Working Group on Birds of Prey and Owls, World Conservation Union (IUCN), Bern Convention and other organisations.

The research coordinator works at present primarily through 4 working groups. The following reports detail the members (including those whose help from outside IAF's Advisory Committee is especially welcome) and activities in each group during the last year.

Many thanks to all those who have worked hard for these groups during 2002.
Robert Kenward

1.10.02

**WG BASS – Robert Kenward
Falconry Regulations.**

The falconry regulations issue bridges operations of Bern, IUCN, BASS and European working groups. During 2001, clubs in several countries contacted IAF with requests for help in obtaining suitable legislation for falconry during their accession to the European Union. Tom Richter proposed the preparation of a report to address this issue, containing recommended principles for regulations and items on the acceptance of falconry in global and European legislation. This REGUIDE document was completed in 2002 (see also report by Tom Richter).

It was realised that this document would be useful for all EU accession states and other countries wishing to legislate for falconry, but that further advice (for example on advantages to be gained from sustainable-use of wild raptors in falconry) would also be useful. Accordingly, following the establishment of credentials with environment ministries during the REGHAB initiative (see Bern Convention report), provisional arrangements were made for a workshop for representatives from EU Accession States, to be held in Poland in February 2002 thanks to the efforts of Janusz Sielicki. Sadly, the proposal for February was too close to a meeting of the Convention on Biological Diversity, so agreement was reached to postpone. Although pressure of work and other meetings (for which 2002 is especially rich) has delayed re-scheduling, the provision of REGUIDE as background material ensured that it reached all the states. REGUIDE continues to be requested by clubs and is available on IAF's web-site (www.i-a-f.org).

In April, IAF was approached at short notice to provide a speaker for two meetings in Turkey. One was a meeting of falconry clubs and government officials in eastern Turkey to defend the practise of falconry, and the second was the AGM of Conseil International de la Chasse, 8 days later in Istanbul. Jevgeni Shergalin, with his knowledge of the similar traditional falconry with migrant sparrowhawks in adjacent Georgia, joined for these meetings and a subsequent meeting with environment ministry officials. The IAF contributions were well received by falconers and officials, resulting in more use for REGUIDE and membership application to IAF from Turkey. IAF personnel were delighted with the hospitality they received from Turkish falconers, especially the arrangements made by Omer Borovali and Fikri Kurtulus, as well as the chance to renew good relations with CIC's falconry commission, chaired by Peter Sapara.

WG FACE – presented by Tony Crosswell for Christian de Coune

FACE

Written declaration by the European Parliament

FACE made an active lobby to have a Written Declaration issued by the European Parliament aimed at allowing member States to decide themselves about the hunt seasons and at having the Directive accordingly amended. The issue has been turned down. I availed myself of the opportunity for recalling to FACE that I was very reluctant towards opening discussions on amending the Directive as falconers would have much more to lose than to win, it would be a dangerous Pandora Box.

Working group for the Bern Convention. Robert Kenward

Members: Robert Kenward, Herwig Hoedl, Tom Richter, (Christian de Coune).

This working group addresses IAF's observer status to the Bern Convention. The Council of Europe organises Annual Meetings of Parties in Strasbourg, to review operation of conventions on protection of species and habitats. Participants include those in Environment Ministries throughout Europe, which makes it a convenient point for informal discussion of falconry issues. Resolutions are made to improve the workings of the conventions. Of interest to IAF at present is a draft recommendation from a working party on Invasive Alien Species. Christian de Coune ensured in a previous resolution that falconry with non-native species does not constitute an introduction in the sense of the resolution, and it is important to ensure that this principle endures, so a drafting meeting in Portugal is being attended.

Robert Kenward conducted two activities for the Convention secretariat in the last year. One was a questionnaire survey of legislation on raptors and attitudes to raptor predation and management issues. This was done for a European Union project on Reconciling Game-bird Hunting and Biodiversity, which recommended use of raptors for falconry as a solution to some predation problems. A second operation for CoE and IUCN was a review and synthesis of sustainable-use activities for an inter-ministerial conference organised by United Nations Environment Programme. Files of these reports are available from (reke@ceh.ac.uk).

A further activity of this group was attendance by Christian de Coune at a meeting of the new Bird group within the Convention, which was held at Wageningen, Holland, in May. Christian produced a useful report and was able to intervene on behalf of sustainable use activities.

WG Middle East Relations – Tim Kimmel

Submitted to the IAF Council of Delegates AGM
Woodhall Spa, ENGLAND (8 October 2002)

This report provides a summary overview of activities conducted by the Middle East Relations Working Group (MERWG) in recent months. For an overview of MERWG activities conducted up through January 2002, please consult the MERWG report published in the 2002 IAF *Newsletter*.

The MERWG is comprised of Frank Bond, Martin Jones, Robert Kenward, Tim Kimmel (chairman), José Manuel Rodríguez-Villa and Jevgeni Shergalin.

When first formed at the end of 2000, this Working Group was charged with developing a plan to encourage implementation of IUCN Resolution 2.74 as adopted by the 2nd World Conservation Congress. More recently, the goals of the Group have been expanded in a related way to: (1) create a forum for discussing issues related to wildlife conservation in the Middle East, especially those related to sakers and houbara; (2) encourage Middle Eastern states to embrace national and international efforts to secure traditional falconry within the context of sustainable-use wildlife management; and, (3) encourage falconers in the Middle East to form organisations and welcome the organizations into the IAF.

In an effort to move toward achievement of these goals, the MERWG developed in 2001 an external communications document (see MERWG Report, 2002 IAF *Newsletter*) that was hoped to serve as a kind of 'IAF calling card' to falconers and dignitaries in addressing issues of interest to the Working Group. The MERWG intended to share the document with other such individuals in the region by inviting them to assist with publication of the document as an informational brochure (and possibly, a video) and then distributing the materials to others in the region. However, just as the Working Group was preparing to arrange to accomplish that task last year, the tragic terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 occurred. This abruptly resulted in a temporary suspension of MERWG activities until such time as it might become clear that the political situation improved in the region sufficiently to resume the initiative.

By early 2002, the political situation had calmed enough to permit the MERWG to resume its activities. In the interim, the Working Group had started discussing alternative means for enhancing communication with parties in the Middle East region, specifically an Internet-based discussion network. Moreover, it was felt that MERWG issues actually extended beyond the Middle Eastern region, largely because the biological range of the two species of particular conservation interest – sakers and houbara – extended beyond the Middle East. Therefore, it was decided that if an Internet discussion group should be established, it should include countries spanning a region from Morocco across northern Africa and the Middle East and into China/Mongolia. It was at that point that the Northern Africa, Middle East and Asian Network (IAF-NAMEAN) was developed. Although there was some discussion as to whether NAMEAN might replace the MERWG, it was decided that it would be best to retain the MERWG as an internal working group of the IAF Advisory Committee and to have NAMEAN serve as a communications arm of the Working Group. Indeed, the MERWG manages NAMEAN as it approves all members who are nominated and generally oversees NAMEAN discussions. Further, the MERWG Chairman serves as facilitator of NAMEAN. Membership thus is restricted, messages posted go only to NAMEAN members, and members are requested (as part of a set of guidelines, or 'ground rules') not to forward messages to others.

The first message was posted to IAF-NAMEAN in mid-summer 2002. Since that time, approximately 15 postings have occurred. The rate of member participation started slowly at first, but in recent weeks has increased slightly, and the MERWG is hopeful that the flow and exchange of information will increase even more in time.

Presently, NAMEAN has a total of 41 members from 20 different countries. Nine NAMEAN members are IAF Advisory Committee members, five other individuals have been asked to serve to represent the NAMEAN area generally, and 27 members have been asked to serve as sources of information from 20 different countries in the NAMEAN region. New members are welcome by nomination and approval by the MERWG.

The next task of the MERWG will be to develop a detailed plan for establishing an international system for registering birds (including, in particular, wild-taken sakers) that will be based on the 'mark and bank' model developed by IAF Research Coordinator, Dr. Robert Kenward, and a system recently implemented for registering birds imported into the United Arab Emirates. The intent of the plan would be to document falcons moved across international borders for falconry purposes, monitor saker populations in parts of their breeding range, and provide incentives for local cultures to conserve sakers and their habitat. Once the plan is developed, the MERWG will present the plan to IAF-NAMEAN for additional input and refinement of the plan. It is hoped that the IAF might have an opportunity to present the plan at a conference being planned to occur in Saudi Arabia sometime in 2003 that will focus on saker and houbara conservation.

Submitted by Tim Kimmel (MERWG Chairman & IAF-NAMEAN Facilitator)

WG CITES – Tony Crosswell

Report to IAF AC of Meeting held at CITES Geneva 15th July 2002 – Anthony Crosswell, Executive Secretary IAF.

I went to Geneva for a meeting with Willem Wijnstekers, Secretary General CITES. My goal had been to reinforce our support for sustainable use by encouraging a resolution to the CITES problems in UAE to help captive breeding. For these aims IAF has a good reception.

After an initial discussion with Mr Wijnstekers about current CITES issues I also met Chief of Enforcement John Sellar, Jonathan Barzdo Chief of Convention Support Unit, Maritza de Campos COP Organiser, and Marie-France Adian Barretto PA to the Secretary General.

The main subjects were related to the current events and difficulties involving CITES accreditation in UAE. This has caused suspension of the ability for falcon breeders and others to export to UAE. IAF should remember that there is now a representative from Saudi Arabia on CITES Standing Committee.

Falconers react with dismay at the content of the Hungarian Management Authority Web site authored by Katalin Rodics against falconry. Action for CITES suspension was taken earlier this year following an inspection team visit to UAE earlier in relation to trading conditions. Following their report a suspension was imposed awaiting system upgrades to improved workable standards. **It should be noted that this is a general suspension effecting all CITES related trade – not just raptors.** Falcon breeders world-wide have been effected by this ban and Middle Eastern buyers are in need of a resolution to the problem.

During the second week of July 02 a delegation from the UAE visited CITES Geneva to discuss proposals and progress. A plan was outlined by UAE and a further visit by the inspection team is scheduled for the end of July with the object of lifting the suspension so that falcons can be imported in time for the hunting season 2002. UAE will have in place a registration system by that time with a cut-off date for registration of all birds by the end of July. No wild or non-CITES registered birds will be admitted after that date. UAE are paying all costs and CITES Officials are being used in the establishment and training process in UAE. It is to be hoped that this will prove successful.

Changes in UAE Management Authority structure and their Falcon Research and Breeding program have some impact for falconers in the West. IAF have not been involved or consulted in this process by ERWDA or their representatives but have received copies of some documents for information.

There is no proposal for changing the status of the Saker Falcon to CITES Appendix 1 on the agenda of CITES COP 2002. Proposals are now closed.

With regard to Hybrids there is an argument that they could be seen as of positive benefit relieving pressure on wild stocks – they could even be recognised as being outside of regulation if they could appear indisputably different! This has been achieved with some parrots where breeders have managed to change the colour to something that does not occur in nature and those birds do not require controls! The genetic pollution angle is generally not seen as important and the political benefits could easily outweigh other aspects.

The whole subject of UAE accreditation will no doubt be discussed at the COP in Santiago 2002. It might be a good opportunity for IAF to attend and be involved. IAF might like to contact Chilean falconers to join IAF for their involvement in this one time event – CITES COP 2002.

I outlined in detail the unique role of IAF as the international voice for the sport of falconry as distinct from the commercial industry that is dependent upon falconry. There is clearly much respect for our credentials as falconers in the world of conservation of birds of prey as well as an appreciation for the different policies of member countries, some for sustainable use and some for commercial captive breeding.

The value of IAF as the avenue for communication and representation of differing policies in the sport of falconry is much appreciated. CITES is responsive to the internal changes we have made and the new team. To have one falconry body CITES can talk with is of great value as distinct from the commercial bodies.

Working group for World Conservation Union (IUCN)

Robert Kenward, Frank Bond, Herwig Hoedl, Tim Kimmel, Janusz Sielicki

This working group handles issues associated with IAF's membership of IUCN as an International NGO. A secondment to IUCN in Geneva and election to committee of IUCN's European Sustainable Use Specialist Group have ensured good contact between IAF and IUCN during 2002. This was important, among other things, or briefing IUCN, WWF and Birdlife International on IAF progress with saker issues, for example through establishment of the NAMEAN e-forum.

Another important action was the participation by Ralph Rogers in an IUCN-sponsored workshop on Commercial Captive Propagation and Wild Species Conservation in Jacksonville, Florida in December 2001. The goals of the workshop were (1) to review the currently known conservation benefits and costs of commercial captive propagation of a wide range of plant, and animal species, (2) to determine the contributions of CCP, if any, to the survival of wild stocks, and the conditions under which CCP can be made beneficial to wild stocks and (3) to develop policy guidelines on CCP to insure that such activities remain beneficial to wild species. A report of the meeting has already appeared in the IAF Newsletter.

IUCN is an organisation composed of IUCN brings together 754 non-government organisations as well as 113 government organisations in 181 countries. Organisations that join are required to comply with IUCN policy on conservation, notably the new acceptance of sustainable-use activities. FACE has recently drawn our attention to the recent admission to IUCN of a new member that is hostile to sustainable use. A draft letter that IAF might submit to IUCN on the issue will be provided before the Woodhall Spa meeting.

IATA –Herwig Hoedl

In response to notification that an IATA working group in Vienna was to consider the recommendation of UK Hawk Board Chairman for the withdrawal of accreditation of sky-kennels for air transport of falcons Herwig attended the workshop. It was a useful exercise and in combination with what was done by other falconers and IATA withdrew proposals for withdrawal. As background it should be understood that the sky-kennel had only achieved accreditation about 5 years ago after lobbying by NAFA and IAF at that time.

Reports of the delegates

Mexico

December 14th, 15th, and 16th, 2001, was our "National Field Meeting of Longwings and Shorwings", which was held in San Luis Potosi, México. We had a roundtable, conferences, falconry market among other activities. There were 16 Falcons flying at homming-pigeons on Sky Trial style, 55 Harris-hawks flying at rabbits and Jackrabbits (eventually at Jackalope).

This meeting was attended by 150 falconers from all over the country and got acquainted with other falconers who we had not met before. The total of the quarry was of 15 jackrabbits, 54 rabbits and 4 squirrels. However, the roundtable results were not the ones expected, we saw that the number of falconers committed were less than we thought, but it helped us to know how many there are and who they are.

Actually, in most of the country there are falconers, the largest group is "Grupo Cetrero del Valle de Mexico" there were approximately 80 members, some people of this group are consultants to the Mexican government. They published the magazine "RAPAZ" since 1998, in 1999 they created the internet page

<http://www.geocities.com/hawkjaime.geo/>
<<http://www.geocities.com/hawkjaime.geo/>>

In Longwings the best group is "Asociación de Halconeros de Aguascalientes", they hunt ducks like Pintail, Cinammon, etc. There is also a large project of captive breeding of Enrique Hicks and Pedro Hicks where we can buy legal birds, they produced their first F.P.Anatums this year.

The State of Queretaro has also another active organization which is "Asociación Queretana de Cetrería A.C." They have been in charge of organizing the last 4 Sky Trials and one Field Meet for shortwings in 2000 and were the ones responsible for coordinating this first "National Field Meet for Longwings and Shortwings 2001" Along with the clubs San Luis Potosí and Aguascalientes. They participate with articles for Rapaz and also have their own web page with the domain :

<http://cetreria.queretana.miarroba.com>
<<http://cetreria.queretana.miarroba.com>>

Monterrey has the largest facilities of captive breeding and rehabilitation, they produce some Harris Hawks and F.P.Anatums since 1997. Other states such as San Luis Potosí, Veracruz, Hidalgo, Baja California etc. are doing good falconry.

On behalf of the Mexican Falconers I want to say THANK YOU VERY MUCH for your hospitality, for all those beautiful moments with the birds in the fields and specially to Tony Crosswell and every member of THE BRITISH FALCONERS CLUB.

Regards

Juan Carlos Rojo
Mexico

EUROPEAN ISSUES

by Christian de Coune

Written declaration by the European Parliament

FACE made an active lobby to have a Written Declaration issued by the European Parliament aimed at allowing member States to decide themselves about the hunting seasons and at having the Directive accordingly amended. The issue has been turned down. I availed myself of the opportunity for recalling to FACE that I was very reluctant towards opening discussions on amending the Directive as falconers would have much more to lose than to win, it would be a dangerous Pandora Box.

Rook hawking and quarry licences.

The British Falconers' Club asked IAF for its opinion on the issue of the compatibility with the Bird Directive of hawking at non-game species and of spring rook hawking.

Upon request of Patrick Morel, I made an overview of the case law of the Court of Justice of the European Communities. Within two days, I sent the result of my analysis to Patrick.

My conclusion was that allowing hawking at non-game species and at rooks during the spring could be considered compatible with article 9 of the Bird Directive.

Meeting European Commission and IAF.

Patrick Morel and myself met with the authorities of DG Envi. of the European Commission.

We addressed several issues : introducing the IAF ; falconry as a judicious use ; definition of falconry ; describing falconry as currently practised in Europe ; attitude of the Commission towards falconry ; traditional game-species.

Quarry licences : the Commission gave in 1998 a favourable opinion to the UK on the lark licences. Rooks are on the UK list of game-species.

No complaints have ever been lodged against falconry by the EU Commission.

There is a hearsay that article 9.1.c of the Bird Directive was a result of falconers' requests. I confirmed that at that time, falconers (IAF and FACE) have strongly reacted against the Proposal for the Directive that had forgotten falconry.

About the use of wild birds of prey, the Commission would be against a system of continuous taking of raptors from the wild, it should not concern threatened species and respect the principle of small numbers.

Free movement of falconers to and from third countries ; it is confirmed that household and personal effects may not consist in live animals. The issue should be raised with the person more specifically in charge of CITES.

Lawyers of the Commission tend to consider falconry as a judicious use, but the concept of « judicious » remains to be defined. The Commission asks us formally to prepare a document illustrating the fact that falconry is a judicious use ; the day after, that document was sent to the Commission.

A working group comprising FACE and BirdLife are preparing a guidebook to the Bird Directive to help the Commission giving opinions of certain sensitive issues ; falconry is not addressed specifically in it.

We told to the Commission that we preferred to keep a low profile about falconry.

Guidance Document

An Ad hoc Working Group comprising FACE and BirdLife co-operates with the Commission in drafting a « Guidance Document on hunting under the Bird Directive ». They are performing a remarkable work, which is still in progress. It is 50-page document. The aim is to help the Commission taking a position on sensitive issues, keeping in mind that interpreting the Directive is of the sole competence of the EC Court of Justice. That document could help solving the problem of the interpretation of some provisions (e.g. opening and closing dates for hunting) without having to amend the Directive. Falconry is not addressed as such, but is quoted as an example of judicious use of certain birds. We follow the issue with interest.

Opening and closing dates for hunting.

The European Court of Justice has been asked for a preliminary ruling by a French court on the issue of the possibility for derogating from the opening and closing hunting seasons such as defined in article 7 ; if so what are the criteria ?

This question asked to the Court is one of the major issues of the Guidance Document. It makes it a bit difficult for the said Guidance Document to take to strong a position on the issue while the case is pending before the EC Court of Justice.



The Commission consults the IAF.

I have been informally consulted by the Commission on the following issues : can derogations be issued for taking raptors from the wild, keeping them, using them for hunting, releasing bag-game for training hawks, hawking at non-game species or outside the normal hunting season, are falconry birds specialised on specific game species ?

Conferences attended

8-12 April 2002, I attended the Conference of the parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity in The Hague (Netherlands). It was not on behalf of IAF that I was there, but nonetheless I have been seen by a good many people who saw me as « Mr Falconry ».

6th Conference of the Parties CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

7-19 April 2002

The 6th conference of the Parties to the CBD held in The Hague (Netherlands) gathered about 2000 participants. The convention has been ratified by 183 States. One of the priority aims of the Conference was the adoption of Guiding Principles for the implementation of Article 8(H) of the Convention : « (H). prevent the introduction of, control or eradicate those alien species which threaten ecosystems, habitats or species ».

It is recognised that alien invasive species represent one of the primary threats to biodiversity and it is reaffirmed that full and effective implementation of article 8 (H) is a priority.

Parties, Governments and relevant organisations are urged to promote and implement the Guiding Principles.

The Conference of the Parties welcomed the initiative of the Council of Europe to help the implementation of Article 8(H), including the development of a European Strategy on invasive alien species. These guiding principles provide all governments and organisations with guidance for developing effective strategies to minimize the spread and impact of invasive alien species. Because the principles are non-binding, they can be more readily amended and expanded.

No first-time intentional introduction of an alien species should take place without authorisation from a competent authority unless it is known that an alien species poses no threat to biological diversity. A risk assessment should be carried out. The burden of proving is placed on the proposer.

I reminded to the delegate of the Council of Europe the resolution of the Bern Convention on the introduction of non-native organisms which exempted falconry birds from the ban on the introduction of non-native organisms. I recalled him that the said resolution had been prepared by IUCN. He of course remembered.

I asked him to keep this resolution in mind if a European Strategy was to be prepared. He reacted positively.

Lots of other topics wer addressed :

Forest Biodiversity ; the need is expressed for urgent action for forests that are threatened while undelining the sovereign rights and responsibilities of countries.

Inland water ecosystems. Marine and coastal biodiversity. Biodiversity of dry and sub-humid lands. agricultural biodiversity. Global strategy for plant conservation. education and public awareness.

This convention covers a large set of strategic issues for preserving biodiversity. It is likely to have a direct impact on our specific field of interest, unlike the Bern Convention or the CITES Convention that may impact falconry more directly.

15-19 April 2002, I attended the Green Week organised by the European Commission. It was a good opportunity for making informal contacts with several participants. Patrick and myself attended a workshop on sustainable hunting and good practices. One of the main topics was the necessary dialogue between hunters and conservationists, the wish was expressed that this workshop would revive that dialogue. Hunters and environmentalists have a common aim. BirdLife calls for a modern, well managed and sustainable hunting. Hunting is not incompatible with Natura 2000 but must adapt to it.

11-12 June 2002, I attended upon request of Patrick on behalf of the IAF the meeting of the Expert Group on Bird Conservation of the Bern Convention. Hereafter my report on my attendance of the conference :

Presentation of the IAF's award

A new award instigated by the President for services to falconry. The award is an IAF brooch in gold and silver. It was awarded to Dr Robert Kenward for some 27 years loyal service to IAF and Dr Tim Kimmel for his service for two terms as NAFA president and his subsequent work for falconry. Later in the week Vice President Frank Bond also awarded this prize to Anthony Crosswell, Executive Secretary IAF and President BFC.

AGM 2003 - Jose Manuel Rodriguez Villa from Spain kindly offered to host the 2003 AGM of IAF. The offer was accepted and is expected to be in the first two weeks of December.

Close of business

7.00 pm BFC Presidents' Drinks reception for local landowners and guests

8.00 pm for 8.30 - IAF dinner in the main dining room

9.00 pm - speaker Richard Burge, Chief executive of the Countryside Alliance, organiser of the recent March in London to oppose anti hunting proposals.



Report from the Research Coordinator

Dr. Robert Kenward 18 March 2003

Falconers need to be aware what the issues of hybrids, over-harvest of sakers and a growing welfare lobby are doing for falconry in Europe. Five years ago, falconry was an acknowledged rescuer of peregrine populations and becoming accepted by the conservation community. We expected new privileges as a result, not least the legalisation of falconry in Scandinavia. Now, we are back to defending our ground in each country joining the European Union and even in Germany, a country in the European falconry heartland.

We should not be too disheartened, because there are rays of light on the horizon. As a result of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the concept of 'conservation through sustainable use' is gradually starting to gain ground over the purely 'protect and reserve' approach to conservation. Falconry is the very epitome of conservation through sustainable use, and will eventually be recognised for this if we work for it. IAF has an excellent team to help defend falconry now and build that new reputation for the future. The CBD represents a watershed in conservation, under which thinking is gradually changing. Unfortunately for falconry, another issue under CBD is the damage to biodiversity that can come from invasive alien species.

As a result of CBD, IAF has been busy during the last 6 months with two issues at the Bern Convention. One has been to try to secure effective and not restrictive treatment as part of Europe's new interest in alien species. The second is to help European conservation thinking move forwards to an approach that welcomes the conservation benefits from sustainable use.

European Strategy on Invasive Alien Species

Under the Bern Convention, an Expert Group on Alien Invasive species has been putting together a strategy plan. This was presented at a meeting in the Azores in September 2002, and then again at the Meeting of Parties in Strasbourg in December. IAF was represented at both meetings, with help from Christian de Coune especially valuable in Strasbourg and for producing the following comments on the draft strategy (which can be supplied with the original draft proposal to anyone interested). It was Christian who won the exemption in 1977, so that the flying of trained hawks of non-native species is not counted as an "introduction". The difference now is that the strategy draft is much broader than the act of introduction into the wild. It also covers species brought into a country, held there for any reason, and what approach is taken to such species in the wild – in other words the whole process of becoming an invasive alien species.

Comments from the International Association for Falconry and Conservation of Birds of Prey on the draft European Strategy on Invasive Alien Species.



"Falconers take greatest interest in the conservation of biological diversity and are well-informed on the issues that affect it; IAF had a delegate at the 6th CoP of the CBD in The Hague. IAF supports and engenders initiatives that are likely to maintain or improve the richness of natural ecosystems.

However, the best intentions may have unpredicted negative side effects. Some provisions of the draft ESIA could result, if strictly implemented, in the practise of falconry being jeopardized without any benefit to the biological diversity. Falconers do not use exclusively birds of prey of indigenous species. They have been using non-indigenous species for centuries without any harm to natural systems, because (a) loss is a rare event especially with radio-tagging now routine, (b) survival to breed after loss, of two trained birds, of opposite sex at the same time and place is an event of vanishingly small probability. Were such an event to occur, the birds could readily be detected and removed before any risk of population growth by taxa with such a slow rate of population increase.

This was the basis for the exemption of falconry from Recommendation T-PVS (1997) 57, which is as justified today as it was in 1997. We therefore wish you to introduce in the text of the ESIAS a statement which would justify decisions exempting the use of birds of prey in falconry from the prohibitions contained in it.

We propose this as a paragraph after 5.23:

5.24 Non-indigenous birds of prey trained for falconry have been used for centuries without any harm to natural systems, as recognised by exemption in Recommendation T-PVS (1997) 57, and should be white listed. The International Association for Falconry and Conservation of Birds of Prey (www.i-a-f.org) provides a contact point for falconry issues."

A number of other one-word amendments follow (which can be supplied with the original draft proposal to anyone interested), after which we address the issue of the preparation of white lists. The proposal is only that species should be added to white lists following a risk assessment, so we have added:

"The following amendment is essential to avoid huge administrative overload from horticulture, silviculture and agriculture, as well as problems that will hinder cooperation from other groups:

5.11 **White list** replace "...following a risk assessment." by "... following (a) risk assessment or (b) decades of exposure to local or equivalent habitats without evidence of invasion".



In general, we find the review exemplary in its thorough cover of all possible considerations. However, we note that implementation of all the proposed measures would require very considerable resources. Moreover, the chain of a species becoming invasive includes many links, including with a vertebrate example: export (permitted), transport (permitted), import (permitted), development of large captive stock (permitted, encouraged), release or loss of enough to establish (permitted, encouraged, failed to remove), invasion. It is not necessary to cut every link in the chain to prevent invasion. Indeed, with stakeholder agreement, it may be adequate to (i) prohibit deliberate release, (ii) discourage a large stock and (iii) ensure that any establishment will be immediately removed.

We feel that, rather than attempting every possible measure, it may be most practical to use step-wise implementation based on prioritisation. A review could be used to establish priorities, by assessing for each recent alien species invasion problem all the steps that would effectively have cut the chain, and whether 2-3 steps common to all could then be prioritised. Of course, differences between taxa might require different steps, for example for plants, vertebrates and invertebrates, or terrestrial and aquatic species.

Prioritisation among the many current proposals could lead to recommendation of a few simple measures likely to succeed. If there was then also be an annex of other measures to be considered when and where required, all the present hard and thorough review would have been useful, without practical and political difficulties from over-extensive and draconian measures."

Draft European Charter On General Principles For Protection Of The Environment And Sustainable Development.

The second issue involves the whole Council of Europe, and thus would affect all European countries, whether within or outside the European Union, just like the Bern Convention binds and the European Court of Justice. We are very privileged, through our observer status at the Bern Convention, to be able to contribute. The following gives the tone of our comments on the draft (a copy of the draft and our entire comments can be provided on request). Our objectives are to help change thinking on conservation in Europe towards that of other hands-on practitioners, so that it embraces sustainable use and does not remain purely "protect and reserve".

The future European Charter has three simultaneous objectives:

1. To synthesise the complementary contents of all the documents already adopted by the Council of Europe in relation to sustainable development and the environment;
2. To bring together and firmly establish the common principles generally accepted by the whole international community in relation to the environment and sustainable development;
3. To express and to acknowledge the existence of a new European political consensus on the values attached to the fundamental human right to live in a healthy environment guaranteeing sustainable development and solidarity for all.

The essence of the Charter is the adoption of 11 Principles:

1. the principle of the indivisibility of fundamental values,
2. recognition of the European common heritage,

3. the principle of integration,
4. the human right to the environment,
5. the principle of joint management of shared resources,
6. the principle of prevention,
7. the principle of precaution,
8. the principle of responsibility,
9. the principle of knowledge and information,
10. the principle of participatory democracy,
11. the principle of subsidiarity and of local independence in respect of sustainable development.

Comments submitted by the

International Association for Falconry and Conservation of Birds of Prey.

"We have reviewed this document with great optimism, seeing in it an opportunity for Council of Europe to introduce innovative Principles that may really help not merely to preserve an unsatisfactory "status quo", but to enhance the degraded components of our European environments. We have been looking for new thinking, to encourage conservation through sustainable use, stakeholder participation and other principles enshrined in Convention on Biodiversity and at Johannesburg. We find that the author and earlier reviewers have done a remarkable job of pulling together so many instruments to produce a comprehensive charter that is on the whole both thorough and well-balanced. However, there is still scope for improvement in three important areas.

1. A particular concern is use of the words "environment", "protection" and "rights". The term environment is used here in the loose sense of "human living space", and should perhaps be defined as such at the start of the document (to avoid confusion with the many different environments recognised by an ecologist). Only in this anthropocentric context does the "fundamental right to live in a healthy environment" (page 6, objective 3) make sense.

Even this loosely-defined environment is a multi-component entity (geosphere, hydrosphere, atmosphere, biosphere) that changes dynamically with natural processes as well as human developments. "Protection" now normally means "prevention of impact by humans", as implicitly recognised in the charter on the several occasions when it mentions "protection and management". Accepting a "right to development" (p.4) or "rights" to water, food, housing, access etc (p.11) inevitably implies impact on the environment and hence impossibility of pure "protection". Nevertheless, a human-managed environment can still be "preserved" or, perhaps more accurately, "conserved" as a healthy environment for humans and other life. Indeed, management to maintain, restore and enhance is also crucial for conservation of the environment. That is why Council of Europe's Bern Convention is for *Conservation* of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats, why the Convention on Biological Diversity generally uses the term "conservation" and why IUCN changed its name from IUPN at the first major conference after its foundation in 1948.

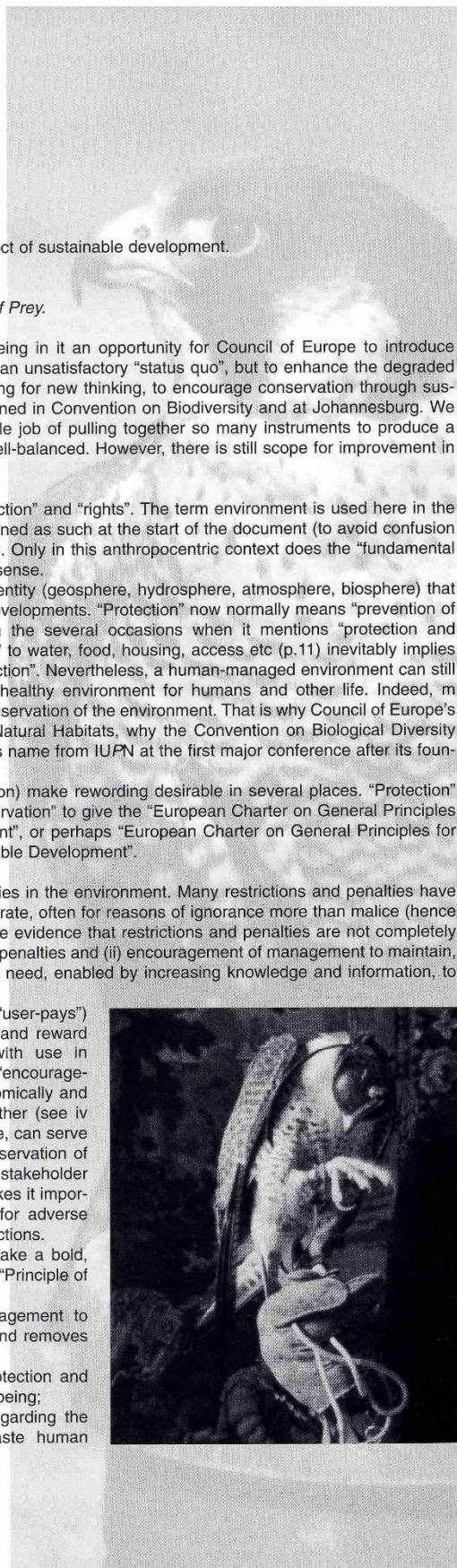
These considerations (that may in part reflect loose translation) make rewording desirable in several places. "Protection" should be replaced in the overall title by "Preservation" or "Conservation" to give the "European Charter on General Principles for Preservation of the Environment and Sustainable Development", or perhaps "European Charter on General Principles for Conservation of the Environment and Encouragement of Sustainable Development".

2. The charter is full of admonishments applied to human activities in the environment. Many restrictions and penalties have existed for decades while environments have continued to deteriorate, often for reasons of ignorance more than malice (hence the importance of Principle 9 on Knowledge and Information). The evidence that restrictions and penalties are not completely effective has resulted in two trends: (i) increase in restrictions and penalties and (ii) encouragement of management to maintain, restore and enhance environments. Indeed, there is now a great need, enabled by increasing knowledge and information, to restore and improve components of the environment.

Principle 8 on Responsibilities mixes initial admonishment (e.g. "user-pays") with novel recognition (at the end) of need for encouragement and reward environmental improvements. This is admirably consistent with use in Convention of Biological Diversity of recommendations such as "encouragement of use of natural resources in ways that are socially, economically and ecologically sustainable" – although that itself can be taken further (see iv below) using IUCN's Amman Policy Statement "Use, if sustainable, can serve human needs on an ongoing basis while contributing to the conservation of biological diversity". CBD and IUCN also strongly encourages stakeholder participation in all aspects of conserving environments, which makes it important to balance "stick" (Prevention, Precaution, Responsibility) for adverse actions with the "carrot" of recognition and reward for beneficial actions.

We therefore propose that this charter for Europe should take a bold, innovative step on the international stage, by separating from the "Principle of Responsibility" (8) a "Principle of Encouragement" for:

- (i) good governance, that legislates and motivates for management to maintain and enhance environments, as well as for protection, and removes negative incentives to conservation;
- (ii) good practise, that researches, informs and implements protection and management adaptively to enhance biodiversity and human well-being;
- (iii) cooperative participation of all stakeholders in decisions regarding the environment, to ensure equity and reduce conflicts that waste human



resources and can degrade environments;

(iv) innovation that maintains and enhances environments, for example by encouragement for conservation through use of natural resources in ways that are socially, economically and ecologically sustainable (CBD).

We feel that Principle 8 is already rather long, and that admonitory Responsibilities are important enough (in a convention with so many "rights" in Principle 4) to be separated from Encouragements. We note that this Principle of Encouragement could usefully be expanded, for instance by adding other examples to (iv). Our example in (iv) would create a "principle of conservation through sustainable use", which combines aspirations in CBD and IUCN's Amman Resolutions, but is explicitly stated in neither, and could be an especially important initiative for crowded European environments. It moves the objective from one of protection and no-impact, in activities that are merely sustainable and maintain environments, to one in which users of natural resources (soils, water, wildlife) are encouraged to enhance environments. Heaven knows, there are enough intensively used environments in Europe in need of enhancement.

3. The essence of the Precautionary Principle is to reduce damage from changed or new activities. This needs to be made clear in the first paragraph by insertion of "new or changed" before "... activity or product" (at 14.3.1). Rationale: it is an abuse of this (CBD) principle (and a major cause of stakeholder alienation) to apply it as a "catch-all" to issues on which there is already evidence for lack of adverse effects. Examples of abuse occur when hypothetical impacts are suggested by interest groups, often for advantage more in politics than in conservation. The proposed modification should reduce such abuses."

REPORT OF IAF PARTICIPATION IN THE FALCONRY SYMPOSIUM AT ARHAVI AND AT THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF CIC IN ISTANBUL, TURKEY DURING APRIL-MAY 2002.

The meeting in Arhavi on April 25th was attended by 8 clubs and 400-500 falconers. There were presentations by two local politicians, by Muzaffer Topak as director of the Directorate for National Parks and Wildlife in the Ministry for Forestry, National Parks and Wildlife, by Tansu Gurpinar as director of the Turkish Society for Protection of Nature (DHKD), by the local falconers, by Robert Kenward and by Edwin van Vaassen (as listed below). It was in effect a debate, in which only the DHKD director was critical of falconry. The main problem was that falconry had been made subject to licensing or individual birds in 1996, but only some 600 of an estimated 5,000 falconers had obtained licences. The presence of IAF representatives was felt, at the least, to have ensured appreciation of the widespread and legal nature of falconry internationally.

During the following week, Jevgeni stayed with Edwin (who has a pioneering raptor rehabilitation centre in Turkey) in Ankara. They visited Muzaffer Topak at the Ministry for Forestry, National Parks and Wildlife to discuss falconry regulations. Robert's stay at an apartment, where he worked undisturbed on two reports, was organised by Fikri Kurtulus, Director of the main Hunting Association. Robert was very kindly treated by Fikri and the local falconers, especially Niyazi Akkaya, who showed him some trapping (catching 4 migrant sparrowhawks). They let Robert pay for nothing at the small café where they ate each evening. These evening meetings provided valuable further opportunity for discussion with Ömer Borovali, the CIC delegate for Turkey and main organiser of our visit, with whom we had also travelled to Arhavi. We are especially grateful to all these people for kindness and hospitality during our stay in Turkey.



sparrowhawks (probably 2 a year, with release stipulated for 1 hawk). Keeping other raptors would require an advanced licence, available on completion of a course. The courses would be administered by the hunting association, which would encourage falconers to join clubs and thereby promote responsible behaviour. Falconers would also be encouraged to work with a new ringing scheme, to help monitor migrant populations of raptors on the very important Bosphorus and Caucasus flyways.

Robert Kenward & Jevgeni Shergalin

The Annual General Meeting of the CIC, during 1-3 May, was a large and extremely well-organised event. The President, Dieter Schramm, hosted the proceedings in fine style. As well as the many meetings of individual Commissions, there were general presentations, including a superb audiovisual reminder of the importance of hunting in culture and conservation. Following the move from Paris to its new base in Hungary, CIC was pleased to announce the appointment of its new Director General, Kai-Uwe Wollscheid, who had previous worked for FACE (and with IAF at the Bern Convention). On May 3, there was a meeting of the CIC Commission for Falconry and Conservation of Birds of Prey, very ably chaired by Peter Sapara.

After the meeting of the CIC Commission for Falconry and Conservation of Birds of Prey on May 3, there was a meeting of all interested parties to discuss falconry regulations. Muzaffer Topak chaired that meeting, assisted by Ömer Borovali. The other participants were CIC Commission Chair Peter Sapara, Dr Sigrid Schwenk (a DFO expert on the culture of hunting), Dr Igor Tavcar, Roger Upton, two DHKD representatives (Nergis Yazgan & Ahmet Birsal), several local falconers and hunters, Jevgeni and Robert. We had an extremely constructive meeting at which all agreed that regulations should require minimal resources and encourage falconers maximally to keep the law and contribute to conservation. The chosen approach was to license individuals, initially by simple application, which would entitle them to trap and keep

The list of presentations at the Meeting in Arhavi, Turkey 25.04.2002.
(Translated from Turkish into English with the kind help of Mr.Edwin van Vaassen)

Morning session:

Refik Lakerta. History and culture of hawking in our country.

Oguz Kurdoglu. Status and recommendations according to national and international regulations, number of hunters and hawkers in Eastern Black Sea Region.

Tansu Gurpinar. The affects of hawking on natural populations

Kemal Bayraktar. Heritage and ethics of hawking.

Afternoon session:

Dr. Sancar Baris. Breeding & feeding biology, behaviour and habitat specifications of Sparrowhawks.

Edwin Vaassen. Ancient Hunting techniques and use of these in foreign countries.

Muzaffer Topak. Legislation of bird protection according to international agreements.

Dr. Robert Kenward. Falconry and conservation of birds of prey

Evening session:

Questions, recommendations, discussion.

The Presidium of the Meeting consisted of the following:

Muzaffer Topak - Assistant to General Director of General Directorate of National Parks, Game & Wildlife

Tansu Gurpinar - General Director of Turkish Society for Protection of Nature

Dr. Sancar Baris - Ass. Prof. of 19th May University in Samsun

Edwin Vaassen - President of Raptor Research & Rehab. Centre of Turkey

Kemal Bayraktar - President of Local Hunting & Falconers Society

Refik Lakerta - President of Local Hunting & Falconers Society from Arhavi

Oguz Kurdoglu - Forester Engineer of East Black Sea region for Ministry of Forestry

Cavit Bilen - Assistant to Gen. Director for a big constructing company in Turkey; naturalist and hawker.

The Meeting was chaired and led by Mr.Cavit Bilen.

Some tel. numbers of 8 Turkish Hawking/Hunting Associations, which held Meeting in Arhavi on 25.04.2002.

Hawking Society in Rize 0.464.214 69 71

Hawking Society in Kemalpasa (Kemalpasha) 0.466.351 48 65

Hunting & Hawking Society in Cayeli 0.464.532 28 43

Hunting & Hawking Society in Pazar 0.464.641 20 39

Hunting & Hawking Society in Ardesen (Ardeshen) 0.464.715 75 05

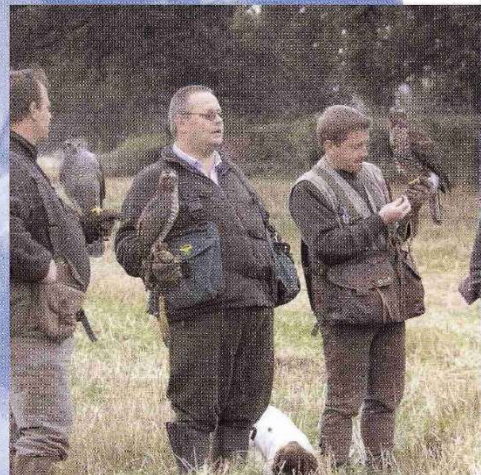
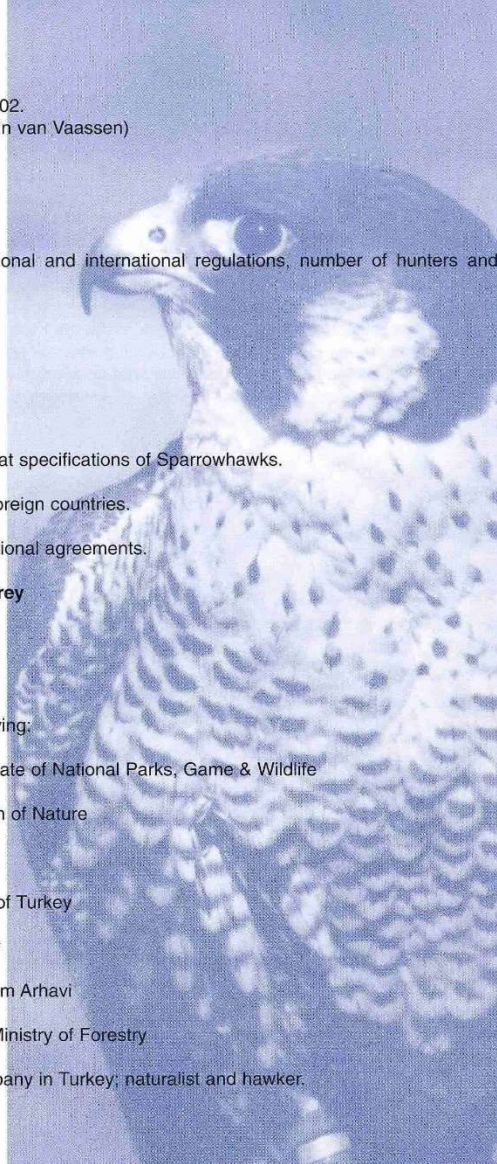
Hunting & Hawking Society in Findikli 0.464.511 36 39

Hunting & Hawking Society in Arhavi 0.466.312 30 20

Hunting & Hawking Society in Hopa 0.466.351 48 65

National Parks Game Wildlife Directorate in Rize 0.464.214 59 32

-"- Head of Regional Directorate in Artvin 0.466.212 73 65



FALCONRY JOURNEY IN THE USA

Gilles Nortier

The sky is a deep, slightly turquoise blue. It is torn up in the East by a line of glowing embers that slowly fade away into a long trail of purple, then lead blue little clouds. Simultaneously the early morning sun sprinkles its soft golden light over the snow-capped Big Horn in the West. Like a flow of lava it slowly runs down the valleys and seems to stop on reaching the first spruce trees.

Ahead of us, among the dry grass of the meadow, the setter has frozen to the spot. As expected the sharp-tails have kept the appointment.... More than 600 feet above our woollen bonnets, bells are tinkling steadily. After a long climb towards the mountain, the peregrine has come to the right position, just over the dog. She is high enough to catch the first sun rays and



seems to be twinkling in the deep blue sky. Hans Gabler has slowly got closer to the dog and is about to flush. The sight is breathtaking. In a few seconds our little fire-ball will turn into a shooting star

.....At that very second the ringing of my alarm-clock shatters my dream, a recollection of last week in Wyoming ! It is 5 a.m. and when falconry has me get up so early it is usually a bad omen ! But we are in the USA and falconers are early risers here. Patrick Morel and I share the same room in the big Holiday Inn of Kearney in Nebraska. No doubt, "Falconry Inn" would be more suitable a name for this hotel, during the 5 days of the NAFA annual field meet

A freezing wind is blowing on the car park. Several mini convoys of 3 to 4 vehicles are lining up, ready for departure. The 6 or 8 cylinder engines of monstrous 4x4 pick-ups are humming in the cold air, letting out clouds of white steam. Scrapers are busy defrosting the windows and the bustle has woken up the birds left in the cars. Bells are ringing everywhere behind the tinted windows. One after the other the mini-convoys drive out of the car park, into the night.

There are neither flying groups in the USA nor any determined allocation of hawking grounds. The convoys are composed of one or two falconers possibly accompanied by a strictly limited number of watchers. Each falconer chooses his own ground, sometimes quite remote (up to several hours of driving) that he already knows or has reconnoitered some days before. It is either a private estate, for which he needs the owner's permission to fly, or a federal hunting ground open to all. Landowners are mainly cattle-risers in this part of Nebraska and the cultivated areas are reduced to the cattle needs. It seems quite easy to get permission to fly as most of these ranchers are not small game hunters themselves. Those we met were quite friendly. They were flabbergasted to see such an impressive number of nuts come from so far away, to catch a grouse on their estates, and foreigners cross the Atlantic to watch the show. Back home, by the fireside, they will no doubt have related their strange encounter with Martians.... But even if obtaining the agreement to fly on their grounds wasn't a matter of elementary courtesy, yet it would be most advisable, judging from the calibre of the loaded guns I caught sight of on the seats of their 4x4 or hanging from their tractors !

It's now the turn of our little group to move off and drive across the town of Kearney, situated in mid southern Nebraska. But Lisa Cherry -our charming lady driver- isn't the least bit worried and seems to guess our destination. Knowing the strict respect for speed limits in this country, catching up with someone on the road is far from being easy. However Lisa manages to do it and, one hour later, we finally drive into a farm yard (I had been told that the flying area was very close to the hotel) !

Interminable discussions with the farmer in the draughty yard, waiting for the day to break. The wind is bitterly cold and it sweeps little snow flakes around on the frozen ground. For my part I am trying to give some advice to a Spanish group of cameramen I have already met in Scotland and England. Judging from the weight and bulkiness of their equipment, the lack of daylight, the usual pitch of Kenny's falcons and the swiftness of prairie chicken, I wish them courage....and good luck.

Kenny is indeed going to fly his two gorgeous gyr/peregrine tiercels. A cast flight with Hans assistance in the simultaneous release and calling down of the birds. Let's hope for 2 kills ! These birds are brothers from the same clutch, imprinted and perfectly trained for cast flight. They are a beautiful slate blue. In spite of the leaden sky the day is slowly breaking. Kenny decides to go into action and we drive toward the flight location - a field of tall corn stubble where prairie chicken have

been seen to alight.

"Prairie chicken" ! What a petty name for such a beautiful bird, so swift and skilful at getting away from the best falcons. It's in fact a grouse from the Lagopedes family (tymanuchus cupido). It's weight averages 1300 grams. Like its cousin the black cock I flew sometimes in Scotland, it has a fast and long flight (several miles). As you can tell from its name, the prairie chicken lives in the vast wild grasslands of the Middle West, where buffalo used to graze. This magnificent environment was chosen for the film setting of "Dance with wolves".

In late autumn the coveys start getting together and you can observe flocks of up to 50 birds and even more, landing in formations in the stubble.

To fly this remarkable game, the falconer ought to know where they are used to alight, be patient, be there at the right time, and he must pray that they haven't changed "restaurants". Hawking the prairie chicken is a bit like duck-flight shooting. In the morning the birds don't stay long in the stubble and they quickly head back to the grasslands. It's even worse in the evening for, by the time you have located them and released a falcon, the sun is already setting the horizon ablaze. There is no time for loitering then, when our companion is about to kill. Otherwise get ready to look for it in the dark with an electric torch, and it can take hours!

Kenny and Hans have cautiously stepped out of their car, with their birds on their fists. We are all waiting inside our cars until the two tiercels are on the wing, so as not to frighten the game. One of the birds leaves the fist and climbs up into the wind. Instinctively the second takes off in his turn, then changes his mind and alights on the 4x4 roof. After shaking his feathers with obvious pleasure, he finally decides to catch up with his brother.

In no time at all the two partners are flying over 600 ft above our heads, regardless of the freezing wind that has risen with the day and the increasing swirling of snow flakes.

Then Kenny and Hans dash into the stubble, crunching the snow under their feet. Instantaneously the two falcons adjust their positions but it's impossible to follow them both at a time.

Cries, rustlings of wings... the prairie chicken are taking flight . Suddenly, the tiercel I have been carefully following from the start, tumbles and, as quick as a flash, goes into a long stoop. The feathers have turned into stone. Impact in spite of the game's dodging. Feathers are flying among the snow flakes but the grouse keeps flying on, as if turbo-propelled ! It's over. What a splendid flight and what a game!

The two tiercels are called down to the lure and fed. The day is over for them.

Once we accompany Lucy and Pete Widener. Lucy will fly her female American goshawk; a beautiful bird of several seasons, with a delicately striped breast and carmine eyes. After driving for a while in the Kearney area, Pete catches sight of a fallow piece of land where we may find some game. The weather is very nice and the wind a bit strong for the Gos.

We stand in a line around Lucy and start beating the fallow. The flora is rich and dense there. A thick layer of various dried plants and high grass is covering the ground and offering perfect protection to the game. Some of these grass sticks hard to our clothes (so hard that three months later, I was still trying, with a magnifying glass and tweezers, to rid my corduroy trousers of these horrible scratching things. But what a crazy idea not to wear jeans like everyone else).

Three times Lucy flies her goshawk at jackrabbits. Without success due to this difficult ground.

From 3 pm on, depending on the distance to the fields, the falcons that didn't fly in the morning are taken to the prairie chicken late flight. On several occasions we join Rick Sharpe and his wife (who have come from California to attend the meeting and, seizing this opportunity, intend to visit Midwest falconers, for hawking for... two months). Rick is flying two hybrids – one white gyr/peregrine and one grey gyr/peregrine.

Here they are ! In a corn stubble field bordered in the South by a copse. The sun is already low, spreading its golden glow on the countryside under a bright blue sky. Patrick and I are eager to watch a kill. Knowing ourselves and with such a well programmed hawking scenario, we would have long had a falcon on the fist, ready to fly ! Rick, on the contrary, is slowly walking to his car with disconcerting composure. Then he kills a pigeon, clean and cut it to bait his lure, prepares and checks his transmitter, and finally takes a bird on the fist. We follow him to the place he has selected to put on the wing, but after 300 yards he changes his mind, and decides to go back and to release his bird behind the hedge where the cars are parked.

There he is on the wing at last, and climbing up quite far from us, up the North wind. Some trees hide him from our view. We will need long minutes to locate him again with the telemetry. Actually he is over a thousand feet above our heads ! Then a little group walks with Rick to the cover. In the meantime the sun is sucked down by the hills at the skyline and it's getting dark. Rick is still running in the field for the grouse seem to have moved a bit

The falcon is still positioned, but the length of the flight and the obscurity on the ground have made him lose his initial



pitch. Here they fly ! Straight stoop of the falcon and deadly hit, but it's too dark for the watchers to admire the scene. Rick comes up to us, feeding up his falcon. He reacts to our congratulations by shrugging his arms with disappointment. In his hand is a duck...! But what did get into Donald's head to fly by, just two seconds before the taking off of the chickens? What a deadly mistake !

Back again to the hotel. Imagine an establishment of 100 to 150 rooms, inhabited by falconers only (non-falconers having sensibly shortened their stay...). Every ten yards in the corridors little groups are commenting on their impressions of the day. Some rooms have large windows opening on to the corridor ; they are mostly occupied either by organisers of the meeting and so have been turned into offices where everyone stops by, or by suppliers of accessories or art vendors, using their windows for display. Real shopping malls, quite nice and handy.

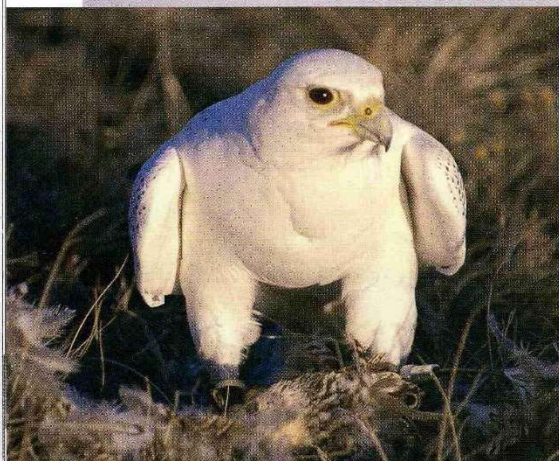
The closing evening dinner, on Friday night, is the only shared meal, on previous reservation. On the other evenings, we had dinner at the hotel, or in a restaurant, even a fast-food, close to our hotel. It could also be in one of these famous steakhouses where you can eat succulent meat, definitely much more savoury than the one you usually get in Europe.

As to the birds, the lack of hawking groups doesn't enable us to watch many in action, even during these five days. Imagine a meeting with 443 attendants, most of them having one or several hawks ! So it's equally impossible to observe all of them on the lawn at the same time because of the unceasing comings and goings of all participants.

I think there were more long-wings than short-wings. Lots of peregrines (pealei and anatum), of hybrids mainly gyr/peregrine and a few jerkins. I have also seen a passage merlin tiercel and a few prairie falcons.

Among the short wings, I probably saw as many goshawks (a few of them were European) as Harris hawks, a few red-tails and Cooper's hawks. I didn't see the eagles (except in Wyoming where golden eagles are everywhere in the wild).

As to the President of NAFA - Darryl A. Perkins - he flies a magnificent female of Siberian white goshawk. It was the first time I had seen such a bird in reality. It has an imposing size and whiteness slightly streaked with beige.



Darryl got back late at night. He had driven more than 700 miles in one day to fly his hawk. But he did kill his jackrabbit. Well done Darryl...a President must show the way !

After spending 15 days in their country, I can confirm what had seemed impossible to me at first : American falconers are even more madder than we are ! That should comfort our spouses ! Even though Patrick and I had nonetheless travelled 10.000 miles to meet them. No comment.

With approximately 215 kills, it was a beautiful meeting, very friendly and remarkably organised. A warm and relaxed atmosphere, courteous and welcoming falconers, thoughtful NAFA Officials, eager to give us the best possible welcome, both as foreigners and IAF representatives (to enable us to be free and independent, our friend Tim Kimmel lent us a car, especially brought by a friend of his from....Kansas).

All that was needed to make a memorable stay. Certainly to be done again !

In such a spirit, let's come back to the previous week in Wyoming, before the NAFA meeting.

This 15 days journey was thought up and organised by our friend Frank Bond - NAFA General Counsel and IAF Vice-President for the Americas. And he didn't select the worse destinations ! To drive us around and make us meet a maximum number of falconers, he had called another friend of ours with whom we have been often hawking in Scotland, friendly and devoted Tony Huston.

At long last we leave Denver, after spending some 22 hours in planes and airports, looking forward to getting to the nearest motel, where Tony will skilfully negotiate the rooms rates.

On crossing the Wyoming border, the scenery becomes more varied. We drive past Cheyenne, the capital city, and keep to the North to reach Sheridan late in the afternoon. Very warm welcome of Pete and Lucy Widener who are housing us. They live in an elegant newly built big house, on a scenic site at the foot of the mountain. Tony knows the place quite well and Lucy has him take us to one of the two guest houses located further down. After what she invites us for dinner. Actually this guest house used to be Pete's father's home. No wonder nothing is missing ! The bedrooms an living room large windows open on to a big meadow where deer are grazing all day long. In the distance, the Big Horns summits play with changing colours every hour, turning into dark figures on the inflamed sky at dusk.

Arrangement is taken to meet Kenny Sterner and Hans Gabler to fly sharptails, tomorrow morning at 6 o'clock at Kennys, which means getting up at 5 ! We haven't overcome the jetlag yet, but my dread of getting up so early fades away during the aperitif at Pete and Lucy's, thanks to the comfort of a nice glass of Scotch whisky (or was it two ? Or more ?)

Loveily and friendly evening. Lucy is a charming hostess and a successful shortwing flyer, and Pete is a passionate falconer who swears by peregrines, just like me.

Pete and Tony explain to us that sharptails are flown at "leks" that are display areas of the grouse. In Autumn, old cocks join together early in the morning and introduce young males displaying. When one knows where leks are, there is no need for searching for this game anywhere else. It is most likely to be there in the morning within 50 or 100 meters. We are longing to admire this famous game.

This Monday 18 November 2002 will remain a memorable day in my life ! On this very day I start discovering American falconry. Despite my tiredness, getting up early is no more a problem !

Here we are, quite close to a sharptail lek. The scene is grandiose and it brings us back to when my dream-memory had been interrupted at the beginning of this narrative, just when Hans was about to flush the grouse for his young anatum female.... The falcon is high up and well positioned. Flush ! Instant stoop, oblique, so fast that the grouse is soon caught up. But just then, while climbing up, it starts accelerating like a rocket. The falcon speeds up desperately without catching up. The two birds offer us a fantastic tail-chase show. This sharptail, a brilliant ambassador of its species, seems keen on showing off its power to the tourists we are : at about 40 meters high it flies on a perfect circle around our binoculars, some hundreds meters away. An exceptional watching opportunity ! It's now higher and has definitely confirmed its advantage. Its show being over, it darts West to the Big Horns, still chased by the brave falcon that finally gives up and comes back to us.

Then Hans decides to offer it a second chance and releases his setter which soon comes to a point again. A grouse is flushed but the falcon, having lost its initial pitch and being straight over us, represents a top danger for the grouse that immediately tries to reach the nearest cover. Nice stoop that I can follow through my glasses until the sharptail itself enters in my field of view. Then it noses up to slow down and dive into a bush. The falcon could hit it but hesitates because of the branches. A gross youth error ; it will not crop on its prey. My god ! What a show, what a deco and what a game !

Brian Mutch flies later his pealei adult tiercel. Beautiful flight of an experienced bird. Nice stoop and hard hit, unfortunately without conclusion. Killing a sharptail with a peregrine tiercel, even a strong pealei, is possible but far from being obvious.

Later in the afternoon, after purchasing some change of clothes and shaving set (my luggage must be still flying somewhere !) we go and fly Tony's prairie falcon, trapped by him five weeks before. About trapping, it is worth pointing out that the USA are one of the very few countries to trust their citizens, who, consequently, have no reason to commit offences. Thus, a falconer can trap a bird in the wild, whose species is related to his experience and his rank in falconry. According to this rank he will be able to catch most of the species used for hawking, including the gyrfalcon and, again, the peregrine in several states. Once the bird has been taken, the falconer sends a mere possession notification to his authorities, that send him a registration ring in return. Of course these regulations only apply to the falconer's catches intended for personal use. It forbids any kind of transfer or export of the hawks thus caught. Such a system would be far too simple for France and European countries !

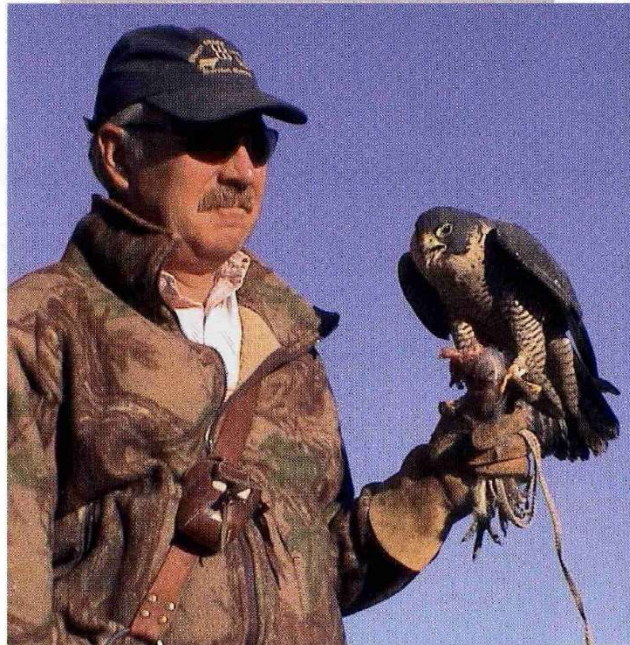
Tony is now flying the bird. The place isn't ideal and the wind is slightly blowing down, which wouldn't disturb a passage falcon when having long been man trained. The bird flies in a few circles around us, then glides down wind toward the valley, where we lose sight of it. It will be called down two kilometres away, after a telemetry search disrupted by an echo resonance.

We start off equally as early on Tuesday morning, to fly the sage grouse. A mythical game for hawking that I am eager to discover. We join Kenny and his superb black hybrid gyr/peregrine tiercels. He will fly them together, with Hans' help.

On the road leading us to the hawking area, near Buffalo, South West of Sheridan, a totally different bio-type catches our eyes, inundated with a magical light. As far as the eye can see the plain is stretching, covered with silvery wild sage bushes. One has to beat a lot of ground to find this game and we follow the tracks in our 4x4, hoping to catch sight of some of them....

The sage grouse (*Centrocercus urophasianus*), as its name tells, lives in the wild stretches of wild sage where it feeds. It is much bigger than the prairie chicken and the sharptail and its weight varies, according to the areas, from 890 to 1500 grams for the hens, and from 1900 to 2500 grams for the cocks. Its location spreads along most of the Rockies range, on the East side. Locally, this species, totally dependent on sage, is threatened as soon as man touches its environment. A considerable work is being done by the "North American Grouse Partnership" to promote the conservation of grouse and the habitats necessary for their survival and reproduction, with the essential help of local ranchers. (This association boasts many reputable falconers among its officials, and publishes a review, magnificently illustrated with surprising pictures. To subscribe, write to the Treasurer of the NAGP - Mr Cleo Sealing : sealingc@aol.com.)

Besides its impressive weight the sage grouse has a great power of acceleration and a remarkable flight speed, on several kilometres. Only strongly built falcons (gyrs, pealei or anatum or hybrids females) can kill such game regularly. It's fearsome



acceleration often confounds the falcon's killing attempts, and ends up with a long tail chase and a catch out of sight. A very dangerous situation for the falcons ; every season indeed, several hawking birds are killed by eagles or great horned owls (Patrick and I are familiar with this risk for losing already three of our falcons in an eagle's talons in Scotland. While shedding tears we do accept this major risk philosophically since we, and not the eagles, are the intruders ! A natural risk, therefore acceptable, unlike this repeated euthanasia of our birds carried on by stupid trigger-happy gun holders, or irresponsible pylon installers. Maybe an out of place reflection, but still useful to remember).

....We are carrying on our search at a slow pace, at the end of the convoy, when we finally spot two grouse worming their way among the sage bushes. Headlight signals to the two other vehicles that stop and wait for us. Kenny analyses the place and invites us to get closer by car for releasing the falcons. The two hybrids soon leave Kenny's and Hans' fists to climb rapidly 200 metres above our heads. One of them goes on climbing while drawing southwards, probably interested in some distant prey, until we lose sight of it. But luckily its brother is still there and getting impatient to see us motionless. Kenny decides not to wait any longer and we start running to flush the grouse. Magnificent stoop of this black drop against the blue sky....and hit ! However, as explained above, flying the sage grouse with a tiercel, even a very strong one, is akin to a challenge. The hit result will then be a few flying feathers. The falcon starts on a long chase that takes it out of sight. Kenny leaves to fetch it in case it might have succeeded in force (which won't be the case unfortunately). Meanwhile, Hans has called down its absenting brother that came back to us, but too late.



I have just watched my first sage grouse flight... and I am not disappointed. I sit down in the morning sun, my head full of beautiful images ; the weather is fair, the quietness deep and the scent of the sage hangs heavy in the air. Life is hard !

Tony has made an appointment with Bob Berry and he introduces him to us. Bob has a passion for falcons and his speech is gripping. He leads us through his breeding project and I am impressed by the number and quality of his gyrfalcons, white for the most part. Bob also breeds the extremely rare "orange breasted falcon" (*F. deiroleucus*) from Guatemala, within the context of a project managed by the "Peregrine Fund" aiming at saving the species. To do so, Bob had to build specific mews and reconstitute the neo tropical environment and climate, vital for this little falcon. Tall exotic plants have been brought in, constantly watered, so as to produce, with the help of heating, the indispensable hygrometric degree, close to air saturation. Still in the field of this conservation project, Bob is working at the breeding of the lovely little "Taita falcon (*F. faciinucha*), native to southern Africa. It's a rare privilege to be able to admire these two magnificent richly coloured species, so

closely.

The rest of the afternoon is spent with Lucy and her Goshawk female. We look for cottontails (rabbits) in the thickets close to the house, and Pete displays a real talent for tracking. Several attacks but without success. We slowly walk back to their home, chattering. Lucy has fed up her goshawk ; Coming home with an empty bag won't prevent Lucy from preparing us a delicious piece of deer, marinated with much art and perfectly grilled by Pete.

On Wednesday at daybreak, we are at Brian and Ruth Mutch's. Brian is flying his adult Anatum female, a powerful and broad shouldered bird, on a sharptail lek close to his house. Beautiful flight with a nice pitch above the dog which doesn't manage to find a grouse. This morning the sharptails must have changed leks. Brian thanks his falcon for its patience by flushing a hen pheasant. Despite the fowl's quick flight, it will be caught in a nearby dale.

We head for another lek where Dale -Brian's brother- flies his white jerkin. What a marvellous bird, immaculate. It climbs up rapidly and, a connoisseur, positions itself perfectly. Lightning stoop with an impressive acceleration and deadly hit. We reach the falcon on its kill and I soon have the privilege of holding the prestigious sharptail in my hands. It's heavy, dense and compact, and its feathers that appeared fairly dull in the distance, offer a great richness of delicate and variegated stripes.

In the afternoon, Pete takes us to the other part of his ranch, near Buffalo, to fly the sage grouse. For hours on we cut across his estate, looking for some grouse. But the scenery is so grandiose that time seems to fly. Pete talks lovingly about his country, his lands, the animals that live there, and his cattle. I pester him with questions he answers willingly, while crunching the ice cubes he's filled up his big beaker with.

We drive slowly. Here a badger, just a few metres away, is stealthily trying to hide a rabbit in its earth, there flocks of antelopes bolt as we approach, there at last, after a curve, a big ash grey bird is standing out among the sage, and stands still. Through our binoculars we catch sight of a second head pointing out of the cover....Sage grouse !

We walk a little away for flying and Pete hoods off his adult Pealei female. The falcon doesn't climb high but it eyes our flush

manoeuvre with attention. A young hen takes off at Patrick's feet and doesn't have time to activate its "turbojet" ; the falcon has already caught up with it and binds it properly. We congratulate Pete, quite displeased with this short flight. Like any falconer, he wishes he could have shown us a great flight with a breathtaking stoop and an explosive hit ! I try to soothe his disappointment by saying that I sincerely think that no grouse can be killed by chance and that, if the falconer may be dissatisfied with the show, the ornithologist is dumfounded by the feats some falcon can do. Champions always make things appear so easy ! We will talk it over again in the evening during the aperitif and the wonderful dinner that Lucy has once more cooked for us. And, as it sometimes happens with falconers....we rebuild the world around our glasses of whisky !

On this Thursday morning, the gorgeous sunrise fills us with wonder as we are on our way to see again Brian and Dale's sharptail flight. Brian flies first his Anatum female which offers us a very beautiful flight, a superb stoop ending with a violent and deadly hit. Brian gets back his bird on its kill, at the bottom of a small valley.

Dale in his turn hoods off his jerkin. It takes off into an East wind, quite away from us. I am eager to see it fly back for, in my binoculars, it has been replaced by a young bald eagle flying quite low and inspecting the surroundings, like a hen harrier ! Dale doesn't look worried because gyrfalcons are often used to straying far away to get their pitch.

And here it is again, very high, above the three pointing and backing setters. Not being used to flying gyrs and to their big size, I can't estimate its height. Snow white, it sparkles in the early morning blue sky. Dale goes to the dogs and flushes. Then a true shooting star crosses the sky and hits a sharptail amid our applause. Our little group is overwhelmed and our faces are beaming.

An opportunity for friendly meet with Skip Tubbs tonight. Skip and his wife had come to see us in Scotland a few years ago. Passion wipes off distances !

Friday today is our last day in Wyoming. In the morning, Pete flies ducks with his young Pealei tiercel (a falcon I have been dreaming of for a long time).

At noon we visit Dan Konkell and his breeding project. A new occasion for us to admire magnificent black gyrfalcons on top of the white ones. (There are so many breeders around Sheridan that I wonder how many falcons are bred every year !)

Then we accompany Dan who flies sage grouse twice. His gyr hits a grouse and kills it after a long tail chase, out of sight. Randy Money flies in his turn but his gyr, much attached today to the conservation of the sage grouse, obstinately refuses to fly ! Like every day, the sunset is grandiose.

Last evening at Pete and Lucy's, who are busy loading their car before supper. We all plan to leave very early tomorrow morning, heading for Kearney, Nebraska, to the NAFA meeting. Feverishness ! The weather forecast is announcing snow falls in the night !

For the aperitif, Lucy offers us thin slices of sage grouse breast, marinated and grilled. A real delight that I won't forget. Rick Sharp and his wife, just arrived from California, spend the evening with us. More than ten hours of driving are awaiting us....

These 15 days spent in the Midwest will remain in my memory for ever. The USA is a dream country for falconry, with their vastness and the beauty of their territories, with the quality of their game and the simplicity of their regulations. It's easy to find hawking grounds abounding in game, and there is no lack of room. The state of Wyoming, where we stayed is nearly half as big as France and inhabited by about 500,000 people. Sheridan -4th town in the state- has only 15.000 inhabitants. It makes you wonder....

My warmest thanks again to Frank Bond who organised this journey for us, to Tony Huston who devoted all his time to us and made us meet so many fascinating falconers, to Lucy and Pete Widener, the perfect embodiment of American hospitality, and to all the falconers who were so kind to us, never hesitating to disrupt their timetables to show us great flights.

To all these charming people, Patrick and I hopefully say....see you soon again !



Middle Eastern Relations Working Group Report

J. Timothy Kimmel, Working Groups Chairperson

Since the time of the 2002 issue of the *IAF Newsletter*, one of the major accomplishments of the Middle Eastern Relations Working Group (MERWG) has been the establishment of IAF-NAMEAN — an Internet-based e-mail network for discussing raptor and prey conservation and falconry-related issues that span the geographic area represented by Morocco to the West and China to the East. This is an area where saker/houbara conservation have been a primary conservation issue, which was the major reason for establishing the network. This network, called the Northern African, Middle Eastern, and Asian Network (IAF-NAMEAN, or NAMEAN in short) consists of a select group of IAF officials and local representatives of countries in the NAMEAN region who can quickly provide information on local viewpoints, regulatory, biological, and conservation issues.

IAF-NAMEAN was 'launched' in mid-summer 2002 and currently has a total of about 45 individual members representing about 25 countries, xx of which approximately 15 are in the NAMEAN region. Our membership continues to grow as new members are approved by the MERWG, as potential members might be recommended by other NAMEAN members or identified through other means.

Admittedly, the activity of NAMEAN, while it started off fairly strong, has waned quite a bit in recent months (due, I will add, as a result of my preoccupation with other issues, but also the continued uncertainty of political and military events in the region). However, I believe there is an interest in increasing the activity of NAMEAN discussions to address issues in the NAMEAN region, especially as sakers and houbara draw increasing attention by regulatory agencies and organizations, such as CITES. Furthermore, now that the network has been established, the IAF has a means to quickly and reliably gather data and information throughout the region at "the click of a mouse."

In addition to the establishment of NAMEAN, the MERWG has had an interest in increasing IAF membership from within the Middle Eastern Region where IAF membership has been under-represented in proportion to the level of falconry practice worldwide. Both José Manuel Rodríguez-Villa and Martin Jones (IAF member of the MERWG) have played significant roles as we have worked with countries in the Middle East to engender support for and membership with the IAF. At this point, certain falconry organizations in the Middle Eastern region are considering invitations for membership with the IAF.

THE SLOVAK FALCONERS CLUB IN SLOVAK HUNTING UNION.

In the present time are the birds of prey and owls captive managing problems regulated by law/norms in environmental protecting, hunting and veterinary section.

In creating process of the hunting and veterinary laws there were always included asides and proposals from the consulting council of the Slovak falconers club (SFC) So that it does not come to interest engagements or any other problems, quite opposite to the case of environmental protecting laws.

In the year 1990 members of the SFC came with a cooperation proposal with the State nature conservation (SNC), concretely at that time to the Head-quarters of nature conservation Liptovsky Mikulas in the case of birds of prey wild population fortification by captive bred individuals. Skilled breeder SFC members gave also proposals for particular methods. On a negotiation in December 1990 this plans were accepted by officers of the SNC and a group was built contained of SNC and SFC experts to finish and realise the project. However, in January 1991 this group on the first meeting stopped its operation, because the Head quarter of nature conservation Liptovsky Mikulas received attitudes of Mr.-s Simak,Danko,Kadlecik and Korman, which evaluated the birds of prey situation in Slovakia as a not calling for the above quoted activities bound up with the wild population fortification (most of all they considered the golden eagle population as a form stable to rising one). Notice books of these negotiations are in the archive of SNC.

In the year 1993 was built the so-called gestor system at the SNC for diverse species or groups of protected plants and animals. The birds of prey and owls protection gestor group elaborated the so-called birds of prey and owls conservation concept in Slovakia. At its creation also the interests of the captive holder from SFC were included (Ing. Alojz Kassak was a member of the gestor group). At that time arose also the environment-protection law, valid since 1994 under the N 287. It is necessary to notice, that at last nearly nothing from the above quoted conception was subsumed into this version, although for its time very professional, we can say dateless, elaborated.

The law 287/ 94 Z.z. has brought the first serious problems; an agreement for keeping protected species with special farming conditions a new tally of the captive individuals, categories of protected species

designation of kept individuals
agreement for using hawks for falconry

These circuits are still influencing in keeping hawks for Falconry and are multiplied by issue of Decree Nr.93/ 1999 Z.z.

I would like only briefly to comment the single circuits of problems;

Agreement for keeping protected species with special farming conditions

According to this law the protected animal species captive keeping agreement is issued by the environmental departments of the proper township offices and on a base of promoted documents of the hawk-acquiring the received origin certificates and the so-called cards of a species. The environmental department of the township office specified also the origin of discreet kept individuals. In case of the ascertainment and recognition of origin there was after the law-issuing a meeting at Ministry of the Environment of the Slovak Republik (MESR) under participation of Dr.Svec, Dr.Klescht and members of the gestor group, which draw a line, that all individuals kept in captivity acquired before 28.5.1992, consequently before CSFR get into the Washington convention, will be consider for legal acquired on the base of promoted documents.

However, already at 16.1.1995 the MESR reserved for itself the law to confer judgements for birds of prey and owls keeping. Any later begun the Environmental departments of the district offices with issuing this judgements again. That's why different SFC members are in possession of different licences with different farming conditions. At least, by joining of Mgr. Kmecova to the office of the MESR they began to permit the valid certificates of origin. In defense of the promoted documents of birds origin issued by environmental office, which determined on this base the great part of bird origins, mostly falcons and eagles, as "C" (minimally 2nd generation bred in captivity), Mdr. Kmecova determined their origin as "U" (unknown), even she "intended" new origin categories, as U/C etc., unknown in the rest of Europe. At present it is plain as the nose on ones face, that it was only a breeding-ground preparation for further restrictions brought by the decree 93/99 Z.z.

The new tally of kept individuals

Each individual received a so-called certificate of origin and was written into the card of the species. This document for keeping in captivity. That's why became the control twice multiplied, because the SFC used since a long time the so-called Hawk Control Cards, which are not accepted by the SNC.

Then the control system of the SNC changed more times, including the control numbers of captive keepers, so that on this field a really confusion was built, activated by the MESR, it caused a considerable displeasure also at the officers of the district environmental offices. At the present time new certificates of origin and cards of species are issued, where Mgr. Kmecova appropriates again the origins of individuals off her bat.

Many SFC members appealed against such procedures, even sued against the willful process of the MESR. During February 2002 the High Court of Slovak Republic satisfied the sue of Mr. Tibor Bedi in full range and eliminated a judgement of the MESR. On this example it is evident, that the complaints sued by SFC members are justified.

Designation of the kept individuals

The gestor group of SNC recommended her own concept a closed ring, a microchip and a DNA-test as a basic designation.

The MESR set on the first place the DNA-test, then the closed ring and microchip. At present, all hawks belonging to SFC are designated with closed rings edited by the SNC, which are frequently by themselves brought in question. Following microchip use is often directed, and certainly, at most of all individuals DNA-tests are also wanted. By SFC members self initiative ordered DNA test up 1994 in the firm MEDSERVICE Brno. These were at first by MESR accepted, but later gradually for transporting blood or pen assays to Czech Republic of course with time terms of 30 days and more for transaction the agreements, so that was at last not to realise.

After a stimulus by SFC-members, the firm MEDSERVICE Brno created up September 1996 the society BIOSERV Nitra, which converged all the essays for DNA analysis from the whole territory of Slovak Republik and supplied them to Brno for evaluation. But in a short time this firm stopped its activity. Also by a stimulus of SFC, in cooperation with Veterinary University Kosice and the Slovak Environmental Agenture Banska Bystrica a firm was searched, which could realise the DNA analysis on the Slovak territory, nevertheless more proposals were handing by the above quoted institutions, the MESR selected the firm Slovgen s.r.o. Bratislava for this activity. This firm yet don't have a state accreditation for making DNA-analysis and their edited protocols haven't any legal value. That's why the SFC refuse to make DNA-analysis at this firm.

Agreement for birds of prey use for Falconry

The law 287/ 94 Z.z., 7 f is about the using of hawks for falconry and animals to catch or killing other animals. In the practice does it mean, that if one want to keep hawks in an aviary, needs only an agreement for captive keeping, (this agreement has each member of SFC) but if a falconer want his hawk to give a possibility to fly and hunt in natural surroundings, he needs to have the above quoted agreement edited by the district environmental office for the proper district, of course for a proper fiscal stamp charge. This agreement has a validity only for the district of falconers residence. If he wants to go visit a friend with a hawk SNC on the glove to another district, he need to have an agreement for all the districts he has eventually to pass, because for the SNC

even holding a hawk on the glove indicates falconry. If all Slovakian falconry meeting is organised, the SFC asks for agreements global for all the attendees and all districts, where the hawking takes place. In practice does it means minimally 30 days transactions for agreements and 2000,-SK fiscal stamp for each district. The greatest problems induced the Decree Nr.93/99 Z.z. about protected plants and protected animals. It is possible to preface, that this decree was elaborated only by MESR officers and a narrow group of their consultants, and asides of natural reservation or national park administrations regional SNC-centres or groups were absolutely negated.

In 3-details about protection conditions of protected animals assessed also the manners and possibilities of obtaining an animal from the wild. Neither one of them gives a possibility to obtain a hawk for falconry by taking a nestling from the wild. Hereby is blocked a possibility to obtain a young goshawk, sparrowhawk or kestrel for falconry use. It is possible to acquire a goshawk by catching in a pheasantry, but the pheasantry must have an agreement for goshawk catching edited by MESR. In the last year no one pheasantry obtained such an agreement. Taking goshawk nestings from the wild, in the past the most common way to obtain a hunting hawk for SFC members is blocked by the SNC because of the ostensible critical situation of our goshawk wild population. Paradoxically, even in the year 1998, when the same MESR granted agreements for taking young goshawk from the nest in their reasoning adduced under other arguments, that in the whole Slovak territory breeds about 1600 pairs of goshawk, the population is plus or minus stable, the presumed yearly accession is about 350 young birds and according to the birds of prey and owls protection gestor group it is possible to take yearly 20 individuals from the nest, it is about 0,6 % of the populations accession, without endangering the wild population.

Decree 230/ 2001 of Ministry of Agriculture, changing and amplifying the Decree Nr.172/75 Z.z. in wording Decree 231/ 1997 Z.z. 3 sect 1 and 3 gives a possibility to catch during the whole years goshawks in independent and accredited pheastries, and in black grouse and capercaillie localities. This possibility is by MESR not accepted.

3 sect 9 says ; sale, gift, interchange, rent and lending of extremely endangered and critical endangered animal species is only to realise with animals born after fertilisation in controlled or artificially by man designed surrounding e.t.c., and which origin is minimally from the second generation born in captivity without amplifying by genetic material from the wild. The breeding ground for this paragraph was prepared by into the question bringing of birds of prey origins obtained before entrance the CITES.

All eagles and falcons imported to Slovakia in the past were minimally the first captive bred generation and their young were F 2 generation, with a possibility of free treating with them. Mgr. Kmecova did after ostensible control willful change the categories of origin for U or U/ F1, and so stopped any manipulation with their broods.

The most sad thing on the whole problem is the fact, that the SNC is not able to rationate her measure against members of the SFC (or SHU). Also the standpoints about a captive keeping of diverse species, hybrids, their designation and other measures had in some years extremely changed.

Some examples;

standpoint about obtaining of goshawk was quoted above

hybrids and foreign species- in the year 1990 the keeping of hybrids was absolutely disqualified

In the year 1992 and 1993 was the SNC standpoint positive for holding such birds by SFC members, because of protecting of our original species and a more easy control. At the present time they were more cases of not agreed imports of foreign species and hybrids because of endangering of original species in the wild lost birds came free to the wild.

For example in the year 1992 and 1993, were only foreign species and hybrids were recommended, was the lanner falcon categorised to the original species because of 2-3 found during the last 50-70 years on our territory. In the recent time for more our members an import of this species was not agreed, because it is a foreign species.

At the present time, also because our protests against the law norms and procedures of the SNC executives is persisting intentional sickness of the operation of SFC, victimizing of their members, groundless interruptions of proceedings and similar non correct procedures. During the last 2 years the SNC also made attempts to ruin international falconry meetings on Slovak territory. For example in the year 2000 during the falconry meeting in Rimavska Sobota transferred 22 SNC officers with assisting 3 police officers a control raid with a following blood-test on hawks, so that the meeting was practically ruined. It is necessary to say, that for all the participating hawks also the export permits were conferred already before the meeting. It is odd, that a German falconer after refusing the blood test on his eagle had originally to pay 5000 Sk fine. After his refusing again they proposed a fine of 3000,-Sk and finally they satisfied with a fine of 300./Sk. Ultimately they made them excused after his protests to any international organisations.

In the last year the MESR-officers an attempt to ruin the jubilee 30 falconry meeting by handing import permits to foreign attendees only in the last while under the condition of blood test at overstep the state border. That's why {in apprehension on well-being of their hawks } 2/3 of the foreign participants didn't come to the meeting. A control with blood test subjected consequent the hawks only of the attendees passing the border in the working hours of a business day { SNC officers } Who came at week end or in the evening could pass the border after waiting any hours without such controls. Later, also the export permit certifying cheated them a whole hunting day.

For illustration only, as long as in other countries are the CITES permits transacted promptly at the same day or in a 5 days per post, in Slovakia this procedure has a more month duration. Last, but not least it is evident, that because of the last version of the law about handle with protected animals the SNC officers don't want to apprehend, that CITES-norm doesn't mean a generally stop in manipulation with protected animals, but only its control and regulation.

I want finally to point out, that the SFC does not activate the problems, we are only defending against victimizing, contravention of the constitution of Slovak Republik and breaking laws valid in the Slovak Republic, in the order to bring the state officers to work for the citizens welfare and not to discredit our state in contact with foreigners.

It is necessary to apprehend, that falconry means a very old hunting method, a component of cultural heritage from our fathers. An endangering of this hunting art leads to endangering of the whole hunting in Slovakia.

At present it is so, that a Slovak falconer or animal keeper is discriminated toward falconers and keepers in the states of

European union, because countrywide, that in EU-states the holding of foreign species or hybrids allowed- and in our country also in the year 1994 it was forced to fly or bred hybrids or foreign species- so now are hybrids and foreign species imports rejected. SNC officers predicate, that such individuals can our native species endanger, although they haven't any proof about such an endangerment.

Slovak falconer club

Anton Moravcik
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At the present our slovak falconer club has 268 members and 62 candidates from 16.10.2002 till 20.10.2002 was the 31st falconry meeting in Diakovce from Slovak republic 90 falconers from Austria,Germany,England,Spain,Italy,Denmark and Hungary...30 falconers birds of prey ...aquila chrysaetos 21x

falco rusticolus 3x

falco cherrug 12x

accipiter gentilis 14x

falco peregrinus 3x

falco peregrinusticol. 2x

together was hunted 75 hares and 6 pheasants

A Profile of Falconry in Ireland

(as presented at the AGM in Woodhall Spa)

According to the licensing authorities we have between 200 and 250 bird of prey keepers in Ireland. Of these about a hundred are members of the Irish Hawking Club, although at any one time it is difficult to account for more than 50-70 paid-up members. A fair estimate of practising falconers, i.e., those that hunt with their birds would be around a hundred.

The Irish Hawking Club has members in both the Irish Republic and in Northern Ireland which has a different legal system based on that of the UK. Currently the IHC supplies IAF with the Irish Delegate.

In the North hawks must be bred in captivity and be licensed. Most are bred in England, although the number of breeders in Northern Ireland is increasing. The main hawks flown are Harris hawks and redtails flown at rabbits with a few hybrids and peregrines used for rooks and grouse. There are many displays and falconry centres.

In the South it is forbidden to sell a hawk, but we can import. The sparrow hawk is the traditional hawk flown and the annual field meet in Carlow is designed specifically for spars. Goshawks are on the increase due to the efforts of one or two competent breeders and we are seeing an increase in Harris hawks. The redtail boom of the nineties has largely subsided in favour of the Harris. Game hawking is rare due to the lack of keepered partridge and grouse and the unsuitability of ground (small fields) for pheasant hawking. Several members are hawking snipe, but for longwings, peregrines and hybrids, the principle quarry is rook and grey-crow (hoodies). Falconry centres are rare and displays are few, although increasing.

Public opinion is largely favourable towards falconry and a traditional personal accessibility to TD's (Members of Parliament) makes it difficult for them to refuse us when we ask for help. Unfortunately our governments are almost always in a minority and need the support of independent members like the Greens, which puts Irish falconry at the mercy of political wheeling and dealing. Further worries arise from beaurocratic interpretation of EC and International Law and we have had to consult IAF on at least one occasion for advice on proposed legal restrictions. Traditionally (although not necessarily legally) there is a right of access to land for hunting in the South, particularly the southern part, and I have never come across a landowner who was not happy to have someone flying a hawk over his land. Finding a territory to hunt is not difficult, but because of the lack of keepered estates game is often difficult enough to find. Both the falconer and the hawk have to be licensed and no examination is required.

Gary Timbrell, IAF Delegate for Ireland



Total ban of falconry in the Flemish Region of Belgium, a proposal from the Association for Bird Protection.

Gunter Daes, IAF delegate

In Belgium, each Region does every 5 years a review of the hunting law (game species that can be hunted, opening and closure dates of hunting season and hunting methods allowed).

This year the decisions for the period of 1st July 2003 – 30th June 2008 need to be taken. All interested organisations may submit their proposals (hunters, falconers, green party, association for bird protection, etc.) to the minister of agriculture, fishing and hunting. It's worth to note that this Minister is a lady belonging to the Green party (Agalev).

The Bird Protection Association proposed several changes in the new hunting law amongst them a total ban of falconry in the Flemish Region, according following arguments:

Falconry has to be abolished. This way of hunting doesn't bring any positive contribution for nature and game conservation. This hunting method is practised by individuals for their own interest/pleasure/joy. Additionally, the current hunting law does not forbid the use of hybrids and non-indigenous raptors, so there are possibilities that these birds escape during hunting and cause a problem of 'fauna falsification'. Also as far as animal welfare is concerned escaped birds could cause problems, as they haven't learnt how to survive in the wild nature.

It was clear that in the proposal text of the bird protectors there was a great contradiction: birds escaping during the hunting will cause fauna falsification, however 2 sentences further these escaped birds will die because they haven't learnt how to survive in nature.

Bird protectors always made a clear difference between birds of prey keepers and displays on one side and falconers on the other side.

As falconers we were completely astonished by this change of attitude, because in the past bird protectors always gave positive criticism of falconry (stating even in one of their publication that falconry was the only acceptable hunting method as the most ecological). They relied on falconers for advice, rehabilitation of injured raptors and training of young raptors before releasing them back to the nature.

As the bird protectors were the last ones to submit their proposal, only very limited time was left to react.



The president of the Belgische Vereniging van Vlaamse Valkeniers en Havikeniers (Belgian Association of Flemish Falconers and Austringers) René Motmans prepared a very well structured document to reply to the proposals of the bird protection. His reply contained arguments justifying falconry based on experience and science, on articles from bird protection, giving positive and true criticism to falconry, and on articles from falconry books and magazines.

The Club Marie de Bourgogne did send a letter with arguments to preserve this ancient art and traditional part of Belgian cultural heritage and asking extended season for falconry.

IAF's president Patrick Morel, wrote a letter on behalf of the IAF with an impressive list of positive points concerning falconry, containing scientific and legal arguments, decisions of courts and authorities.

The Ministry did acknowledge receipt of the letters and expressed her concerns that our interest will be taken into account.

Until now no final decision is taken by the ministry, we wait in uncertainty, however I want to express my great thank to Patrick and René and hope that their efforts will result in the continuation of our passion and our way of live, the practice of falconry.

Status of falconry in the Czech Republic

Dr. Bohumil Straka Czech Falconers Club March 2003

Czech Falconers Club and statistics

Czech Falconers Club (Klub sokolník? ?MMJ) was founded in 1967 as the only club organizing falconers in the Czech Republic having currently 418 members. Internally, the club involves 20 district groups having five to fifty members. Although some members are passive, majority of the members have one or more hawks and the essential part of members are active falconers. Last year the club registered 17 new members succeeding in the special falconry exam, registered 51 new hawks for hunting (of which 16 are goshawks) and encountered following birds bred by its members: 101 peregrines, 79 falcon hybrids, 53 sakers, 10 gyrs, 9 golden eagles, 6 goshawks, 3 tawny eagles and 1 harris. In the last decade 2056 birds in total (of which 1583 falcons) were bred. The club registers currently: 321 goshawks (mostly females), 55 sakers, 41 falcon hybrids, 41 peregrines, 31 golden eagles, 11 harrises, 7 kestrels, 6 sparrow-hawks, 4 eagle owls, 4 tawny eagles, 3 red tails, 1 lanner and 1 lugger. The club registers only hawks used for hunting. The total number of hawks kept by falconers for breeding and other purposes, which is registered by the authorities (common species at district level and rare species at ministry level), is about triple.

Falconry legislation and IAF help

Falconry in the Czech Republic has always been quite popular and strong, however last years are more hectic than ever before due to the new hunting, environmental, CITES and animal welfare laws as a consequence of so called "approaching EU and its legislation". Since Czech Falconers Club is a part of Czech Hunting Union (?MMJ) having over 100,000 members, the club has fortunately means to influence negotiations with the government about the new laws.

Hunting law

In December 2001, Czech parliament approved the final version of our new hunting law, which is generally positive towards falconry and it clearly recognises falconry as a legal activity. The law involves several special paragraphs defining falconry related topics unlike all hunting laws valid till now. However, the law involved one unintentional error, which disabled hawking of the main quarry - hares and pheasants. Fortunately, in June 2002 we were able to push through a small, but important change, so hawking the hares and pheasants is enabled again since January 2003. The related paragraph said: "It is forbidden to HUNT hare, pheasant... by other means than by shotguns...", which was later changed to: "It is forbidden to SHOOT hare, pheasant...". This is an example, how easily falconry can be endangered by one single word and so we could advise every other country to be very cautious whenever some new laws are prepared. We can be lucky that we lost only one hawking season. In November 2002, the ministry order concerning the hunting law was updated and falconers will enjoy prolonged hunting period for hares and pheasants from September to December instead of November to December period, which is valid for shooting. Currently the new law is valid and no more essential changes are expected in the near future.

Environmental law

In June 2002, the new parliament was elected for another 4 years. Socialist party won, so also the government stayed socialist. The Ministry of Agriculture's attitude remained positive towards hunting and falconry, but ministry of environment changed from neutral attitude towards rather negative attitude probably due to the new minister, who used to be a chairman of Czech Nature Conservation Society. In November 2002, the Ministry of Environment suddenly submitted the first draft of the new environmental law to the parliament. The draft was generally quite restrictive and it concerned many areas of human activities incl. falconry. The main proposed restrictions affecting falconry are: complete prohibition of hybrids, 79/409/EC bird directive is implemented in an improper way that it does not distinguish the wild bird from birds bred in captivity as a private property, even fully legal birds would require a permission to breed, obligatory DNA tests should be introduced for European species in captivity. Therefore, we immediately started a heated discussion inside the club. Some members preferred the submissive attitude to accept the dictate of the ministry draft, but majority desired to try other ways - directly via MPs and via ?MMJ influence. We kindly requested the IAF to provide us info about the status of falconry legislation in the EU describing the importance of the situation. Based on the IAF materials and other sources, we prepared an overview and arguments for further negotiations. In addition, IAF sent a very useful lobbying letter to the parliament in January 2003. This was important, because we are a EU candidate country and our authorities consider everything, which 'comes from Brussels'. Currently the first draft law is postponed and it will be further discussed in the parliament in April or May 2003. It is expected to be returned back to the government or to be remade essentially (due to many other reasons than falconry).

CITES law

In November 2002 the Ministry of Environment submitted the first draft of the new law about trade with endangered flora/fauna (CITES) to the parliament. The draft is an update of the same law from 1997 and so far it seems that it does not impose any new restriction towards falconry. Currently the law draft is pending and it will be further discussed in the parliament probably in June 2003 and it is expected to be accepted.

Animal welfare law

In February 2003 the Ministry of Agriculture submitted the first draft of the new animal welfare law to the parliament. The draft is not restrictive for ordinary falconers, but it would bring some restrictions and additional bureaucracy to breeders and flying displays. Currently the law draft is also postponed and it will be further discussed in the parliament later. In the meanwhile we have time to influence it by lobbying.

Goshawk issue

Another difficulty for Czech falconry is that goshawk becomes unavailable for falconry. So far, it has been possible to get a

common species, such as goshawk, from the wild with certain obstacles imposed by bureaucracy. Nowadays authorities do not want to allow to take legally goshawks from the wild, although it is very common and its population is stable, if not growing. Czech falconry has been based on goshawks for a long time and currently still about 70% Czech falconers use goshawks for hunting, although many falconers moved to falcons in the last decade. We can expect that many falconers will give up falconry, because they cannot afford to move to falcons (considering not only price of the bird, but also other necessary additional equipment). Therefore our main concern is that this should be enabled also under new environmental regulations, because the yearly need for falconry purposes is far less than 1% of goshawk population and thus this cannot harm this species anyhow. The main opponent is the Ministry of Environment supported by ornithologists. We continue to negotiate and persuade the Ministry about our arguments. Another, but long-term solution, is the captive breeding. This year Czech falconers bred 6 goshawks, which is still too low number compared to about 250 bread falcons.

Future

We would like to continue our legislation effort in order to provide continuity of Czech falconry in this new century. If our effort is successful at the end of the legislation process, as we hope, we are going to translate all related materials and describe our experience and know-how so that other IAF members in troubles will also benefit from our positive example. This would be the best way how to thank for IAF support.

Annual meeting and presidential elections

In February 2003, we had an annual club meeting. Václav Svoboda was a good president over 2 decades, but he decided to retire. Petr Zvolánek, a relatively young forest engineer, was elected by a large majority as a new president of our club. We hope that his enthusiasm will help our club to sustain falconry in these critical years.

The main conclusions from the annual meeting are as follows:

- We are against obligatory DNA tests as we consider it as expensive bureaucracy
- We do want to keep hybrids for falconry purposes
- We do want to keep the possibility to take common goshawk in small amount from the wild
- We want to make lobbying directly via Members of Parliament and not via the Ministry of Environment, which is generally negative towards falconry and appeared unreliable during negotiations. We have already won support from several important MPs.
- A special action group was appointed, which is responsible for negotiations concerning the environmental laws, new CITES and new animal welfare laws.

Other activities

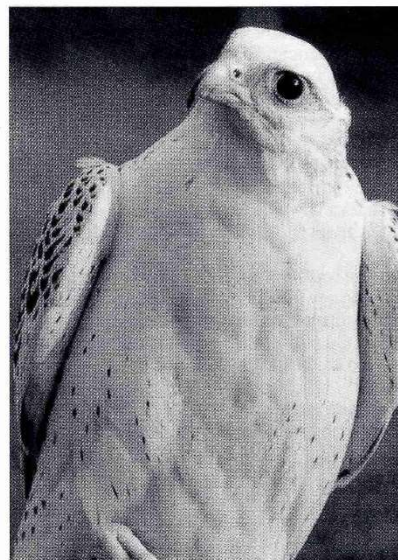
Apart from the legislation activities, Czech Falconers Club tried to influence positively the public opinion through mass media and exhibitions more than in other years. The official internet page of Czech Falconers Club has been updated and improved: <http://www.sokolnictvi.cz>

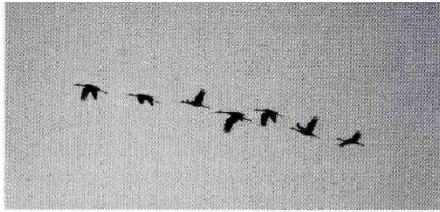
In October 2002 - at the same time as the IAF Meeting in Woodhall Spa UK, our club held its 35th annual international field meeting, which took place at Opočno castle about 150 km to the east of Prague. Every year about 150 Czech and 50 foreign falconers (UK, Germany, Austria, USA, Slovakia.) come with about 100 hawks such as 50 goshawks, 30 falcons and 20 eagles and they hunt for three days in groups of about 10 hawks. Usual quarry is hares for goshawks, pheasants for falcons and hares/roe-deer/foxes for eagles. This time, Opočno meeting was affected by the error in hunting law, so hawking was not possible and the meeting was organised only as a social event incl. demonstration for the public and invited media, falcon on balloon competition, presentations and a social evening. The next 36th international field meeting will be held again in Opočno castle from October 8th to 12th 2003.

Report from Danish Hawking Club

Tage Jessen, IAF-rep Denmark.

"The Danish Hawking Club has grown now to 35 members. Our political situation has not changed yet, hawking is still not legal, but we may breed and fly our birds. It looks like this year will show if we can make some serious progress regarding to legalise hawking, or we have to wait another maybe 10 years or more. It is very difficult to change a law, but we work very hard and seriously on this matter, and hopefully we will succeed one day. It is a bit frustrating, because wild birds of prey are still being illegally shot in Denmark, (in January a young peregrine) and we are not even allowed to hawk a rook or crow.





Netherlands

Thijs Fleskens

A disappointing falconry season just passed. Having no (suitable) gos, I was condemned to play the ferret-man.

Present situation in the Netherlands:

As birds we are only allowed, to fly goshawk and peregrine, bred in captivity. Before getting a license from the government you must prove to have successfully underwent two seasons apprenticeship, passed a theoretical exam, have a bird and a hunting area.

The maximum number of licenses is 200, so far in use 160.

So far there are only five species to hunt left. (mallard, woodpigeon, pheasant, rabbit and hare)

We are at the moment dealing with the government to get the black crow and magpie back.

Goshawks bred in Holland, and staying in Holland have to be DNA tested (mum,dad and child)

Other birds of pray can be held (not flown) as long as they are bred in captivity.
As such we try to discourage the keeping of those birds.

All in all, practising falconry in Holland becomes more difficult every year.

Because:

- strong decrease of rabbits (VHS)
- difficulty to get a hunting area.
- few pheasants (releasing young ones is not allowed any more.
- to hunt partridge is forbidden.
- goshawks are rather expensive.

That is all I think, in a nutshell.

The Hungarian Falconry in 2002.

János Tóth

The Hungarian Falconers Club founded at 1939. At present the club members are 150. Every year we have 3-4 new members. Every falconer has to make a state hunter-falconer exam and from this year a nature conservation state exam too. This exam organised by the Nature Conservation Ministry and contents the conservation law.

We can use goshawk, sparrowhawk, mousebusard, kestrel from the wild for falconry with permission. The peregrine, gyrfalcon, lanner falcon, golden eagle we get only from captive breeding. It is not allowed to use exotic birds of prey, saker falcon, imperial eagle and any kind of hybrids for falconry purpose. The two most popular bird are the goshawk and peregrine falcon. The hunting season starts with the duck hunting in the middle of August and finishes at the end of February, with the end of the pheasant hunting season. Most of the falconers catch pheasants and hares, but some of them hunt on ducks, rabbits, partridges, magpies, crows, geese, foxes, deer.

There aren't commercial breeders, only so called family breeders, who have some pairs and they produce small number of young ones. The home breeding covers the 90 percent of the new bird demand of the club, some special birds we import every year from abroad.

The club have two General Meetings, one in March and an other in September. In the hunting season there are club hunting two times a month. These hunts are three days, Friday, Saturday, Sunday and the game paid by the club. These events are the main scene of club life. Every year the club holds International Falconer Meeting, which become a tradition, the celebration of falconry. We developed the meetig to a city event with some interesting programes, for example, the bagging we hold in the main square of Orosháza, we have bird shows, falconer exhibitions, march with coaches and horses. It is a very good advertising of falconry.

The club publishes some newsletters to inform the members and a year book regularly. The Hungarian Falconers Club represents the Hungarian falconry in the IAF and CIC too.

In the last year we lost id. Puskás László one of our oldest falconer, who was 40 years member of the club. The club put up a wooden headboard for his memory at his favourite hunting place.

Summary the 2002 was a successful year for the Hungarian falconry our club became stronger and more recognised.

ABFPAR - Brasil " News from Brasil.

Leo Fukui

Here in Brasil the Brazilian Falconers Association and Preservation of Birds of Prey (ABFPAR), is working hard trying to normalise the practice of falconry in our country. In September 2002, during two days were discussed the possibility of regulation of this practice with the IBAMA (the environmental agency in Brazil), the ABFPAR and other specialist in areas like conservation, veterinary and biology. Unfortunately there is little chance, at least now, that falconry will be permitted as sport hunting instrument (let me remember that the hunting is not legal in Brasil, just one state here has hunting season) . The possibilities must be the use of trained raptors for pest control and training birds for rehabilitation. I know that this can not be considered a real practice of falconry, but we think this may be a start.

The taking and keeping of any wild animal from Brazilian fauna is only possible with special authorisation from the Environmental Agency.

We are waiting for the final text and its publication to consider the falconry a legal practice in Brasil.

At the moment the "base work" of the ABFPAR is the rehabilitation of birds of prey, and we use the training methods of falconry to physically condition birds and "teach" eyasses to hunt. We are flying some imprinted birds that were donated for us that are not suitable for release in the wild, just to keep them in good condition. We do not score game with them, just fly to make them get their own food. Some birds we use to fly are *P. unicinctus* (Harris hawk), *B. albicaudatus* (White tailed hawk), *F. femoralis* (Aplomado falcons) and *A. bicolor* (Bicolored hawk), *F. peregrinus* (Peregrine falcon), *F. sparverius* (American kestrel), *R. mag-nirostris* (Roadside hawk). And other less common species that are brought to us for rehabilitation.

Here we have a unique commercial breeder of raptors legally established in Uberlândia, in the state of Minas Gerais, and its owner Mr. Ronivon Viana da Silva is in hope of getting the first legally captive bred Aplomados in Brazil for the next season.

I would like to thank all from IAF, that mainly through its newsletter, gave us many ideas as how to discuss falconry in a moral, technical and ethical ways and a special thanks to Mr. António Carapuço, from Portugal, who aided the ABFPAR to form the base for discussion with the Brazilian authorities during the September meeting.

Portuguese falconry:

António Carapuço Vice-President
Associação Portuguesa de Falcoaria

Birds:

We can fly any specie bred in captivity, hybrids included. If the bird comes from a country outside the EU, it is needed an authorisation for importation.

To transport, train and hunt with the bird, one must be a licensed falconer. To obtain the permit is necessary to pass two examinations: general hunting license and specific falconry license. The Associação Portuguesa de Falcoaria (APF) together with the Forestry Services supervises this last exam.

Game:

The main quarry is: partridge (red legged), duck, quail, rabbit and hare. The south province of Alentejo is the most qualified for falconry practice due to the quarry density and areas of open land. Bagged game is allowed for training but not aloud for public displays.

Territory:

The hunting territory is organised as following:

Free territory: for all licensed hunters (falconers included). The hunting practise is allowed on Tuesdays and Sundays for shooters, on Wednesdays and Saturdays for falconers.

Associative territory: for members of a region. A percentage of foreign members are allowed. The hunting days are the same as above.

Touristy territory: the access to these lands is based on a financial agreement with the owner of the hunting rights. Hunting is available all days during the hunting season. This is the best solution for falconers.

Season:

To most of our quarry the season opens in October and closes in December. Ducks season closes in January. Quail season opens in September.

By proposal of the Associação Portuguesa de Falcoaria, the Forestry Services can issue an individual permit to condition and for practice proposals. This allows the falconer, without dogs, to train his bird from June to February. For training (beside all permits), the falconer must obtain permission from the hunting rights owner, however must not hunt local quarry. To use bagged game from quarry specie it is necessary to show the document of captive origin

Practice:

Portuguese falconers mainly hunt rabbits and hares with Harris and Goshawk. The Sparrow hawk is showing some increment between falconers due to the ease in finding quarry. Finally comes the peregrine dedicated to partridges, with a small number of falconers practicing this modality. Ducks are not usually hunted due to the lack of small ponds where we can find them.

The APF has actually 32 paying members, 25 of them practicing falconry.

February, 2003

Slovenia

Dr. Igor Tavcar MD

After joining the International Falconry Community in the form of IAF in the year 2000 Slovenia is now almost certainly approved to join the European Community in 2004. Arguably a reaction to our endeavour in Falconry.

To whatever extent Falconry plays a role in modern global Society the Slovenian Falconers have agreed to coordinate philosophies and ambitions. The two Slovenian Clubs have joined in 2001 to form a single Falconry Association consisting of 29 individual members. In early spring 2003 Slovenian Falconers are keeping a total of 42 birds of prey of 9 species:

Falco biarmicus x 2
Falco cherrug x 20
Falco mexicanus x 1
Falco peregrinus x 12
Falco rusticolus x 1
Accipiter gentilis x 2
Aquila chrysaetos x 2
Aquila heliaca x 1
Bubo bubo x 1

Falco cherrug and Falco peregrinus have been bred successfully in captivity in the year 2002. Fertile eggs are reported also in 2003. Wild populations of birds of prey in Slovenia remain totally protected by law and are to our great pleasure increasing in numbers.

The Slovenian Falconers promote the breeding of native species of birds of prey however tolerate the cautious use of hybrids for Falconry. After intervention of the IAF Cites documents are now being issued for Slovenian Falconers since 2002 by the Ministry of Environment.

On the 10 th of October 2002 the Slovenian Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Foods has published an approval that formally authorizes all members of the Slovenian Falconers Association to practice Falconry in Slovenia. Slovenian Falconers have moved forward to encourage adequate administrative control. Appart from governmental acceptance this notably increased our members awareness of good practice.

Our aim is that under supervision and rational application of legal control Falconry in Slovenia is establishing its role in Society as a fully accepted partner in nature conservation. We encourage the considerate use of natural recources under scientific supervision. We possibly serve Society with indicatons on subtle changes in the environment. We provide awareness and create admiration of natural beauty and so help to strengthen human relationship and respect to nature.

This in mind over the past year the Slovenian Falconers intensified contacts with the Slovenian Hunters Organization, the Slovenian Ecological Forum, the Slovenian Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Foods, the Slovenian Forest Service, the Slovenian Ministry of Environment as well as the Slovenian Society of Birdwatching and Protection of Birds.

We wish to thank IAF President Mr. Patrick Morel, Vice President Mr. Frank Bond and all the members of the IAF Advisory board as well as Mr. Peter Sapara the President of the Commission for Falconry of the International Council for Hunting and Wildlife Conservation, CIC for their expert support.

The IAF being especially helpful in extending their international expertise of CITES and Falconry regulations to the Slovenian Ministry of Environment and the CIC legitimately in explaining the essence of Falconry as a traditional and established way of hunting to the Slovenian Hunting Legislature.

Recognizing a world wide worry in the future the Slovenian Falconers are aware of the acute need of small game wildlife management strategies and are encouraging as well as actively performing local game, wildlife and plant conservation. For the Falconers of Slovenia.



Zimbabwe Falconers' Club annual report 2002

Ron Hartley Research & Falconry Co-ordinator, Zimbabwe Falconers' Club & Dept. National Parks & Wild Life Management (DNPWLM) Zimbabwe Representative, The Peregrine Fund

Falconry

Grade C

C grade falconers are entitled to hunt non-protected species (see Hartley, 2001. *Newsletter IAF*: 36-38). At least 16 grade C falconers were active this year. They hunted one Ovambo Sparrowhawk, three Redbreasted Sparrowhawks, 11 African Goshawks and one Gabar Goshawk. Three grade C falconers were upgraded to B this year.

Grade A and B

Grade A falconers are entitled to hunt the African Peregrine, and or other Specially Protected Species permitted for falconry under the B grade licence viz. Lanner, Black Sparrowhawk and African Hawk Eagle. 12 A grade, eight B grade and four provisional B grade falconers were active in 2002. By the end of the year the A grade falconers were holding 46 Peregrines (18 for falconry, 20 for breeding, four retired and two dormant) and 18 Taita Falcons (eight pairs for breeding). Graded falconers were also holding 14 Black Sparrowhawks, one Lanner, five African Hawk Eagles. One Crowned Eagle was held on a Special Permit, while a Martial Eagle, two Bateleur Eagles, one Secretary Bird and an Ayres' Hawk Eagle were held on Rehabilitation permits.

Summary

Hawks acquired from wild: 2 Peregrines, 4 Lanners, 5 Black Spars, 1 African Hawk Eagle - taken for falconry; 1 Ayres' Hawk Eagle, 1 Wahlberg's Eagle - brought in for rehabilitation.

Hawks acquired by captive breeding: 5 Peregrines (1 died at small chick stage) from 3 pairs

Hawks died: 4 Peregrines (1 at small chick stage), 1 Black Sparrowhawk, 5 African Goshawks

Hawks transferred: 6 Peregrines, 2 Taitas, 2 Black Spar, 1 African Hawk Eagle,

Hawks lost: 3 Lanners, 1 Black Sparrowhawk,

Hawks released: 1 Lanner, 1 Ovambo Sparrowhawk, 1 African Goshawk

Annual Fieldmeet

The seventeenth consecutive fieldmeet, this was held in August at Falcon College for the first time. 21 active falconers attended plus guests numerous guests. 33 trained hawks (seven African Goshawks, eight Black Sparrowhawks, one Little Sparrowhawk, two Lanners, 11 Peregrines, two African Hawk Eagles and one Crowned Eagle) were hunted and these made 84 kills over several days.

Breeding project

Productivity was disappointing, especially with a compliment of 13 pairs of Peregrines and eight pairs of Taitas. No breeding colonies of Red-billed Queleas were located in Zimbabwe, because of the drought. The virtual absence of rain in the traditional breeding grounds from January to April (the key breeding period in Zimbabwe) appeared to be the decisive factor. Some harvesting was achieved, however, near Bulawayo in April by using walk-in traps.

Peregrines

Four pairs produced four males and a female (Table 1). The most notable event was the success of John Grobler's Pr 24. The male *Hobbit* had been withdrawn from the breeding project. He was originally trained and hunted by John, and had spent four years as Pr 1. *Hobbit* was placed in the chamber in July. The falcon *Avalon* had enjoyed a full and successful season of hunting, before she was placed in the moult chamber in late August. There was instant courtship, a clutch of three eggs and a male chick. The adults raised the chick normally, but it died unexpectedly at three weeks of age, probably from an infection.

Taitas

Surprisingly only one pair of Taitas laid a single egg (Table 2). The previous season this pair laid a clutch of three eggs. This pair (f) were seen to copulate, while both established pairs (1 & 2) did the same. As per 2001 Pair 2 did not lay. Neither did Pair 2, but this was probably due to the fact that the female became ill on 14 August, just before she was due to lay. Fortunately she did not succumb and was placed back in the chamber after ten days.

It is difficult to understand why the Taitas failed to lay. At Falcon College where the three proven egg laying females are housed the feeding regime was good, while a pair of aged Peregrines (Pr 19) produced a clutch of four eggs. However, it was a very dry year and, apart from a fall of 61 mm in April, we had eight dry months from January to September. Normally we have five to six dry months. It is interesting to note that Taita Pr 2 failed to lay in 2001 as well.

Acknowledgements

Willie Gau had continuing problems on his farm and decided to move to town. Consequently he retired from the programme. We are greatly indebted to Willie for his unstinting participation in the programme. He maintained an excellent facility for a pair of Peregrines (from 1989) and Taita Falcons (from 1994). His breeding pair of Peregrines (Pr 6) fledged 17 chicks and 14 of these were hacked to the wild. Willie developed a unique system of hacking whereby the nearly fledged chicks were moved to a ledge outside the breeding pen and where the adults could still feed them through a gap. His pair of Taitas (Pr 2) was the second pair to breed in captivity, fledging a chick in 1998. They have produced a total of six young and were transferred to Reg Querl's facility in June 2002.

Support for the Taita programme has come from TPF, while K. Seiler provided great support in the harvesting of quelea.

Ron Hartley

Falconry Co-ordinator

Zimbabwe Falconers' Club (ZFC) Department of National Parks & Wild Life Management (DNPWLM)

ZIMBABWE FALCONERS' CLUB RESEARCH REPORT 2002

We have had a very productive year in terms of participation and results, despite on-going political problems, including large scale land invasions which are impacting on some study sites. Emphasis on community-based studies on privately owned wildlife conservancies highlight the vital future that these areas hold, as regional conservation strategies focus increasingly on the development of trans-frontier Peace Parks. Both the Malilangwe and Save Conservancy study areas fall within the framework of the massive Kruger, Banhine-Zinave, Gonarezhou Trans-frontier Park (95 712 km²). Batoka Gorge falls within the framework of the Four Corners Trans-frontier Park. Wildlife and wildlands constitute probably our most valuable and unique resource. Conservation and multiple use of these resources has the potential to uplift local economies and the national effort. While much of this work focuses on dry deciduous woodlands, we also have studies in the moist miombo habitats in Mashonaland where extensive land invasions may threaten the long term integrity of these systems, already modified by commercial agriculture. Our work has revealed important baseline information on species diversity and abundance and our aim is to gain an understanding of their vital role in the ecology of these systems. At the same time we are able to improve public awareness on the need to properly conserve raptors in these areas

Under direction from RH, ZFC members and students conducted the following work, supported by The Peregrine Fund Inc. (TPF):

Batoka Gorge. RH made trips in August and in early January, where the upper 25 km section from Victoria Falls to Chasuma was monitored. Of continuing concern was the lack of Taita Falcons.

Bubiana Conservancy. Michael Drummond continued to monitor the population of six pairs of Black, three pairs of Crowned and four pairs of African Hawk Eagles in a 100 km² study area.

Triangle. While the original focus of this study by Angus Middleton was on the effect of sugar cane farming on the distribution and abundance of large winter breeding eagles at Triangle, it has the added component of land degradation from widespread land invasions.

Malilangwe Conservation Trust (Chiredzi). Angus Middleton continued to monitor this study area throughout the year and much useful work was done.

Save Conservancy - Mokore. RH and Patrick Middleton checked Crowned, Black, Martial and African Hawk Eagle sites. Considerable prey remains were collected.

Esigodini. Breeding success was low for most species studied. Occupancy reached an all-time low (30% of sites) for Wahlberg's Eagle, a species which has been monitored for 30 years. Black Sparrowhawks were persecuted at two nests, including a ringed chick which was unfortunately killed by locals.

Mbalabala. Despite encroaching settlement and concomitant disturbance two pairs of Crowned Eagles and one pair of African Hawk Eagles bred successfully. Accipiters did not fare as well, and both pairs of Black and Ovambo Sparrowhawks appear to have deserted the study area.

Mashonaland and Kariba. Craig Mirams and his students monitored several pairs of Black Sparrowhawks, Ovambo Sparrowhawks, African Goshawks and Crowned Eagles, mainly around Peterhouse School. Fin O'Donoghue did the same around Harare, Mvurwi and Karoi (see below) and he was assisted by Brian Seiler who also monitored a selection of raptors around Kariba. Generally productivity was low, especially for Black Sparrowhawks with failure at three sites attributable to humans. Two pairs of Crowned Eagles failed at the small chick stage when their nests were pulled down by settlers.

Status and distribution of Taita, Peregrine and Lanner Falcons in Zimbabwe. Two new Peregrine sites were reported in the Zambezi Valley. A survey of eight Peregrine sites in Mashonaland and Midlands revealed 100% occupation and reasonable productivity, and chicks were ringed by Brian Seiler. Several Lanner sites were also checked.

Raptors in Harare and Bulawayo. Dr. Neil Deacon continued to monitor Lanner and Peregrine Falcons in Harare city and RH did the same in Bulawayo. Four Ayres' Hawk Eagles and an adult female Peregrine were ringed and released in Harare. An injured Ayres' was recovered and will be rehabilitated. The pair of Lanners in the city failed to breed, owing to the disappearance of the male, while the same ringed female occupied the site. The Peregrines produced at least one juvenile, a female that was recovered safely in a street. Derek Adams also checked a variety of raptor sites in Bulawayo, including two pairs of Black Sparrowhawks (which failed), a pair of Ovambo Sparrowhawks (new record for the city) and a pair of African Hawk Eagles.

Marula (Matobo Hills). Richard Peek continued to monitor raptors on his Malilangwe property, while data was collected on a couple of other Black Eagle sites in the area.

Miombo woodland study at Karoi. In November RH visited Fin O'Donoghue's two study sites in moist miombo woodland. The habitat at Karoi is typical of large parts of the miombo biome of central Africa and one study site includes a mosaic of emergent miombo and cultivated land, typical of Zimbabwe's intensive farming region. This year 56 pairs of raptors of 13 species were studied (4 pairs of eagles, 35 pairs of hawks and 17 pairs of owls).

RH is also helping to document Fin O'Donoghue's registered egg collection, which contains multiple clutches of a number of raptor species. A comprehensive report is under way which will accompany the collection which is destined ultimately for an appropriate museum. A selection of this information will be published.



Minimum requirements for the keeping of Birds of Prey and Owls as suggested in Germany

Dr Thomas Richter 10th January 1995

I Introduction.

These minimum requirements are valid for birds of prey of the order *Falconiformes* and include the families New World Vulture (*Cathartidae*), Osprey (*Pandionidae*), Hawks (*Accipitridae*), Secretary Birds (*Sagittaridae*) and Falcons (*Falconidae*) also the order Owls (*Strigiformes*) including Barn Owls.

The term 'Birds of Prey' will cover all of the above for the purposes of this document. The most frequently kept species are listed in tables 1 and 2.

Birds of prey are to be found living, either singularly or in pairs, across all continents. They inhabit all environments and climate zones except for the high seas and polar regions.

Birds of prey live off a variety of prey animals and many species have a wide ranging prey base which includes mammals, birds and insects which they either catch and kill themselves or find dead.

Some species are specialist hunters that require a particular diet, eg. ospreys, snailkites and carrion eating vultures. Additionally there are species such as palmvultures, black kites and honey buzzards that supplement their food with plant material.

Owls and falcons, as a rule, do not build nests; other species, however, build enormous ones. Nests are built in a variety of trees favoured by specific species, on cliffs, on the ground and in holes. As a substitute often buildings are chosen.

Currently 144 owl and 291 other bird of prey species are classified. Almost every species will become tame and for hundreds of years birds of prey have been trained by man for use as hunting birds in falconry.

The keeping of birds of prey requires very specialist knowledge. Injured or foundling birds must be passed on to officially approved or trained experts due to the expert care they demand.

Import, export, dealing and ownership of birds of prey is strictly controlled by legal regulations.1) Additionally all European bird of prey species are subject to legal protection.2)

II. Specialist Information

General requirements for the keeping of birds of prey.

Birds of prey are only allowed to be kept in aviaries or under strictly controlled conditions (see Section 4) when trained for falconry. Roving commercial falconry shows using birds of prey are not to be tolerated.

Birds of prey in their natural environment require a large territory of varying size that would be fiercely defended. Intolerant individuals, either of the same or differing species, cannot be kept together.

Equipment and aviaries for the keeping of birds of prey must be designed to eliminate any danger of injury to the bird or feather damage. All aviary netting and wires should be regularly checked for tension and damage. Repair or retensioning should be made in good time to ensure that the bird cannot become entangled and left hanging. 'Chicken mesh' wire netting should not be used, preference being given to plastic coated 'chain link' netting.

See through walls or partitions should be constructed to ensure that birds cannot injure themselves if they fly against them.

If there is a danger from predators, measures should be taken to protect the birds by using buried netting, closeable accommodation or overnight aviaries.

Protection from bad weather, especially heavy rain, strong sunshine or wind and cold draughts must be provided. Species specific temperature requirements should be determined and met.

Birds of prey must be protected from injurious stress caused by people or other animals being allowed to approach too near. This can be achieved by providing withdrawal areas, into which the bird can retreat and feel secure, and/or taming.

Birds of prey on public display must be positioned an adequate distance from onlookers to avoid being stressed. Even tame display birds must be positioned so that strangers cannot disturb them.

Closed aviaries are required if their size is not significantly greater than the minimum dimensions recommended.

2. Feeding

The provision of live food is not necessary and for humanitarian reasons not allowed. Exception to this may be justified in the preparation of a bird for release back to the wild, however this may prove illegal in some countries and local advice should be sought.

The feeding requirements of each species should be understood and fulfilled in terms of both quantity and quality.

Fundamentally their food should be as varied as possible and should not be just pure meat but should contain bones, hair and feathers to allow the formation of pellets which will be regurgitated after digestion and are essential to the birds well being. Vitamins and minerals should be given occasionally as recommended by a veterinary expert.

Adults of the smaller species should be fed at least twice daily and of the larger species at least once daily. As many larger species are not successful daily when hunting in the wild and are not expending much energy in the aviary, fasting days should be introduced to avoid them becoming over weight.

To maintain hunting keenness, trained birds of prey must be fed in a controlled manner. However they should never be starved but fed on food that is lower in calorific value and high in bulk. That way they will always be interested in feeding on the fist and can thereby be tamed and trained or, once training is complete, their natural hunting instinct can be harnessed through their keenness to chase and catch game or return to the falconer when he offers an easy meal.

Low value food should not be used. Target flying weight should be approximately 15% lower than the maximum body weight achieved at the end of the moult after unrestricted feeding and relatively little exercise.

This 'rule of thumb' will vary from species to species and also between individuals of the same species. The goal of feeding to achieve hunting keenness should be to arrive at a weight that corresponds with that of a healthy bird in the wild.

Birds of prey receive almost all of their water requirements from the meat they eat. However they should always have access to water in a shallow bowl that is large enough for them to stand in and immerse themselves when bathing and also take the occasional drink of water.

III. Housing in aviaries.

3.1 Aviary construction.

3.1.1 Wire netting aviaries

Wire netting aviaries must be built and equipped so that all requirements of the bird are met e.g. the bird has an adequate withdrawal zone.

Important considerations when deciding the suitability of using a wire netting aviary is the flight style of the bird of prey and its nervousness when approached.

Consideration should be given to the following points:-

Species with wide, long wings with a large surface area have relatively slow acceleration and flight e.g. eagles, buzzards, kites, vultures and owls. Acclimatised individuals of these species can be kept in fully wire meshed aviaries.

Species with long narrow wings, have relatively slow acceleration and low manoeuvrability but are fast flyers e.g. falcons.

Only acclimatised individuals should be housed in net aviaries.

Species with short, rounded wings and long tail, fly fast and are very manoeuvrable e.g. sparrowhawk and goshawk as a rule are not suitable for keeping in fully wire netting aviaries.

3.1.2 Partly closed aviaries (1)

Partially closed aviaries are a combination of solid wooden or brick walls and one or more netting or barred open sides. Ledges or branches should be provided as perches and the ability to close off the open sides is recommended.

3.1.3 Fully enclosed aviaries.

Fully enclosed aviaries have solid walls but are open to light and air from above due to the roof being constructed of wire netting, preferably made from the plastic coated chain link variety.

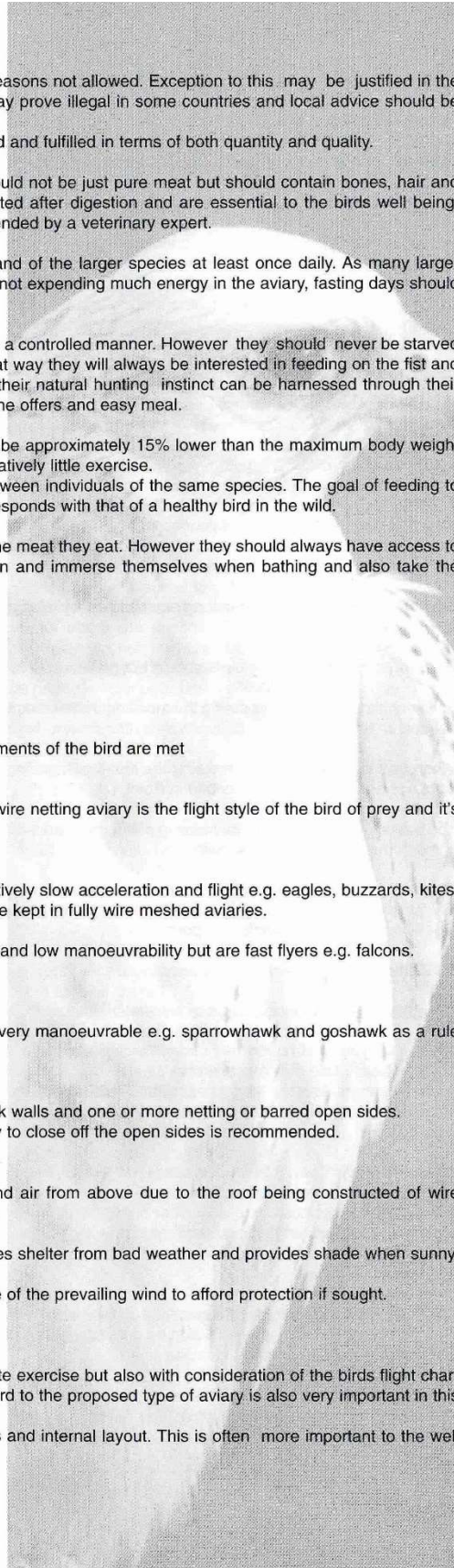
It is recommended that all netting roofs have a solid area that gives shelter from bad weather and provides shade when sunny. This could be achieved by using translucent plastic sheeting.

Likewise netting aviaries should be fitted with sheeting on the side of the prevailing wind to afford protection if sought.

Aviary size

The aviary size must be designed to provide the bird with adequate exercise but also with consideration of the birds flight characteristics to avoid injury. The tameness and conditioning of the bird to the proposed type of aviary is also very important in this factor.

Particular attention should be paid to the construction of the walls and internal layout. This is often more important to the well being of the bird than the actual size of the aviary.



Species are listed in Table 1 classified against suitable aviary size and in Table 2 against temperature sensitivity.

Internal aviary layout.

Aviaries should be arranged to allow the longest possible 'targeted' flights without restriction. This could be taken in a circular manner, not just in one direction. Perches should be positioned in the upper areas of the aviaries as birds of prey will always seek to sit as high as possible.

They should be covered in various materials and surface textures that can be freely selected by the bird.

Open aviaries should have withdrawal areas out of sight of observers. This is very important for nervous, shy species of hawks and owls. Such secure zones should allow the bird to observe the area but not feel itself to be overlooked and threatened.

There must be easily cleaned feeding and bathing arrangements that cannot be fouled by the perching bird's droppings. It should be noted that hawks eject their droppings almost horizontally behind them for some distance whereas falcon droppings tend to fall more vertically.

IV. Keeping for Falconry

Birds trained for falconry should only be possessed by people with a valid falconry license, where applicable, or appropriate experience. Likewise only these people should handle birds kept for falconry except at rehabilitation centres, veterinary practices or clinics.

4.1 Basic principles.

The foundation of handling a bird of prey for falconry is that restraining straps will be attached to both lower legs (Tarsometatarsus) which will be connected to a longer leash via a rotating swivel. By holding these straps and leash the bird can be encouraged to stand on a gloved hand during training or attached to a suitable perch when not undergoing direct handling. Falconry birds become accustomed, through regular handling, feeding and training, to this method of restraint.

Birds of prey should only be equipped and handled for falconry when they are trained to be flown free, or are undergoing training, during the hunting season. Exceptions are made for injured birds under medical treatment or birds being prepared for release. (see point C)

Breeding or young, growing birds should not be fitted with such equipment.

Falconry birds must, except during the moulting or breeding season, be given sufficient opportunity for exercise through free flight at least on alternate days.

When free flight is not possible during the moult or breeding period, falconry birds must be either in an aviary or on a suitable flight line arrangement as described in Point 4.4.

The primary requirement for the keeping of falconry birds, alongside at least an hour daily per bird to feed, care and fly them free, is the corresponding expert knowledge.

Housing and protection from bad weather is particularly important.

Equipment and fittings for falconry must always be arranged so that the bird cannot be injured. e.g. by entrapment or attack from predators.

4.2 Falconry equipment and its use.

To restrain the bird leather straps or anklets are fitted to both legs. Anklets are made from a short leather strap with a hole each end of a diameter to suit a two piece eyelet used to clamp both ends together. The anklet should rotate freely around the leg otherwise injury or abrasion may occur. Through the eyelet hole a leather strap with an end stop or 'button' is passed and these are attached to one side of a stainless steel swivel, using a slit at the opposite end of the strap, to prevent the straps twisting. A leash of approximately 1-2 metres length is attached to the swivel by passing a long chord, also with an end 'button', through the opposite ring. The leash is made from leather or braided nylon chord and used to tie the bird to a suitable perch or flight wire arrangement.

When the bird is flown free the leg straps, or 'jesses', must not be connected. Leash and swivel should be removed and, when anklets are used, the leg straps that have a slit to allow connection to the swivel should be swapped for non-slitted 'hunting jesses' that cannot hook onto a thorn or branch and cause the bird to hang helplessly. However they still allow the falconer to restrain the bird when standing on the gloved fist.

The equipment must be designed so that :-

-the bird is not injured.

-it will not break.

-knots cannot come undone or be undone by the bird.

-all parts in contact with the bird's skin do not cause abrasion, are the correct width, are soft and treated with suitable preservative and are made from natural leather.

To allow the falconer to find his bird when flown free, lightweight leg bells are attached which ring when the bird moves or flies. The bird accepts the wearing of these bells surprisingly well from the outset and they do not appear to cause any concern at all. A third, smaller, bell is often attached to the centre tail feather. This is especially useful in finding hawks that sit in trees when

their only movement may be the regular shaking of the tail.

Modern falconers also have the benefit of light weight miniature transmitters that can be attached to the bird and allow it's recovery from several miles when tracked using a directional antenna and receiver.

To remove visual stimulus and calm nervous birds, especially during transportation, specially made and tailored hoods of various designs are used. Birds of prey become accustomed to wearing hoods very quickly if initial training and acclimatisation is carried out correctly.

4.3 Perches

Falcons have evolved feet suited to standing on primarily flat surfaces found in their natural cliff or even city environment. Hawks generally are woodland birds and have evolved feet suitable for perching on tree branches of various size. Likewise falconry birds should be provided with perches to suit their specific requirements. Blocks or screen perches for falcons and bow-perches for hawks are generally used covered with varying surface materials such as cork, leather or 'astro turf' type artificial grass. However these coverings should not be padded but provide a firm base for the bird to grip.

Due to the restricted movement allowed on screen-perches these should only be used in the first few days of training or for overnight accommodation during periods when the birds are flown free. Only birds that are accustomed to this form of perch should be left unhooded on it unobserved. Care must be taken that the bird remains quiet on the screen-perch and will not be found hanging from it having suffered serious distress or injury.

4.4 Flight-wire arrangements for use during the moulting period.

During the breeding and moulting period, Spring and Summer, birds of prey can be attached to a flight-wire arrangement (Pic.5). However care must be taken to ensure that the bird is suited to such arrangement, those that are not should be kept free in an aviary.

Each bird must have either an aviary or flight-wire available during long periods when they are not flown free.

Flight-wire arrangements allow the bird to fly low attached to a steel wire or nylon chord strung tightly between two perches. Weather protection in the form of a three sided, roofed 'hut' should be provided over one perch (Pic.6)

The bird's leash is attached to a ring that can run freely along the flight-wire which should not be less than 4m long, however, for birds with a fast take off speed it should not be more than 6m long. For birds with a relatively slow take off speed. .eg. large falcons and buzzards it can be 15m long.

Injuries due to abrupt stops at each end should be avoided by use of a suitable 'damping' system e.g. fitment of a foam tube over each end of the wire.

Attention must be paid to the distance between flight-wires, if more than one is used, to avoid birds attacking each other. Birds that will not tolerate being close to each other should be separated by solid screens.

Care of injured or sick birds.

Introduction.

Frequently well meaning but uninformed people will find sick, injured or apparently abandoned young birds of prey and, although they have no knowledge of the birds basic biological requirements, try to care for them.

In this situation serious concerns for their well being require that such birds of prey are passed immediately to specialised experts at an approved care or 'Raptor Rescue' centre.

Injured wild birds require expert knowledge for them to be cared for as required by animal protection laws. Their care requires aviaries, falconry expertise and, with injured birds, their housing in suitable boxes. Young birds must be kept in artificial nests made from suitable material.

In the case of sick or injured birds the normal requirement for exercise is secondary to the need for them not to injure themselves. Here the temporary suspension of exercise during care is often necessary for them to make a full recovery.

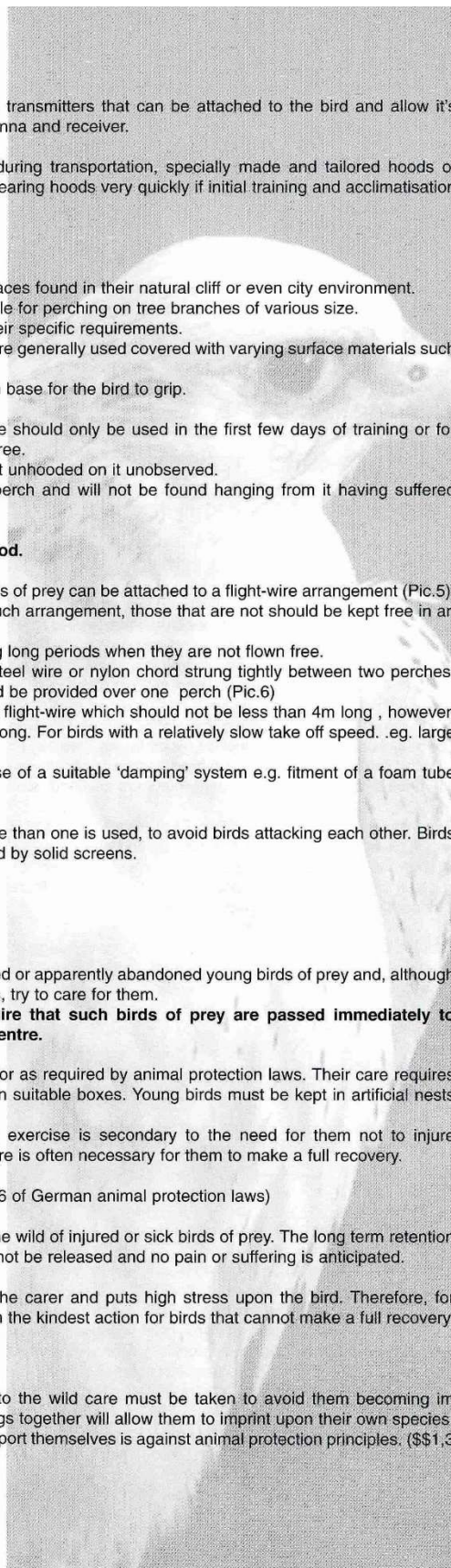
Handling should be carried out only by veterinary staff (§§ 5 and 6 of German animal protection laws)

The goal of any care should be the successful release back into the wild of injured or sick birds of prey. The long term retention of the bird should only be considered if for medical reasons it cannot be released and no pain or suffering is anticipated.

The care of sick or injured wild birds makes high demands on the carer and puts high stress upon the bird. Therefore, for animal protection and ethical reasons, painless euthanasia is often the kindest action for birds that cannot make a full recovery.

2. Nestlings

With nestling birds of prey that are eventually to be released into the wild care must be taken to avoid them becoming imprinted upon humans during their upbringing. The rearing of siblings together will allow them to imprint upon their own species. The release of unprepared birds into the wild that are unable to support themselves is against animal protection principles. (§§1,3



and 4 German animal protection laws.)

Adult birds of prey.

The type of care required for sick or injured birds of prey is dependent upon the nature of the illness or injury and the handling required to treat the bird. Birds requiring only short care-up to about 3 weeks-can be housed in suitable closed boxes. The boxes must be so constructed that they cannot lead to further injury. Perches should be arranged to suit the nature of the illness or injury.

If longer periods of care are required falconry methods of restraint and housing described previously can be used as soon as the bird's condition allows.

Rehabilitation methods, either in a closed aviary or on a flight-wire system should be selected to suit the individual bird to prepare them for release to the wild. In general the use of wire aviaries is not suitable.

The successful release of the recovered bird can only be achieved if it is fully prepared for life in the wild and is able to support itself.

Book Reviews – by Patrick Morel

Arab Falconry – History of A Way of Life by Roger Upton

Hancock House Publishers, 2001

At a time of East clashes with West and war in Iraq, Roger's book comes as a first hand witness of the Arab lifestyle as related to the practice of falconry. Much of our western way of life depends on the resources of the Arab world and Roger's book brings us a unique opportunity to understand and appreciate this way of life.

Arabs are nomadic people and falconry is a tradition and way of life to them. Roger started visiting Arabs in the early 60's, when traditional falconry with camels was still practised. Only passage falcons were flown and falconry took place in the local surroundings. Oil, and the wealth it has provided, has greatly influenced the practice of falconry. Camels were replaced by fast and comfortable 4 wheels drive and airplanes make regions beyond previous range such as the great deserts, easily reachable. Houbara bustards are now looked for as far as Pakistan or central and north Africa in unimaginable numbers in ideal hawking country. Transmitters and captive-bred falcons of all colours and sizes have partly replaced the passage falcons. This led in some countries to overhunting and quarry numbers declined, probably mostly due to habitat conditions.

Roger takes us all over the Middle East, from Morocco to Pakistan, with trappers and falconers. Nine chapters, well illustrated with a great number of excellent photos and drawings, cover the falcon species used, trapping, furniture, training techniques, quarry and description of flights. Diary notes of the author indicated by falcon feather symbols illustrated the text. This is an in-depth study of falconry as practised by the Arabs as found in the varied terrains and among the different countries where Arab falconers still pursue their favourite sport.

The author notes that "there is no doubt that the passage falcon is ideally suited to the methods and timing of Arab falconry. The migration is perfectly timed to produce a selection of suitable and already somewhat experienced falcons at just the right moment, allowing enough time for concentrated and expert training. They are ready for the houbara that arrive with the colder weather, which is so suitable for flying hawks; for most of the year, the weather is too hot for practical falconry. It would be a perfect arrangement if more of the lovely falcons could be released at the finish of the hunting season as they were in the past times. Then the falcons would be, as it were, on loan from the wild for a matter of four months or so, little more than a hiccup in their life cycle. Where the survival of Arab hawking is likely to stand or fall is not in the availability of suitable hawks, but in the sufficiency of quarry, particularly the houbara bustard."

Roger is a true falconer and the most interesting chapters are the ones treating with trapping, training and hawking. He was able to adapt to and accept the Arab mentality and he gives us a fantastic insight into Arab falconry. A book not to be missed in all falconers libraries.

Soitando pihuelas – Conocimiento y practica de la Cetreria by Javier Ceballos Aranda Cairel Ediciones editorial@clan.es , 2002.

Spain is a paradise for European falconry – good density of raptors and game in ideal hawking country and good weather. This is the first major book of falconry in Spanish since the famous treatise of Felix Rodriguez de la Fuente 'El arte de la cetreria' published in 1965. There are a lot of similarities between both books in the construction but Javier's book is definitely a reflection of modern falconry. Spanish falconry was not very known on international level before Felix Rodriguez but it's revealing to learn that Spain is home of hundreds or thousand of falconers by now – 65 associations are listed in the appendix! Felix was a pioneer and a master in the field. His book became a classic and was probably the bible of thousand of Spaniards or Central American falconers. The approach of Javier is slightly different – he tries to give a global vision of Spanish falconry. Even if his book is constructed as a classic 'how to do' book with 11 chapters dealing with all aspects of falconry with a fantastic lay-out and numerous photos of great quality, Javier gives a lot o interesting considerations of falconry in the modern world.

The best chapters are the ones dealing with history, conservation and cultural contribution through ages. A lot is to be learned on history of falconry in Spain and abroad (with amazing details on falconry practised in Mexico and Peru) and an interesting part dealing with modern history and the role of Felix Rodriguez de la Fuente.

In a country where 'related activities' (as competitions open to public) are part of the landscape, Javier does explain wisely what falconry is and especially what falconry is not. He is aware that a falconer must be a hunter respectful of nature, habitat, ecosystems and game population. Falconers are conservationists – Javier does explain most aspects of interaction between falconry and conservation, not hiding the accidental release of falconry hawks in the nature. Javier does insist of the role of recognised associations.

The appendixes are a mine of interesting information: glossary of Spanish falconry, references of bibliography, Spanish and international legislation and numerous addresses of Ministries, associations, books, equipment, and breeders.

Illustrated by countless and fantastic photos Javier's book is a must for all Spanish-speaking falconers and deserves a place on all falconer's bookshelves.



Russian falconer Mr. Yuri Noskov,

Today I am glad to offer to your kind attention my translation of the contents of new book of Russian falconer Mr. Yuri Noskov, who became famous due to successful hunt with Golden Eagle "Altai" during last 25 years.

Jevgeni Shergalin

Noskov Yuriy. 2002. S lovchei ptitsej po svetu [With hunting bird throughout the world]. Ekaterinburg (former Sverdlovsk), Akva-Press. 224 p. + 16 sheets with colour illustrations. Total there are 100 photos in the book. ISBN 5-94544-004-3. In Russian wholly. Paperback. Number of printed copies - 2000. Drawings by Mr. Vadim Gorbатов.



LETTERS

Dear Patrick,

I have discussed certain aspects of the AGM with the IHC committee and we wish to make the following suggestions:

1. That all matters on which delegates are expected to vote, e.g., elections, constitutional changes, membership applications etc. be notified to delegates a month prior to AGMs. This is to avoid comprehension problems (some delegates, including myself, have difficulty in understanding the accents of other delegates) and also to allow delegates time to study the matters on which they must vote.

2. That membership applications from new countries, clubs etc. be presented **IN PERSON** by a representative of the applying body or else by a delegate in the room who is **personally** familiar with the falconry of that country.

It was a great pleasure for me to meet again the friends I met in Amarillo and to enjoy the ambience of Woodhall Spar. I look forward to the next time.

Gary Timbrell,
Delegate, Ireland

THE BRITISH FALCONERS' CLUB CORDIALLY INVITES YOU TO THE B.F.C. SCOTTISH INTERNATIONAL FIELD MEETING 2004

The British Falconers' Club is pleased to announce that we will be holding a four-day International Field Meeting in the beautiful Borders of Scotland in November 2004 for long wings, short wings and eagles. It is anticipated that game will include grouse, partridge, duck, snipe, hare and rabbit. Places will be limited and priority will be given to B.F.C. Overseas Members.

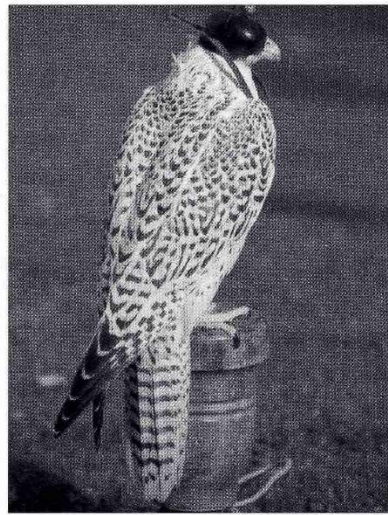
The Borders is located only 23 miles South of Edinburgh International Airport and is the ideal centre for touring, sporting or relaxing. Steeped in history, Traquair House, home of the Stuart Kings, Neidpath Castle, Abbotsford, Floors Castle and the great Border Abbeys are all close by set within stunning scenery.

The main venue will be a quality 100-bedroom hotel with leisure and beauty facilities, in the main Border town of Peebles on the River Tweed. The town boasts quality shopping, pubs and restaurants and there is a wide selection of hotels, guest-houses, B&Bs and caravan sites in the locality to suit all budgets.

The British Falconers' Club looks forward to welcoming you to the Borders. Further details and registration forms will be published in forthcoming issues of the B.F.C. Newsletter or look out for information on the B.F.C. website.

British Falconers' Club Office

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Flaws in principles of utility and cruelty with respect to hunting in the UK

Dr D. R Wise

This week 32 Members of Parliament in the UK will begin a further 120 hours debate on the issue of hunting, hoping, in the words of Minister Alun Michael to enable Parliament 'to reach a conclusion' on the issue. The Minister has framed his Bill on two principles. 'Utility' - does hunting serve a useful purpose, and 'least suffering' - is there a more humane method?

Some weeks ago, a broad spectrum of scientific experts, amongst whom I was included, gave evidence to Alun Michael in three days of public hearings in Westminster. Those of us who oppose a hunting ban on welfare grounds sought to advance the view that cruelty legislation should apply equally to the management of all wild mammal. To restrict tests of suffering to hunting when little or no research has ever been done into comparative management methods was on the one hand pointless and on the other, dangerous.

Alun Michael's definition of 'utility' has been too narrowly drawn and totally excludes economic, environmental, social or cultural interest. Further it appears to be inexplicably different from the much more reasonable definition he used back in May. Were the new definition to be applied generally, farming to produce meat, poultry fish or eggs, not to mention fishing and shooting would have insufficient utilitarian value to be justified. There appears to be a misconception that hunting should only be undertaken for purposes of pest control (rather than population management) and that it can never be justified as a recreational activity. This approach is only appropriate if one starts with the presumption that hunting unquestionably causes more animal suffering than do the other activities mentioned (and which all agree will continue) or, alternatively, is more morally corrupting. The Government appears to be making one of these presumptions because it has no declared intention to legislate against meat production or other field sports.

The Government's presumption that it is wrong to take the lives of wild animals for recreation or entertainment is inconsistent with its declared commitment not to interfere with other field sports.

If wild animals are left to reach their maximum carrying capacities, their populations will experience greater suffering than when they are culled by man so that their levels are no longer controlled by starvation or disease. This is particularly the case in anthropogenic British ecosystems. Hunting substitutes for natural predation and the quarry species are evolved to cope with it. In contrast, they are not evolved to cope with the constant harassment occasioned by uncontrolled rifle shooting such as may occur in areas of small land holdings. By culling a population of one species, one may well be reducing the suffering of other species on which the culled population impacts.

Hunters have a vested interest in maintaining a healthy population of quarry species and their habitat, and selectively kill weak and damaged animals as well as providing a self-financing wildlife management system. It is also impossible to legislate as to where recreation begins and ends. A gamekeeper controlling foxes with a terrier will, quite reasonably, obtain pleasure from a job of work well done. The recreational benefit of hunting to its follower's finances the job of management thus enabling the 'control' benefit to be free to farmers. And unsurprisingly the ratio of 'sport' to 'work' will vary not only from region to region, but also according to a range of other factors like weather and time of year.

No sensible observer believes that hunters gain any sadistic pleasure from the suffering of quarry species. They accept that there might be some suffering at the approach of death, regret its inevitability and strive to minimise the likelihood of suffering. On balance, they correctly assume that the welfare of hunted wildlife populations is improved when judged over their lifetimes and not just at the immediate approach of death.

Moral antipathy to hunting is an eminently valid reason not to participate in the activity and may be a reason to attempt to persuade others not to indulge. However, it is morally repugnant to ban it unless there are overwhelming animal welfare reasons for so doing. The Government must come clean as to whether it has become embroiled in hunting because of its concern for wildlife or because of its concern as to how people spend their spare time. Some of us wildlife experts paid by the Government to contribute to the hunting debate have been forced to a most unpalatable conclusion on that score.

If hunting is to be singled out for the tests devised by the Government and if moral antipathy is not the reason, one can only



suppose that the tracking/pursuit phase of the process is regarded as unique in terms of suffering. On anthropomorphic grounds, this may be understandable. However, it ignores the fact that animal and human brains (and hence minds) differ greatly and that animal fear is not equivalent to human fear. The fear of a hunted animal through the great majority of this phase is likely to be no greater than that of a garden bird that is disturbed several times while feeding on a bird table. The hunted animal will be instinctively programmed to run from a threat but will not appreciate that it has been uniquely targeted or that its life is threatened. Physical suffering from fatigue or exhaustion, if it occurs, will be confined to the final minutes of a hunt and will be independent of its overall duration. Death at the end will be extremely quick and will leave no wounded survivors.

The Government claims to be legislating in a 'principled' manner. Why, then, has it pre-judged the issue with respect to deer hunting and coursing? Why has hunting been singled out for this treatment when other culling methods and non-quarry wildlife species have been ignored? How can the uncontrolled destruction and associated suffering of wildlife by cats be deemed more acceptable than the vastly lesser and highly targeted (and accountable) deaths occasioned by dogs? One is forced to the conclusion that there is an underlying presumption that recreational hunting is deemed to be morally wrong and that culling by hunting will only be tolerated when pest control is essential and other methods impracticable.

Such inexplicable contradictions must be exposed if we are truly to advance open and accountable wildlife management systems.

Dr Douglas Wise

Qualified as a veterinary surgeon in 1966 and obtained a doctorate (PhD) in 1969.

Currently employed as a lecturer in Animal Husbandry at the Dept of Clinical Veterinary Medicine, University of Cambridge.

Most of his research has been related to avian husbandry and disease (meat poultry and game birds) and he has acted in a consultant capacity in these areas. He has also spent periods farming pigs, pheasants and insects.

**Council Member of the Game Conservancy Trust and Chairman of their Reared Pheasant Technical Working Group.
Author of a book entitled 'Pheasant Health and Welfare'.**

Has had experience of most country sports but only actively participate in shooting and fishing. He has run his own small shoot and his primary hobby is gundog training.

Has devoted much of the last five years to studying the physiological and welfare consequences of hunting with dogs and gave written and verbal evidence to the Burns Inquiry and the Government's three day Public hearing leading to the current Hunting Bill.





Delegates to the IAF Annual General Meeting - Woodhall Spa, UK 2002



Aplomado Falcon: Javier Ceballos



Photo: Kent Christopher