



The International Association for Falconry  
and Conservation of Birds of Prey

NEWSLETTER 1994



The International Association for Falconry  
and Conservation of Birds of Prey

President  
Christian de Coune  
"Le Cochetay"  
B-4140 Gomzé-Andoumont  
Belgium  
Tel : 041/68.73.69.  
Fax : 041/68.60.59.

Hon. Secretary  
Patrick Morel  
Rue de Longueville, 13  
B-1315 Sart-Risbart  
Belgium  
Tel : 010/88.90.30  
Fax : 010/88.85.49



1 9 9 4

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

A. MEMBER COUNTRIES  
(alphabetic order)

**AUSTRIA**

The Österreichischer Falknerbund has 120 members out of which 50 are practising falconers they keep 72 long wings and 86 short wings; the four other falconers' associations have a total of 111 members out of whom 48 practice falconry. Six goshawks have been taken from the wild. 72 raptors have been produced in captivity in the ÖFB in 1993. The legislations are different in the 9 Federal States. In all but one State, birds of prey are protected under the hunting law rather than under the nature conservation law. For practising falconry one must be holder of a hunting licence, that is issued after having passed successfully the hunter's examination and/or a falconry test and having proved that one has a hunting ground or the permission of the owner of a hunting ground. Birds must be ringed in six of the nine States.

Falconers complain about the excessive difficulties arising from CITES implementation when they travel abroad for hawking.

Situation of wild populations of raptors : Goshawk: 2.300 pairs, Sparrowhawk: 4.500 pairs, Golden eagle: 250 pairs, Peregrine: over 100 pairs, Saker: 5-10 pairs, Hobby: 400 pairs. There is a program of captive breeding and release of Bearded Vulture successfully going on since 1976. Falconers have repeatedly proposed their co-operation in breeding and release programmes. The anti-hunters and fanatic bird protectors made such a co-operation impossible. The Partridge has been declining during the last ten years. In some States the hunters have decided to give up shooting them. This measure had practically no result; this proves that the cause of the decline is not with the hunters.

**BELGIUM**

There are two officially recognized associations : a national one : Club Marie of Bourgogne and one covering Flanders, the Belgische Vereniging der Vlaamse Valkeniers en Havikiers. CMB has 56 members, out of whom 39 are practising falconers, 10 fly long wings and 29 fly short wings. BVVH has 30 members out of whom 20 are practising falconers.

Hunting and nature conservation are of the responsibility of the Regions, the result is that the legal system is different in each of them. In Flemish Region, keeping protected birds of prey (European species) necessitates a derogation. A numerus clausus



of 30 derogations are issued. Hawks may not be taken from the wild. The use of birds of prey for hunting is not subject to licence nor examination.

In the Walloon Region, the legislations on hunting and bird protection have been deeply modified and there is still some uncertainty concerning the practical organisation of falconry.

Wild breeding pairs estimates : Goshawks 340-520; Sparrowhawks 1.200-2.500; Hobby 190-225; Kestrels 2.000-2.900; Eagle-Owls 30-40.

While a legislation is being worked out on animal welfare, the falconers' associations have been requested to help the authorities formulating criteria for the keeping of birds of prey. The different falconers' associations are working together on this issue.

#### CZECH REPUBLIC

The Czech Falconers' Club is the only falconers' association in the Czech Republic, it has 265 practising falconers holding a total of 415 hawks; in 1993, they bred in captivity 47 sakers, 29 peregrines and 6 goshawks.

Czech falconers enjoy longer hunting seasons than other hunters. Falconers may, under approval of local authorities, take goshawks, sparrowhawks and kestrels from the wild, however they must leave at least one young in the nest. Hawks may be kept only by members of the Czech Falconers' Club.

The way CITES is being implemented makes travelling abroad with hawks extremely difficult if not impossible. No case of illegal traffic in birds of prey has been reported.

The wild population of goshawks is estimated at 2.000 - 2.800 breeding pairs, sparrowhawks, 3.200 - 3.900 and sakers 8 - 12.

Last year I reported to you about a letter received from "Slovakia State Nature Protection Centre" about an agreement between the president of the Czech Falconers' Club and a firm for the sale of raptors.

I made an enquiry and learned that the firm wanted to build a raptor breeding center, a part of the young production would have been for falconers, a part for releasing to the wild a part to be sold for covering the costs. The Ministry of agriculture and environment had given its agreement.

The breeding center has never been set up because the firm lost interest and was wound up.

This story is interesting because it shows that one must be very careful with accusations directed against falconers. We must always ask for strong evidence before taking a position.

#### DENMARK

The IAF member is now called "Dansk Falkejagd Klub", its president is Tage Jessen and the Secretary Morten Clausen. They have 21 members. There is no other falconry club.

Since April 1994 the new Hunting Law came into force. Hunting with birds of prey is not allowed, but keeping birds of prey may be authorised in special cases; they may be flown to the lure but not at game. This strange situation is the result of the official attitude of the hunters' organisations. Birds of species other than birds of prey and owls may be kept if bred to the second generation, no authorisation is requested, they just have to be registered. Only birds of prey and owls must be ringed, micro-chipped and blood sampled. There has been quite a lot of propaganda and many attacks by anti-falconers.

The only case of illegal activities involving birds of prey is of a taxidermist sued for keeping deep-frozen specimens.

The wild population of birds of prey is estimated at 1.000 pairs of goshawks, 2-3.000 pairs of sparrowhawks, 2-3.000 pairs of kestrels. Eagle owls start breeding and so do ravens.

#### FRANCE

The Musée International de la Chasse of Gien holds a very rich exhibition on Falconry. The curator of the museum, Mrs Parpoil, has succeeded in gathering a unique collection of most remarkable art pieces and ancient falconry appliances from several countries as distant as Spain, Russia, Belgium, etc.

A very fine book has been published on that occasion, it contains, besides the description of the pieces on display, there are some 30 articles on history of falconry from the Middle Ages till now, in Europe and elsewhere, on zoology and veterinary medicine. As very little has been published in French in a recent past, that book is most welcome.

I have been invited together with Philippe Justeau to give an interview to Radio France Culture on the premises of the Museum.

I had the pleasure of attending the field meeting of ANFA (French Falconers' Association), it is always an enjoyment to be with my French friends.

#### GEORGIA

Hunting with birds of prey is famous from ancient times. A tale says that the legendary King of Georgia, Vakhtang Gorgasali, was hunting with his favourite falcon; the hawk caught a pheasant and they both fell into a hot spring and died. In memory of his hawk, the King decided to build a town at the scene and he named it Tbilisi (present capital of Georgia). There are lots of legends and folksongs about falconry.

Archeologic excavations disclosed tiles showing falconry birds. One suppose that falconry was known there earlier than the V century.

In 1578 Georgia was conquered by the Turks, they had to pay tribute to the conqueror under the form of 12 virgin maidens, 12



young men, 12 falcons and 12 sparrowhawks.

In Eastern Georgia, people used to fly falcons and goshawks, whereas in Western Georgia, they flew sparrowhawks.

Nowadays hawking is practised only in the Western regions of Georgia : Adzharian and Abkhazian Autonomous Republics and in Chokhatauri, Ozurgeti, Martvilli, Poti, Lanchuti.

Western Georgia, lays along the Black Sea on the migration route of sparrowhawks and quails.

There are about 500 registered falconers in Georgia, and they fly mainly sparrowhawks (*Accipiter nisus*) at quails during the fall migration and goshawks (*Accipiter gentilis*), they use only passage birds.

After the hunting season, the hawks are returned to the wild.

There are two techniques being used to fly sparrowhawks : Georgian style : the hawk is held on the falconer's fist and slipped when the quail is flushed. Pointers and English Setters are used.

Lazian style : the sparrowhawk is held in the hand of the falconer and thrown at the flushed quail, this booster helps the hawk a lot to more easily catch its quarry.

This technique is not encouraged because at the end of the season, the wing feathers of the bird may be impaired which would handicap him for the migration.

#### GERMANY

The Deutscher Falkenorden has about 820 members out of whom some 400 are active falconers, they fly 30-40 long wings, 350 Goshawks and 10 Golden Eagles.

There are two other falconers' organisations of about 200 members and five small ones.

DFO members bred about 120 raptors in captivity while 250-350 were bred by non-members, mostly commercial breeders. All birds must be ringed.

More than 400 pairs of Peregrines breed in the wild. Goshawks', Sparrowhawks' and Golden Eagles' wild populations are at saturation level.

Last summer, an auction of falcons had taken place. It had been the subject of rather large advertising and quite a good many people attended it. 80% of the birds proposed for sale were withdrawn from the auction due to the lack of bids. For instance, a Peregrine female could not find a buyer for 800 DM.

#### GREAT-BRITAIN

The regulations governing the possession of birds of prey have been amended in April this year. In short the system is as follows :

If birds are simply kept,

Barbary Falcon, Golden Eagle, Goshawk, Gyrfalcon, Hobby, Peregrine and Merlin must be registered with the Department of the Environment (DOE) and ringed with a closed ring issued by them.

Buzzard, Kestrel and Sparrowhawk do not have to be ringed or registered.

If birds are sold,

Barbary Falcon, Golden Eagle, etc (as above) must have a signed statement by the breeder that he bred and ringed them with a DOE ring.

Buzzard, Kestrel and Sparrowhawk must also have a statement by the breeder, they must be ringed but not with DOE rings.

Permanently Barbary Falcons, Golden Eagles, et (as above) must be ringed with a cable-tie ring and registered with DOE.

Last summer a British television station showed a very unpleasant program on falconry related hawk traffic.

In a very few words : they try to find illegally captured Peregrines to sell to the Arab Emirates. They couldn't find the illegal hawks and couldn't find anybody in the Gulf who shown interest in buying the allegedly illegally trapped falcons.

They then appointed an actor and dressed him up as an Arab and put him up in a London hotel. A camera was hidden in the hotel room and two persons fell in the trap.

This setting of a dummy buyer proves that the demand in Middle East for illegally captured European falcons is very small or simply non-existent. This proves also that the offer of illegal falcons is minimal or close to zero.

I do not resist the temptation to reproduce an article published in the Lincolnshire Standard of 8th October '93 written by a past chairman of the League against Cruel Sports. The public revulsion of an anti hunting campaigner is most interesting.

I attended the field meeting of the British Falconers' Club, it is always a great pleasure to meet my British friends. I wish to point out how warmly and generously I have been treated.

#### HUNGARY

The Hungarian Falconers' Club is a part of the Hungarian Ornithological Society.

They have over 80 members. They may take Goshawks and Sparrowhawks from the wild, but they may not keep Merlins nor Sakers even if they are captive bred and in spite of the fact that the Saker population is quite strong.

Falconry is a recognized hunting method. All falconers will have to pass a falconers' exam.

The Hungarian Falconers' Club decided on their own initiative to pay a contribution to the IAF although it had been agreed that they could be exempted from it.

The situation of birds of prey :

The Saker Falcons are steadily increasing, there are about 130 breeding pairs (Gensbøll mentions 30 pairs in 1981), 95% of them breed on trees. Peregrine Falcons do not breed.



## INDIA

The Hawking Club of Hyderabad has 47 members, it is the only falconers' club in India.

All fieldsports have recently been banned in India.

HCH members took part in Raptor Project which is jointly run by the Bombay Natural History Society and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

HCH involved itself against the use of DDT, stressing the disastrous effect it have on birds of prey. DDT is now being considered for banning in India.

HCH's views were requested by WWF-India concerning a UICN draft on sustainable use of wildlife resource.

HCH members are liaising with WWF-India in their fight against illegal traffic in birds of prey.

HCH corresponds with International Air Authority of India, which has started a campaign looking for falconers to counter the "Bird Hits to Aircraft" at airfields.

HCH's plans for the future are, legalising falconry, defending the image of falconry and the control on the use of pesticides.



EDMUND OETTLE (Cape Falconry Club)

## PORTUGAL

Associação Portuguesa de Falcoaria is the only falconers' association in Portugal, it has 22 members out of whom 7 are active falconers. They have 5 long wings and 8 short wings. The APF has very good relationship with the official authorities; falconers are well accepted by other hunters who show interest and curiosity for that hunting method.

Members of APF gave lectures at a conference on veterinary medicine. A member of APF organised for the second consecutive year a conference on raptors and falconry. APF participates in the II National Conference on Birds of Prey. Falconers collaborate on the defense and protection of birds of prey. Birds of prey kept by falconers must be officially registered. Falconers may keep only two hawks and they may hunt only on Wednesday and Saturday (!).

Wild populations of birds of prey (breeding pairs) Peregrine: 40; Goshawk: 60; Sparrowhawks 90, Golden Eagle: 30.

Cases of illegal activities involving raptors of species interesting for falconry : 5 Goshawks from Hungary on the way to Spain, 1 Golden Eagle with doubtful CITES papers.

## SOUTH AFRICA

As you will see it farther in my report, I attended the General meeting of the CIC on 15-19 March 1994 in Cape Town (South Africa).

This was the ideal opportunity for visiting some falconers. I must say that I received the warmest hospitality from all our



DARRYL TWIDDY (Natal Falconry Club)



fellow falconers of that superb country, I will keep a marvellous memory of the month I spent in Southern Africa. I wish to publicly express my most sincere and very friendly gratitude and admiration for the way falconry is practised and managed.

Hereafter, I summarise the very interesting conversations I had with Dr Edmund Oetlé, president of the Cape Falconers' Club.

Falconry was already practised in the fifties, by the South African Falconry Club. There was no regulations, no permits, so everybody did what they wanted. The Club lasted only a few years because there was no need of being organised, as everybody was allowed to do anything they wanted.

In the '70s falconry started again in an organised manner, that was mainly in the Transvaal and the Transvaal Falconry Club started.

The Club did a good job in taking care that the birds be looked after properly. Falconry was not very well controlled and so there were illegalities, in the sense that when people lost their bird they just caught another one and put it on the permit. It was legal to keep wild caught birds but it was not legal to just catch as many as they wanted.

The result of this was that the Nature Conservation put an end to it and declared falconry illegal in the Transvaal and from there it spread to the other Provinces. It then became underground.

After a couple of years it was once again instituted. Because of the successes of the Zimbabwe Falconers' Club it was decided to try and start it again in Transvaal. Permission was given to people to keep birds.

About that time, Edmund started a project at the University of Pretoria on the freezing of falcon semen.

The first phase of it was initiating a breeding project, the second phase was to take the excess offspring and hack them back on electric pylons.

The project was approved by the University of Pretoria, funds were granted for it but, Nature Conservation refused to issue permits to take birds from the wild.

He then resigned from that university and moved to the Cape Province and started again with the University of Cape Town. The project had supports and funds, however, Nature Conservation refused the necessary permits.

He then came in touch with Walter Bednarek (Germany) and started a fruitful co-operation. The Nature Conservation agreed to the importation of captive bred peregrines from Germany.

The captive breeding unit at long last was then started after many years waiting.

The very first peregrine falcon was bred in captivity in South Africa three years later.

He trained and flew that falcon and invited the Nature Conservation to come and see what falconry is all about. There was a very positive response, all of them were very impressed.

He then started public relation with the birding clubs, because there was a lot of misinformation there about falconry. For many of them it was the first time they saw a peregrine. Later on he invited them during the breeding season to show them that the peregrine was able to breed in captivity.

They were taught how to locate peregrines in the wild and how to recognise them. The result of that was that the Cape Bird Club found a peregrine nest and were able to watch it.

All this resulted in a reciprocal co-operation between falconers and bird clubs, so there is never a feeling of antagonism.

After years of negotiations, he managed to persuade the Nature Conservation that falconers do not damage the nature, on the contrary : falconers have a great knowledge of birds of prey in South Africa, they are prepared to share that knowledge with the ornithologic societies provided the latter do not reject them, which would be a waste of human resources.

The falconers' club is readily prepared to police their members and keep Nature Conservation informed of any illegalities that would be committed by their members.

Falconers were given five year probation and if the authorities after that time are not happy, they would close the club and it would be that.

This happened three years ago.

The primary effort of the Cape Falconry Club is conservation of birds of prey before falconry itself. It is the duty of every member to keep accurate record of what they see, any nest they find, any observation they make is carefully kept. Annual report is done for the Nature Conservation. There is a great degree of mutual trust that is expressed on both sides. Falconers help Nature Conservation and reciprocally.

Falconers not only work with the Nature Conservation, which is the governing body but also with scientific institutions.

For instance, with Dave Pepler of the University of Stellenbosch, a work has been published on trichomoniasis in Western Cape raptors, the study is still going on. The club is giving its backing to a project David Pepler is conducting on Lesser Kestrels.

The most obvious aspect of conservation is the collection of data from the wild by the Cape Falconers' Club, for instance they collected new data on the occurrence of Black Sparrowhawks in the Cape Province.



The Club itself :

it is constituted of four types of members :

- the apprentices who must spend a period of time with a practising falconer to learn,
- C-grade or learner falconer, he's allowed to keep an African Goshawk or a Kestrel, mostly rehab birds.
- B-grade, a C-grade falconer that the Nature Conservation and the Committee has stated his ability and knowledge, he may fly Lanner, captive bred Peregrine or Black Sparrowhawk, etc.
- A-grade must have at least 5 years experience as a B-grade must know intimately the sport of falconry in all its aspects. The Committee is composed of A-grade members.

The Club holds an annual general meeting, it is on that occasion that the grading takes place.

As far as hunting is concerned falconers have a large amount of freedom.

They have a good country, friendly farmers and a good supply of game. They are submitted to the same regulations as the other hunters, they must have a licence, they must have the landowners' permission and they must hunt in season.

However it is recognised by Nature Conservation that a falcon is outside of the control of the individual and so the American principle is applied : if a hawk catches quarry which is outside the hunting season, he may be fed on it in the wild but the carcass must be left where it was taken.

The falconers have an "opportunistic hunting licence" : they may ask permission for hunting game outside the hunting season and they may be granted a "bag limit" of a certain number of pieces of game they may take in a year.

In exchange of this, falconers must collect data on the game they catch, like crop contents. This must be considered by the falconers, not as a right, but as a privilege.

In Western Cape the main game species are Egyptian Goose, Guinea fowl, Yellow Billed Duck, Cape Teal, Cape Schoveller, Redbilled Teal, Cape Francolin, the best of all being the Greywing Francolin, which is very similar to the European Partridge, it is very well suited to the small Peregrine that they have in Africa (F.p.minor).

A few words on the Lanner Falcon; it is a bird which is very much underestimated by overseas falconers, in many respects Lanner is a better bird than the Peregrine for African conditions, for instance the Lanner makes a better dove hawk than the Peregrine. The Lanner is a highly intelligent bird learning very quickly to take advantage of a situation, it may also make it a very difficult bird to get the best out of it; for instance, it may very quickly become a lure-bound hawk. The other advantage of the Lanner, which is something that very often people don't realise, is that the Lanner is one of the few falcon species which is prepared to take a head-on collision, whereas the Peregrine normally takes the quarry from behind, this leads to very spectacular flights.

The African Goshawk (*Accipiter tachiro*) is much smaller than the European Goshawk, the male is about 250 Gr and the female, 350.

It is an ideal beginners' bird; it becomes very tame, they are very good to teach the falconer how to handle birds.

Captive breeding :

the only breeding units in South Africa are for Rednecked Falcons and Peregrine Falcons. They have 4 pairs of African Peregrines, they produced young for the first time last year. The most successful breeding birds are the European ones.

They do egg pulling to make the birds lay a second clutch and incubate them artificially, the success rate of it is quite good. The young are parent-reared to avoid imprinting, or other methods are applied for the same purpose.

Club policy:

They are in essence against commercialisation.

The captive bred young of the first generation belong to the Club and the Club may charge a fee just to cover the costs, the second generation is the property of the breeder himself and he may do with them what he wishes.

Only members of the Club may breed hawks in captivity.

The Club has no policy with regard to hybridation.

The Club is not against the use of exotic birds as there has never been any case in history of Mankind of introduced exotic birds of prey becoming a pest unlike Starlings, Rabbits or Squirrels. Even if a few of them would be lost, it would not pose any threat.

The Club insists on the use of telemetry.

Birds originating from the wild remain the property of the State and therefor, they may not be sold.

They are in favour of importation of birds provided the birds are captive bred.

In the other provinces, the situation is not the same as in Cape Province. Conservation is not the primary aim of falconers. They do conservation work, but their basic aim is falconry.

Natal has a club with some 40 members of whom 15 are practising falconers and the Transvaal with some 80 members, 25-30 being active, Oranje Free State has a club of 10 members of whom 3 fly a hawk.

The Cape Falconry Club:

It has a membership of 40, 15 of whom practise falconry, they have 23 long wings and 10 short wings.

In 1993 no hawk has been taken from the wild because there was no need for it, two Black Sparrowhawks have been taken as eyasses from the wild for captive breeding purposes.

3 Peregrine falcons have been produced in 1993.

Birds kept by falconers must not be ringed.

Except the Lesser Kestrel, the situation of wild birds of prey populations is stable. It is especially so with bird of prey species of interest for the falconers. From data collected by falconers it appeared that the Peregrine Falcon and the Black



Sparrowhawk are much more numerous than people thought.

One worrying thing is Trichomonas which affects not only pigeons but also wild hawks and owls.

Cape Falconers actively co-operate with Nature Conservation and the African Raptors Information Centre (ARIC) in the reintroduction of Falco chiquera in the North of Cape Province, whose population had sharply declined following the destruction of crows. These falcons used to breed on old crows' nests and they suffered very much due to nest sites loss.

There is no illegal traffic in birds of prey and there is a very small legal trade in raptors for export.

Commercialisation of falconry does not occur and it is discouraged by the Club.

There is no anti-falconry propaganda.

Now the situation of falconry is stable but, with the political changes that will occur, no one knows what may happen.

It is the duty of falconers to ensure the future of falconry by encouraging and guiding the younger members. Youngsters are most enthusiastic and also they are the greatest source of data from the wild.

The Cape Falconry Club would like to become a member of the I.A.F.

South Africa, and particularly the Cape Province has a wonderful potential for falconry, let us hope that this continues for many years to come.

There is an umbrella falconry association, the South African Falconry Association, which has been sleeping for some time but it seems that it might come back to life. The new political situation in South Africa might give to this SAFA a increased usefulness.

#### SWITZERLAND

The Schweitzerisches Falknerbund has 40 members, 3 of them practise falconry. There is no other falconers' association in Switzerland.

Falconers may fly at Crows, Magpies and Jays the whole year round.

For the first time a falconry exhibition is being held until the end of 1994.

The situation of wild populations of birds of prey of species interesting falconers is very good. :

Peregrine, 200 pairs on the north-western half of the country; Golden Eagle, 180 pairs.

An interesting court decision : a falconer's goshawk having

It is an ideal beginners' bird; it becomes very tame, they are very good to teach the falconer how to handle birds.

Captive breeding :

the only breeding units in South Africa are for Rednecked Falcons and Peregrine Falcons. They have 4 pairs of African Peregrines, they produced young for the first time last year. The most successful breeding birds are the European ones.

They do egg pulling to make the birds lay a second clutch and incubate them artificially, the success rate of it is quite good. The young are parent-reared to avoid imprinting, or other methods are applied for the same purpose.

Club policy:

They are in essence against commercialisation.

The captive bred young of the first generation belong to the Club and the Club may charge a fee just to cover the costs, the second generation is the property of the breeder himself and he may do with them what he wishes.

Only members of the Club may breed hawks in captivity.

The Club has no policy with regard to hybridation.

The Club is not against the use of exotic birds as there has never been any case in history of Mankind of introduced exotic birds of prey becoming a pest unlike Starlings, Rabbits or Squirrels. Even if a few of them would be lost, it would not pose any threat.

The Club insists on the use of telemetry.

Birds originating from the wild remain the property of the State and therefor, they may not be sold.

They are in favour of importation of birds provided the birds are captive bred.

In the other provinces, the situation is not the same as in Cape Province. Conservation is not the primary aim of falconers. They do conservation work, but their basic aim is falconry.

Natal has a club with some 40 members of whom 15 are practising falconers and the Transvaal with some 80 members, 25-30 being active, Oranje Free State has a club of 10 members of whom 3 fly a hawk.

The Cape Falconry Club:

It has a membership of 40, 15 of whom practise falconry, they have 23 long wings and 10 short wings.

In 1993 no hawk has been taken from the wild because there was no need for it, two Black Sparrowhawks have been taken as eyasses from the wild for captive breeding purposes.

3 Peregrine falcons have been produced in 1993.

Birds kept by falconers must not be ringed.

Except the Lesser Kestrel, the situation of wild birds of prey populations is stable. It is especially so with bird of prey species of interest for the falconers. From data collected by falconers it appeared that the Peregrine Falcon and the Black



Sparrowhawk are much more numerous than people thought.

One worrying thing is Trichonomas which affects not only pigeons but also wild hawks and owls.

Cape Falconers actively co-operate with Nature Conservation and the African Raptors Information Centre (ARIC) in the reintroduction of Falco chiquera in the North of Cape Province, whose population had sharply declined following the destruction of crows. These falcons used to breed on old crows' nests and they suffered very much due to nest sites loss.

There is no illegal traffic in birds of prey and there is a very small legal trade in raptors for export.

Commercialisation of falconry does not occur and it is discouraged by the Club.

There is no anti-falconry propaganda.

Now the situation of falconry is stable but, with the political changes that will occur, no one knows what may happen.

It is the duty of falconers to ensure the future of falconry by encouraging and guiding the younger members. Youngsters are most enthusiastic and also they are the greatest source of data from the wild.

The Cape Falconry Club would like to become a member of the I.A.F.

South Africa, and particularly the Cape Province has a wonderful potential for falconry, let us hope that this continues for many years to come.

There is an umbrella falconry association, the South African Falconry Association, which has been sleeping for some time but it seems that it might come back to life. The new political situation in South Africa might give to this SAFA a increased usefulness.

#### SWITZERLAND

The Schweizerisches Falknerbund has 40 members, 3 of them practise falconry. There is no other falconers' association in Switzerland.

Falconers may fly at Crows, Magpies and Jays the whole year round.

For the first time a falconry exhibition is being held until the end of 1994.

The situation of wild populations of birds of prey of species interesting falconers is very good. :

Peregrine, 200 pairs on the north-western half of the country; Golden Eagle, 180 pairs.

An interesting court decision : a falconer's goshawk having

caught a chicken was killed, the Court said that the gos was not a protected bird because it was a captive one, in other words not a wild one. That means that bird protection laws apply only to wild specimens.

#### TUNESIA

Tunesia is one of the very few countries in the world where a traditional form of falconry is still practised, they fly passage sparrowhawks at quails during the migration. I was happy to have the opportunity of seeing Tunesian falconers in action; I have been shown their technique of Sparrowhawk trapping.

At the end of the hawking season the sparrowhawks are released back to the wild, this is the opportunity of celebrating the closing of the season.

It is a large popular gathering attended by personalities like the Minister of Tourism, the Governor of the Province, the Maire, etc.

I had been very kindly invited by the Tunesian Falconers' Association.

I was very warmly welcomed and looked after. It was a good opportunity for reviving the relationship between the Tunesian falconers and the IAF.

I made use of that opportunity for pleading to the falconers to get more involved in raptor research and field work.

#### U.S.A.

The field meeting of NAFA follows exactly the two-week CITES Conference, it is the opportunity to attend their meet.

I have been asked by Rich Holmstrom to address the meeting and say a few words on falconry on an international level, I'll do it with a great pleasure.

#### ZIMBABWE

I have been very warmly hosted by the Zimbabwe falconers, especially by Ron Hartley with whom I squatted for several days.

Not only has he shown me his beautiful country, making me acquainted with lots of aspects of Zimbabwe, but he introduced me to the unique example of symbiosis that exists between falconry and wildlife conservation that are the falconry section of Falcon College and the Zimbabwe Falconers' Club.

I was also lucky enough to meet Humayun Taher, the President of the Hawking Club of Hyderabad, who currently lives in Zimbabwe.

I have been given the opportunity to see some very exciting falconry outings.

Many thanks to all of them for the marvellous memory I keep of my Zimbabwe trip.





FALCON COLLEGE



RON HARTLEY (Zimbabwe Falconers' Club)

Falcon College and another one in Zimbabwe are the only school boys' falconry clubs in the world. It was started in 1961 by Peter Steyn, one of the foremost authorities on the biology of raptors in Southern Africa.

Falconry is a part of the curriculum activities of the school -like rugby or soccer- for which there is a proper course on biology of birds of prey, management and veterinary aspects of birds of prey, as well as training how to do scientific work for raptor research and research on quarry species. The membership of the College's club has been limited to eight students at a time.

The boys, who would like to fly a protected species, must pass the National Falconry Test, the College helps by preparing them to pass the test.

This part of the education program is under the enthusiastic and dynamic guidance of Ron Hartley, who is also the President of the Zimbabwe Falconers' Club.

The scientific approach to falconry by the members of the falconry club of Falcon College makes falconry a real tool for data collecting.

Not only is data collected about raptors but also on the quarry species.

Every prey item that is caught is weighed, measured : length of beak, wing, tail, guts, data on the stage of the moult is noted, the crop contents are analysed, etc.

It is interesting to note that for many species, falconry is the most efficient way to collect bird specimens from the wild.

One Ovambo Sparrowhawk made last season 430 kills of 61 different species of birds. The African Goshawks of the school have caught 73 different species of prey.

Falconry is then an invaluable source of informations.

The involvement of falconers in bird of prey research and conservation is by far not limited to the students of Falcon College, the official policy is to promote falconry especially insofar as the falconers are under an obligation to involve themselves in prescribed conservation activities.

This resulted in an impressive number of articles and papers due to falconers.

Not to forget other projects like the captive breeding of Africa's rarest falcon, the Taita Falcon with an eye to supplementing the wild populations and the proposal to set aside as a bird of prey sanctuary a valley hosting breeding pairs of that very rare bird, the Zimbabwe Falconers' Club is to be credited for this.

In Zimbabwe, falconry may be considered as a real tool for raptor conservation, for a large part, Ron Hartley's tireless enthusiasm is to be credited for it.



## B . NON-MEMBER COUNTRIES

### CANADA

Although falconry is legally practised over most of the territory of Canada, the Province of Quebec is undergoing severe difficulties.

The official policy of Quebec is very negative as far as keeping pet animals is concerned.

Falconry might fall victim of that policy.

The authorities might consider favourably an utilitarian form of falconry, e.g. for controlling pest birds, but not as a fieldsport.

Mc Gill University (David Bird) had made a study on the potential impact of falconry if allowed in Quebec and concluded that it would do no harm. Still the officials authorities prefer to follow the recommendations of bird protectors than a scientific work made by a university.

The interests of falconry in Quebec are represented by "Association Québécoise des Fauconniers et Autoursiers", they have 20 members, two of them keep birds under a "wildlife management permit". One member is working for the Quebec raptor rehabilitation association.

The authorities should take a decision concerning falconry in the next few months.

AQFA would like IAF to back their efforts for legalisation of falconry.

AQFA applied for membership.

### IRAN

I regularly receive news from that country, but there seems that little is happening concerning an official status for falconry. All I could do is to send some practical documentation. Falconry had a great past in Iran but it has died out except for less than a handful of young people.

### POLAND

The Polish Hunting Association together with the CIC organise a symposium on reintroduction of the Peregrine Falcon. Robert Kenward will participate in it on behalf of IAF.

Falconry has not a separate representation, all hunting matters are dealt with by the Polish Hunting Association. The international interlocutor of that association would be FACE if the Polish Hunting Association becomes a member of it.

Falconry matters would be handled by FACE; FACE may of course call on the IAF for specific issues.

It seems that the CITES is implemented in such a way that going to Poland for hawking has become almost impossible.

I've exchanged correspondence with several other countries, amongst others, Australia, Bulgaria, Greece, Lithuania, Taiwan, USA.

## C . INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

### BENELUX

It is now about 10 years that, together with our Dutch colleague, I endeavour to obtain a decision of the Committee Ministers of the Benelux in favour of falconry.

All we ask is to include, word for word, the relevant provisions of Directive 79/409/EEC in a decision of the committee of the Ministers of the Benelux, but as ever it met with the systematical opposition of Luxemburg.

The result is a continued legal vacuum.

### BIRD LIFE INTERNATIONAL

I met in Brussels the Head of European Division of BirdLife International. BirdLife is the new form of ICBP.

There is one "Partner" per country; they chosen the "leading organisation" in bird conservation (or protection) of each country. Such a choice has not always been easy and sometimes frustration may have arisen.

Besides the "partners", there are "associated organisations", these are the organisations who are willing to cooperate with BirdLife.

To be admitted as such associated organisation, the IAF must apply through the partner.

The financial contribution would be 600 f.

I explored with the Head of the European Division if there would be a possibility for the IAF, as an international organisation dealing with a very specific matter, to be admitted as some sort of a specialist group.

There appeared to be no other solution than to apply as associated organisation; I have not done so so far.

### C.I.C.

I attended the meeting of CIC's Working Group on Falconry and Conservation of Birds of Prey in Austria.

Giampiero Del Mastro resigned from the vice-presidency and has been replaced by Peter Sapara.



The working group drafted a text of a proposal for a CITES Resolution on facilitation of repeated border crossing for non-commercial purposes.

A country, member of the CITES was to be found who would propose that resolution to the Conference of the Parties.

The working group adopted resolutions

- on genetic fingerprinting for the identification of birds of prey.
- requesting that raptor conservation should depend on the law on fieldsports rather than on the law on nature conservation
- laying down guidelines for the reintroduction of raptors

The working group intervened with the Prime Minister of Poland to the effect that falconry be included in the new hunting law and that falconry should be recognised as a legitimate reason for the issuance of CITES documents.

The working group considers that micro-chips are not a more efficient marking system than rings, it is even doubtful that it is well suited for falconry birds.

The working group supports the planned conference on Peregrine Falcon to be organised in Poland by the Polish Hunting Association; I asked that the IAF be associated with that project.

The Working group has sent a position statement about the implementing of CITES to movements of falconers travelling with their birds. The text of it is reproduced at the end of this report.

I attended the General Meeting of CIC in Capetown (South Africa) (on my own expenses).

No doubt that meeting was a most magnificent occasion for making lots of useful and enjoyable contacts with personalities representative of fieldsports throughout the world.

I was very admiring of the remarkable work CIC performs, amongst other in the field of wildlife conservation.

I had the pleasure meeting CIC's new president, Mr Nicolas Franco from Spain, definitely a prominent personality.

#### C.I.T.E.S.

I attended in Brussels a meeting of the Animal Committee where the criteria for the inclusion of species in the Appendices of the Convention were discussed.

I took that opportunity for addressing the meeting about non-commercial movements for recreational purposes that are as severely treated as though they were purely commercial. I pleaded for a more flexible system for non-commercial movements involving small numbers of specimens.

I proposed IAF's co-operation for problems relating more specifically to falconry.

Falconry is pointed at by the CITES Secretariat (without kidding!) as one of the major problems CITES has to face; if it were like that one could without hesitation say that CITES Secretariat has quite a smooth little job (which it is not) and that our Planet Earth is the Earth Paradise.

The Conference of the Parties (COP) will examine, amongst others, a series of alleged infractions involving birds of prey. From the informations we succeeded in gathering on that issue we drew the impression that it goes mainly on falconers travelling abroad just for hawking and coming back home.

There is no proposal of modification of the Appendices concerning raptors.

Austria had decided to table a proposal for a Resolution of the COP over non-commercial repeated border crossings. Following an exchange of correspondence with the Secretariat, the Austrian Government decided to withdraw its proposal.

I shall attend the Conference and so will the North American Falconers' Association as well as C.I.C. and the Peregrine Fund. The interests of wildlife users will be defended by the newly founded Conservation Action Network and the International Wildlife Management Consortium. I attended the foundation meeting of the former in Washington DC on behalf of FACE and CIC, I am in touch with both of them.

The Working Group for Falconry and Bird of Prey Conservation of the C.I.C. has drafted a position statement on the overbureaucratic implementation of CITES of which falconers are the unnecessary victims. This text has been sent to the authorities of Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Spain, France, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Austria, Poland, Portugal, Switzerland, Slovak Republic, Turkey, United Kingdom, as well as to FACE and to the CITES Secretariat. Personally, I sent it in its original German version to the President of the European Commission and to the person in charge of CITES in the European Commission. I reproduce the English translation of the text of this position statement at the end of this report.

#### COUNCIL OF EUROPE

I attended two meetings of the Council of Europe :

- a) the meeting of the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention
- b) the meeting of the Steering Committee for the Protection & Management of the Environment & Natural Habitats.

Meeting under a) has really become a habit, I attend that meeting every year.

Meeting under b) : it was the first time I attended it. I had been asked by the Federation of Fieldsports Associations of Europe to represent them.

Years ago I had applied for the IAF to be admitted as an observer and it had been replied that fieldsports were sufficiently represented by FACE.



These meetings are always a very good opportunity for meeting high ranked civil servants of all over Europe and other wildlife specialists.

With the deep changes that have occurred in East and Central Europe, the number of delegations has significantly increased and so the interest of that meeting.

The Council of Europe has planned a seminar on "Hunting laws and management of Europe's Hunting resources". I proposed IAF's co-operation for addressing the topic of falconry laws and for giving a paper on the ways falconry is being treated in the laws of different countries.

The Standing Committee has appointed a group of experts on "Legal aspects of introduction and reintroduction of wildlife species". The first report of that group of experts has been distributed to the delegates present and to the observers.

I read in it that the German delegate quoted falconry as a potential cause of accidental introduction (of non-native species) and suggested that certain activities should be prohibited without authorisation.

I expressed my point of view in the following text :

\*\*\*\*\*  
"Group of Experts on Legal Status of Introduction and  
Re-introduction of Wildlife Species"  
T-PVS (93)14

The above document on page 10, 3rd paragraph refers to falconry as an example of other activity that could give rise to accidental introduction of wildlife.

It is a matter of fact that falconers use birds of prey belonging to non-native species, these birds may indeed escape from them.

Falconers represent a very small group of people. The proportion of falconers using specimens of non native species is very low.

Out of this very small number of non-native birds of prey used by falconers, how many will escape?

The percentage of birds of prey that falconers lose is extremely low. The loss of a falconry bird is an extremely rare case.

In this respect one should bear in mind that falconers  
- train their hawks very carefully to make them obedient  
- take every measure to avoid the escape of their hawks  
(reliable equipment, safe aviaries, etc...)  
- use very frequently radio tracking.

The purpose of these precautions is to reduce to the smallest minimum possible the risk of losing falconry birds.

I may say that the overwhelming majority of falconers are competent and careful and therefor (almost) never lose a hawk.

In the operations of reintroducing the Peregrine falcon in

Germany, statistics have shown that more than 10 birds had to be released to have an individual settling in the wild.

These releases for reintroduction have been carried out in such a way as to maximize the chances of individuals establishing themselves in the wild and eventually forming a breeding population.

Not only have the releasing sites been carefully selected, not only the method of releasing has been adapted with a view to maximizing its efficiency, but also the birds themselves have been prepared for being released, for example by avoiding anthropophily.

In spite of these techniques being applied, the percentage of surviving released birds is rather low (it is also low in the case of young fledging from wild pairs).

One is allowed to believe that the chances of survival are much lower in the case of unintentional "release" of a falconer's hawk, independently from the fact that the species may not be adapted to the biotope in which it escaped.

For centuries, Lanner falcons, Saker falcons or Gyrfalcons have been used in Western Europe by falconers, no breeding case has been recorded.

We may say that the number of hawks lost by falconers is very small, that the chances of them to settle in the wild are extremely thin.

In order to form a pair in the wild, far more than 20 birds of both sexes and of the same species should be lost in a geographically limited area and during a limited period; there should therefor be well over hundred careless falconers in a given region using the same species of hawks!

With non-native species this probability is so close to zero that it should be held for negligible and totally ignored in the study concerned.

As far as the risk of hybridation in the wild is concerned the risk is even smaller. Hybridation in captivity is practically always the result of artificial insemination.

There is a behavioural factor that prevents interspecific pairing.

I would not like to end these reflexions without pointing out that in most cases the use by falconers of non-native species is caused by overprotective policy of some official authorities refusing to give access to indigenous species.

Le Cochetay, 6th December 1993

\*\*\*\*\*

On request of the Council of Europe, the Federation of the Fieldsports Associations of Europe (FACE) organised a seminar on "Hunting as a Tool for Wildlife Conservation & Rural



Development", which was especially directed to East and Central European Countries.

I delivered a paper on "Falconry as a Tool for Wildlife Conservation and Rural Development", in which amongst others I proposed guidelines for drafting the "ideal falconry law" and promoted IAF's Code of Conduct.  
I reproduce the text of my address at the end of this report.

#### EUROPEAN UNION

E.U. is the new name for EEC.  
In January 1994, the Commission of the EU published an Amended proposal for a European Parliament and Council Regulation "laying down provisions with regard to possession of and trade in specimens of species of wild fauna and flora"; we may call it in short "European CITES".

A first draft saw the light in 1990 and a second in 1991.  
The 1994 text is an amended version taking into account the 100+ amendements proposed by the European Parliament.

Needless to say that the IAF did not fail to comment on each of those versions as and when they were known.  
My comments were sent to all our EEC (or EU) members with the request that they propose them to their national authorities.

In this second half of 1994, the Presidency of the European Union was held by Germany.  
The German authorities had declared themselves determined to make of this Regulation a absolute priority. Amongst others they wanted to introduce a "Positivliste" containing a few species that are commonly kept in captivity the possession and trade of which would be authorised, no birds of prey would be on that list. All the rest would be prohibited. In other words everything is prohibited except what is explicitly authorised, or in other words :

prohibition is the rule, freedom is the exception.

They wanted also all vertebrates to be listed in annex A or B.

It may be expected that, due to the German extreme position, the Regulation will not be adopted during their Presidency.

I took the initiative of launching the idea of some sort of a "falconry pass" for falconers travelling abroad with their hawks for hunting purposes.  
A similar pass exists in EU for firearms, which grants to the hunters more flexible rules when they travel with their arms to go hunting.

The falcon is to the falconer what the gun is to the other hunters.

Any suggestion on this idea is most welcome.

Bird conservation in the EU is governed by Directive 79/409. It allows to derogate for "other judicious use of some birds in small numbers". The European Commission has given its

interpretation of the different provisions of the Directive. For the interpretation of "judicious use" they give an example : falconry.

They also said that the Directive does not apply to birds in captivity.

In other words the compulsory protection measures are to be applied only to birds living in the wild.

It is interesting to make a parallel with the court decision taken in Switzerland (see above).

#### F.A.C.E.

The Federation of Fieldsports Associations of Europe covers 21 countries totalizing some 7,000,000 hunters.

I wish to underline how FACE actively defends fieldsports wherever need may be.

They have been pleading in favour of falconry on the occasion of the discussions concerning the "European CITES".

No doubt FACE is a very weighty supporter of falconry.

You have seen throughout this report that FACE is always at the forefront of the defence of the interests of fieldsports.

They deserve the gratitude of the falconers' community.

#### IUCN

The International Union for Conservation of Nature held its general meeting in Buenos Aires in January this year.

There were over 1,000 participants from some 110 countries making this meeting the most important world-level conservation event since the Rio summit.

Not being a member, IAF did not attend that meeting, but FACE and CIC did.

Over 150 Draft Motions had been tabled for adoption at that meeting.

One of them on "international trade in wild birds" could have complicated things enormously for falconry : it recommended a moratorium on bird trade, allowing exceptions in too narrow conditions. Falconry did not fit in these conditions.

The text that has ultimately been adopted after two revisions was much more flexible and should therefore not harm falconry.

There was another draft on Houbara hunting recommending urging the Government of Pakistan to put a total ban on Houbabra hunting until its populations can again withstand sustainable utilization; it further urges the range states to agree on rotational hunting of Houbara.

I sent the draft motion to my correspondents in the Middle East. The text adopted doesn't differ from the draft.

I intend to apply for IAF's admission as a member of the IUCN.



## LETTERS

# Hunters don't go for guts and pain

SIR. — Having spent 13 years of my life leading a professional campaign against hunting, I know full well just how easy it is to mislead people compared to the difficulties of informing them.

It is very easy for the League Against Cruel Sports to say: "It is wrong to kill an animal just for fun." People who are not conversant with farming, wildlife conservation and nature will of course readily agree with such a statement.

It is a lot more difficult to get the truth and the facts through ears that don't want to hear, and eyes that don't want to see. But after 13 years of discussing and debating the issue, I found it

impossible to ignore the truth and the facts about hunting. I have come to despise the League Against Cruel Sports even though I was its Chairman and Chief Executive, simply because these people know as well as I do that the abolition of hunting will not make a hapworth of difference to the welfare of foxes, hares or deer.

At war Mankind will always be at war with creatures that damage and destroy. Just as people in towns and cities will not tolerate rats in their houses, farmers cannot be expected to tolerate foxes in hen houses or deer in wheat fields.

To abolish hunting is to say: "You must not kill quick kill or escape method of hunting, but you can kill by other methods that cause a lot more real pain and suffering." When one asks "Why?" the only truthful answer is, "Because I don't like that fact that you get some enjoyment out of it."

Frankly it does not matter whether a man in a slaughterhouse enjoys his job or hates his job. Normal people enjoy their Sunday roast and their bacon for breakfast. It really is as simple as that.

I still have a concern about animals suffering pain. So do most hunting

people. They don't go hunting for blood, guts and pain. They simply know foxes have to be killed and they also know that the quick death in the jaws of dogs is preferable to hours or even days in a snare.

Moreover and much more importantly there could not be any hunting if the quarry species were exterminated. Therefore hunting people make pretty damn sure that there is a quarry around for the next season. The fishermen and game shooters do the same. But if we take away their incentive by abolition, we will lose much of our wildlife and that is what real conservation is about. It is the difference between idealism and reality.

It took me 13 years to accept that point, not 13 minutes of reading misleading and professional propaganda.

Yours etc,  
Richard Course,  
Jubilee Cottage,  
Enfield Road,  
Enfield,  
Middlesex.

### Write to us

THE Editor is pleased to receive letters on local and national issues.

But please be brief and get your letters to us as soon as possible.

A N N E X E S

LINCOLNSHIRE STANDARD  
8th October 1993



FALCONRY AS A TOOL FOR  
WILDLIFE CONSERVATION AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Christian de COUNE

The Bern Convention contains in its article 9, provisions allowing "...other judicious exploitation of certain wild animals...in small numbers."

Is falconry such a "judicious exploitation"?

Yes.  
Because falconry is an extremely ancient hunting method, therefore it is to be considered as mankind's heritage and needs to be maintained. Because falconry is a most ecological hunting method: the falconry bird doesn't do anything else than what he would have done daily if it were a wild bird of prey; the game pursued by a falconry bird knows perfectly by instinct what it has to do to escape, whereas it is not the case when aimed at by a gun. In other words, in falconry, the hunter and the game are on equal terms. No wounded game.  
Because healthy populations of birds of prey may be considered as a renewable natural resource and so the game management principle of "sustainable yield" can be applied to them.

"Sustainable yield" of birds of prey for falconry:  
see calculation ~~on facing page.~~

A similar calculation may be made for other species than Peregrine falcon.  
If you replace in this calculation 7 years life span by 5 years, the harvesting rate becomes 8%, if you replace it by 10 years, the harvesting rate becomes 9%.  
A more conservative harvest rate of 5% of the young production would in most case exceed the needs of falconers.

An experimental "sustainable yield" of falcons has been carried out in the USA: the University of Wyoming has conducted a "controlled harvest of Prairie Falcons (*Falco mexicanus*)". An average of 18% of the young was removed annually, after 8 years the conclusion was that "Success rates increased significantly in the harvest area and the total area but there was no significant increase in the control area. Removing young from a nest may have increased the chances of remaining young fledging successfully".  
In Great-Britain, studies have shown that a population of Sparrowhawks (*Accipiter nisus*) starts declining if it undergoes a loss of 30%. (Ian Newton)

PEREGRINE FALCON (*Falco peregrinus*)

LIFE SPAN : 7 YEARS  
PER YEAR : 2 YOUNG

TOTAL : 14 YOUNG

%.

STABLE POPULATION :  
YOUNG PRODUCTION MUST JUST  
COMPENSATE PARENTS' MORTALITY

OF THE 14 YOUNG  
2 MUST SURVIVE TO REPLACE PARENTS

14 - 2 = 12  
12 YOUNG = SURPLUS

15 % SURVIVAL  
85 % SURPLUS

HARVESTING 10 % OF SURPLUS

OR

HARVESTING  
8.5 % OF PRODUCTION

LITTLE OR NO IMPACT ON POPULATION DYNAMIC

Does falconry comply with the condition of "small numbers"?

Yes.  
Because falconers -will never be numerous;  
-use few birds of prey  
-catch small quantities of game.

Falconers have never been numerous and will never be because falconry is a time consuming and very demanding activity requesting daily care to the hawks. Practising falconry requests particular skill and ability. Falconers do nothing to increase their numbers.

Falconers use few birds because it is against their ethics to keep more birds than they can actually fly; because keeping more hawks increases the work and does not necessarily increase the number of kills and because falconers keep their hawks for rather long periods or in other words the replacement rate is rather low.

Falconers kill far less game than shooters, because hawks are not machines and so they get tired or get less aggressive after a certain number of flights, because also the game knows better how to escape a falcon than a gun.

Not only falconers themselves claim that falconry is a judicious exploitation, others do too.

Two examples amongst many others:

The World Conference on the Conservation of Birds of Prey organised by the International Council for Bird Preservation (ICBP, now Bird Life International) in Vienna, October 1-3, 1975 adopted among many others, the following recommendation:



"recommends that possession of live birds of prey and their eggs be prohibited save under license, to be issued by the appropriate governmental authority, for research, education, falconry and domestic breeding,  
 "that censuses should be made of all birds of prey in captivity  
 "that wilful disturbance of rare nesting birds of prey, including nature photography and bird watching, be prohibited save under license to be issued by the appropriate governmental authority, for research, education, falconry, domestic breeding and bird-ringing.

The Economic and Social Committee of the European Communities stated in its Opinion of 25th May 1977:

"The absence of the possibility of derogating in order to take birds of prey was noted.  
 "It was pointed out to the Commission that this was a **legitimate and ancient sport** which, if properly controlled harmed neither the birds of prey population nor the populations of birds pursued in the course of falconry. Some provisions should be made therefore to allow the continuation of this on a controlled basis.

We may conclude from these two texts that the ICBP and the European Communities consider falconry as a "judicious use". It is interesting to remember that at the time these two texts have been adopted, the situation of many bird of prey was very critical; now that the bird of prey populations of species of interest to the falconers have dramatically increased, these two statements would be still more justified.

The Bern Convention submits the "exploitation" to "strictly supervised conditions" and "selective basis".

#### **How to comply with these requirements?**

Like any hunting method, falconry must be the subject of regulations, in order to  
 - ensure its continued practice  
 - keep it within the limits of "judicious exploitation".

These regulations should be consistent with the risk that falconry poses to the conservation status of wild bird of prey populations. In this respect, the example of the United States Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service is interesting: the USFWS decided in 1989

"to establish simpler, less restrictive regulations governing the use of most raptors. Both falconry and raptor propagation are small scale activities having little or no impact "on raptor populations"... "Changes (of regulations) include "eliminating the requirement for banding the more common species "of raptors used for falconry. The banding requirement will be "retained for three species of raptors, the peregrine falcon "(Falco peregrinus), the gyrfalcon (Falco rusticolus) and the "Harris hawk (Parabuteo unicinctus)".

There are about 2,800 falconry licenses in the USA, it is most probably more than in the entire Europe, that's what the USFWS calls a "small scale activity".

What should these regulations contain?

It is necessary to give a definition of falconry to differentiate it from other activities, like public shows with raptors, bird of prey collections, etc...; falconry is a hunting method and nothing else.

Strict criteria for falconry associations to be recognised would help in case they would apply for membership in the IAF, they would prevent too many falconers' associations to be established and would avoid non pure falconry associations to be recognised.

To obtain a falconry license, the applicant must be member of a recognised associations because falconers themselves are better able to judge if somebody has the necessary aptitudes.

Captive breeding is justified for rare species of birds of prey but not for common ones like for instance Goshawks, captive breeding must only aim at supplementing the wild population resource. Wild birds of prey should be allotted to the recognised association(s) because they are better able to judge who would be entitled to receive a bird, it also avoids these birds of prey to be taken for individual financial profit, it also reinforces the authority of the association over its members.

### MODEL FALCONRY REGULATIONS

#### 1 GENERAL PRINCIPLES

FALCONRY IS THE SPORT OF TAKING A WILD ANIMAL IN ITS NATURAL STATE AND HABITAT BY MEANS OF TRAINED HAWKS.  
 DEROGATIONS MAY BE GIVEN TO PERMIT THE KEEPING, TAKING, TRANSPORTATION AND BREEDING OF BIRDS OF PREY FOR FALCONRY.  
 EXTENDED SEASONS FOR FALCONRY  
 TO BE RECOGNISED, FALCONRY ASSOCIATIONS SHALL

- BE LEGALLY FOUNDED
- FALCONRY AS MAIN AIMS
- MINIMUM xxx FALCONER-MEMBERS
- BINDING CODE OF CONDUCT

#### 2 LICENSE

TO KEEP BIRDS OF PREY FOR FALCONRY, ONE MUST HAVE A FALCONRY LICENSE. TO BE GRANTED A FALCONRY LICENSE, APPLICANT MUST

- BE MEMBER OF A RECOGNISED FALCONRY ASSOCIATION
- NOT SENTENCED FOR HUNTING OR NATURE CONSERVATION MATTERS IN THE LAST (5) YEARS
- HAVE SUCCESSFULLY PASSED FALCONRY TEST
- BE (18) YEARS OLD
- HAVE CIVIL LIABILITY INSURANCE

LICENSE FOR FOREIGNERS.

#### 3 FALCONRY TEST

ORGANISED BY RECOGNISED ASSOCIATIONS UNDER OFFICIALS' SUPERVISION

WHEN NEEDED  
 MAXIMUM ONCE A YEAR  
 DATE FIXED BY OFFICIALS



WRITTEN TEST

MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS

(40) QUESTIONS  
(10) PER BRANCH

- BRANCH A.  
BIOLOGY OF RAPTORS
- BRANCH B.  
BIOLOGY SMALL GAME
- BRANCH C.  
LAWS ON BRANCH A & B
- BRANCH D.  
FALCONRY

ONLY OFFICIALS KNOW QUESTIONS  
CORRECTOR DOESN'T KNOW CANDIDATE'S NAME  
GOOD REPLY = + 1 POINT  
BAD REPLY = - 1 POINT  
NO REPLY = 0 POINT

EXEMPTION

IF HOLDER OF FALCONRY PERMIT AT ENTRY INTO FORCE OF THE LAW.  
FOR FOREIGN FALCONERS.

TEST COMMISSION

- (5) MEMBERS
- 2 OFFICIALS
- 2 FROM FALCONERS' ASSOCIATION
- 1 SCIENTIST

4 ORIGIN OF FALCONRY BIRDS

CAPTIVE BREEDING

CLOSE RINGED 5TH - 13TH DAY  
BREEDER REPORTS WITHIN 7 DAYS

- BIRTH
- DEATH
- LOSS
- TRANSFER

OFFICIALS MAY VISIT FACILITIES  
OFFICIALS GIVE BREEDING CERTIFICATE

IMPORTATION

SUBJECT TO CITES REGULATIONS

FROM THE WILD

ANNUAL QUOTA GIVEN TO RECOGNISED FALCONRY ASSOCIATIONS  
RECOGNISED FALCONRY ASSOCIATIONS DISTRIBUTE BIRDS ACCORDING TO OWN  
RULES  
APPLICATION MUST MENTION

- NUMBER OF SPECIMENS
- LOCATIONS
- NAME OF RECIPIENTS

What should these regulations contain?

It is necessary to give a definition of falconry to differentiate it from other activities, like public shows with raptors, bird of prey collections, etc...; falconry is a hunting method and nothing else.

Strict criteria for falconry associations to be recognised would help in case they would apply for membership in the IAF, they would prevent too many falconers' associations to be established and would avoid non pure falconry associations to be recognised.

To obtain a falconry license, the applicant must be member of a recognised associations because falconers themselves are better able to judge if somebody has the necessary aptitudes.

Captive breeding is justified for rare species of birds of prey but not for common ones like for instance Goshawks, captive breeding must only aim at supplementing the wild population resource.  
Wild birds of prey should be allotted to the recognised association(s) because they are better able to judge who would be entitled to receive a bird, it also avoids these birds of prey to be taken for individual financial profit, it also reinforces the authority of the association over its members.

MODEL  
FALCONRY REGULATIONS

1 GENERAL PRINCIPLES

FALCONRY IS THE SPORT OF TAKING A WILD ANIMAL IN ITS NATURAL STATE AND HABITAT BY MEANS OF TRAINED HAWKS.  
DEROGATIONS MAY BE GIVEN TO PERMIT THE KEEPING, TAKING, TRANSPORTATION AND BREEDING OF BIRDS OF PREY FOR FALCONRY.  
EXTENDED SEASONS FOR FALCONRY

- TO BE RECOGNISED, FALCONRY ASSOCIATIONS SHALL
- BE LEGALLY FOUNDED
  - FALCONRY AS MAIN AIMS
  - MINIMUM xxx FALCONER-MEMBERS
  - BINDING CODE OF CONDUCT

2 LICENSE

TO KEEP BIRDS OF PREY FOR FALCONRY, ONE MUST HAVE A FALCONRY LICENSE.  
TO BE GRANTED A FALCONRY LICENSE, APPLICANT MUST

- BE MEMBER OF A RECOGNISED FALCONRY ASSOCIATION
- NOT SENTENCED FOR HUNTING OR NATURE CONSERVATION MATTERS IN THE LAST (5) YEARS
- HAVE SUCCESSFULLY PASSED FALCONRY TEST
- BE (18) YEARS OLD
- HAVE CIVIL LIABILITY INSURANCE

LICENSE FOR FOREIGNERS.

3 FALCONRY TEST

ORGANISED BY RECOGNISED ASSOCIATIONS  
UNDER OFFICIALS' SUPERVISION

WHEN NEEDED  
MAXIMUM ONCE A YEAR  
DATE FIXED BY OFFICIALS







It is for instance the case in Belgium where hunters with horses and dogs have a much longer season than shooters; in France falconers may start flying their hawks in July on captive game; in Spain where falconers were allowed to fly during the closed season on the condition that they did not take more game per day than a wild bird of prey would kill for its food. The USA and Great Britain have also extended seasons. Derogations from the regulations of other hunting methods may be necessary for falconers:

In some countries, hunting may be exercised only on some days of the week (eg. week-ends), this is inconceivable for falconry because birds of prey must be regularly flown, ideally every day, and in any case more than twice a week (wild birds of prey hunt every day...).

#### FALCONRY AS A TOOL FOR WILDLIFE CONSERVATION ?

Falconry creates among its practitioners a very great interest for birds of prey. Falconers develop a great knowledge of the behaviour and biology of birds of prey (at least for the species they utilise) and an ability to manipulate them. Falconers being dependant on the wild populations of raptors, they will feel most concerned by their conservation.

All this makes that falconers are potentially very active and devoted actors in raptor conservation programs.

Falconers' associations may be statutory under the obligation of participating in some conservation work, like census, ringing, etc... This interest will disappear if falconers do not have access to wild birds of prey.

It is to be noted that many of the great names of raptor conservation are falconers...

#### FALCONRY AS A TOOL FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT?

Like other fieldsports, falconry can yield additional revenue from land. Some falconers go regularly abroad for hunting with their falcons. East and Central Europe are likely to afford good hawking grounds: Partridge, Grouses -black or red-.

Falconers are in search of pure wild game. Falconers need adapted infrastructure: comfortable accommodation and good food for themselves and for their falcons. They need large areas - 5-6.000 Ha of plains-, that can be shared with shooters (additional revenue).

Rules and regulations must be adapted to the needs of falconers: hunting every day, temporary licences issued without harassing paperwork. Streamlined CITES formalities, etc...

#### CONCLUSION

Falconry is a worthy hunting method that deserves to be maintained. Falconers can play an active role in raptor conservation. Falconry, like other fieldsports can provide an additional revenue from land.



## The International Association for Falconry and Conservation of Birds of Prey

Treasurer  
Peter Bekkers  
Dorpsstraat 105  
5241 EB ROSMALEN  
Netherlands  
Tel.: 04192 - 14737

### EXPLOITATION FINANCIAL STATEMENT 31-12-1993

#### Income:

01	Contributions	chf	10.369,--	
	<b>Income:</b>			<b>chf 10.369,--</b>

#### Expenditure:

02	Bank	chf	376,80	
03	Secretariat	-	4.868,98	
04	Treasurer	-	333,50	
05	Travelling expenses and accomodation	-	6.930,82	
06	Incidental expenses	-	198,55	
	<b>Expenditure:</b>		<b>-/-</b>	<b>chf 12.708,65</b>

			<b>-/-</b>	<b>chf 2.339,65</b>
	<b>Balance 01-01-1993</b>			<b>- 4.297,33</b>

	<b>Balance 31-12-1993</b>			<b>chf 1.957,68</b>
--	---------------------------	--	--	---------------------

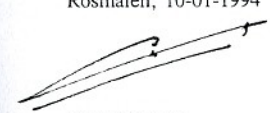
	<b>Gyerzeller Bank A.G. 189336.001.11</b>			<b>chf 1.957,68</b>
--	---	--	--	---------------------

Gyerzeller Bank A.G.  
Attention to Viviana  
12 Rue Ch. Galland  
CH-1211 Genève 12  
Switzerland

Tel. - 41-22-3473700  
Fax. - 41-22-3466130  
Account nr. 189336.001.11

Rosmalen, 10-01-1994

President

  
Peter Bekkers

  
Christian de Coune



APPENDIX EXPLOITATION FINANCIAL STATEMENT 1993

01 Contributions paid up in 1993:

Association		Members 1993	Year 1991	Year 1992	Year 1993	Year 1994	Year 1995
Austria	O.F.B.	110	V	*	* 366.--		
Belgium	C.M.B.	55	V	V	342.--		
Czechia '91	C.F.C.	394	Free	V			
Denmark	D.F.K.	50	V	*	c 4.50		
France	A.N.F.A.	210	410.--	742.20	* 36.35		
Georgia	G.S.F.		Free	Free	Free		
Germany	D.F.O.	780	V	c 152.95	1.966.50		
Gr. Britain	B.F.C.	900	V	2.311.70			
	W.H.C.	300	c 29.75	c 478.60	950.25		
Hungary '91	M.M.E.S.S.	88	Free	Free			
India	H.C.H.		Free	Free	Free		
Ireland	I.H.C.	50	V	V	384.65		
Italy	C.D.F.	20	V	318.15			
Japan	J.F.C.	23	V	c 72.45	317.75	317.75	317.75
Netherlands	A.M.	130	V	V	542.50		
Poland	G.S.		Free	Free	Free		
Portugal	A.P.F.	17	V	V	307.20		
Spain	A.E.C.	150	V				
South Africa	N.F.C.		Free	Free	Free		
Switzerland	S.V.	20	V				
Tunisia	A.N.F.T.		Free	Free	Free		
Zimbabwe	Z.F.C.		Free	Free	Free		
		CHF	439.75	4.076.05	5.217.70	317.75	317.75

01 Contributions: chf 10.369.--  
=====

\* = paid a part  
V = paid  
c = correction

02 Bank:

Commission	chf	291,80	
Postage	-	85.--	
		-----	
02 Bank:	chf	376,80	=====

02a Bank:

Definition	Year 1992	Year 1993	
Commission	263,05	291,80	
Postage	91,50	85.--	
	354,55	376,80	







05 Travelling expenses and accomodation:

Definition	President 1992	President 1993	Treasurer 1992	Treasurer 1993
Austria C.I.C.	536.--	536,37		
Belgium I.A.F.		190,15		94,45
France A.N.F.A. (Strasbourg)	300.-- 828.--	214,67 707,20		
Germany D.F.O.	696.--			
Great Britain B.F.C.		1.103,36		
Raport Research F.		778,12		
Netherlands I.A.F.		223,35	359,55	
Tunisia		543,60		
CHF	2.360.--	4.116,82	359,55	94,45

05 Travelling expenses and accomodation:

chf 6.930,82  
=====

05a Travelling expenses and accomodation

Definition	President 1992	President 1993	Treasurer 1992	Treasurer 1993
Austria C.I.C.	536.--	536,37		
Belgium F.A.C.E. I.A.F.		190,15		94,45
Czechia	170,50			
France A.N.F.A. Strasbourg	300.-- 828.--	214,67 707,20		
Germany D.F.O.	1.176,25			
Great Britain B.F.C. Raport Research	445,40	1.103,36 778,12		
Japan	3.887,85			
Netherlands I.A.F.	484,80	223,35 363,60	359,55	
Tunisia				
CHF	7.828,80	4.116,82	359,55	94,45

06 Incidental expenses:

Showcase in the European House of Fieldsports  
and Conservation (F.A.C.E.) at Brussels

chf 198,55

06 Incidental expenses:

chf 198,55  
=====

06a Incidental expenses:

Definition	1992	1993
Belgium Showcase F.A.C.E.		
Canada book	45,10	198,55
South Africa Nyala Wildlife	131,50	
Zimbabwe Ron Hartley	569.--	
	745,60	198,55

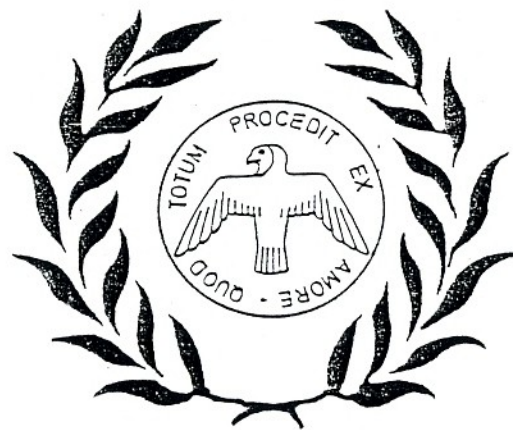




The International Association for Falconry  
and Conservation of Birds of Prey

# SUPPLEMENT

NEWSLETTER 1994







CONSEIL INTERNATIONAL DE LA CHASSE ET DE LA CONSERVATION DU GIBIER  
INTERNATIONALER JAGDRAT ZUR ERHALTUNG DES WILDES  
INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL FOR GAME AND WILDLIFE CONSERVATION

GRUPE DE TRAVAIL DE LA FAUCONNERIE ET DE LA CONSERVATION DES OISEAUX DE PROIE  
ARBEITSGRUPPE FÜR FALKNEREI UND ERHALTUNG DER GREIFVÖGEL  
WORKING GROUP FOR FALCONRY AND BIRD OF PREY CONSERVATION

C O M M E N T



on the regulations for applying the convention on international commerce of endangered species of wild animals and plants CITES, which have been deviated from the original version through the countless resolutions of the parties contracting to the conference and through the numerous interpretations of the executive authorities.

Because of the countless resolutions of the parties contracting to the conference and numerous interpretations by the executive authorities, the decisions taken to enforce the convention do not correspond any longer to its original version which was comprehensible for the concerned individuals and easy to carry out by the executive authorities.

Decrees can be enforced only when they are supported by the citizens. When it comes out that they are turning into an exaggerated bureaucracy and chicanery, the opposition of the concerned persons raises as well as of the one responsible for the execution (in this case mainly the customs officers), who are as overwhelmed by the complicated CITES decisions as are the plain citizens. The instructions are eluded, therefore they are without any effects. This is the reason why we think it necessary to revise the already taken decisions and to simplify the decisions of the executive parties.

The aim of the convention is in no way to render hunting tourism so difficult that it would disappear but to avoid the smuggle of endangered species of wild animals. The CITES should limit itself to this aim. Following, we intend to show the unbearable worries the individuals are subjected to when they want to apply the convention, worries which could be avoided without influencing this aim.

In some countries (for example Hungary) one receives the CITES certificate three months after having applied for it. Sometimes it lasts even longer if you do not urge with faxes. Thus organized hunting trips can sometimes not take place and the last minute invitations are anyway impossible.

Poland, where falconry is part of a hundred-year old tradition, allows no CITES import or re-export permits for falconry.

In some countries like the Czech Republic or Slovakia the authorities of the importing countries issue the re-export permits only when the birds of prey have actually passed the border and the customs have confirmed their passage. This leads to the fact that the hunting week-ends have to be extended to at least one more day in order to obtain the re-export permits for the bird from the head-office of the executive authorities (i.e. Prag or Bratislava). It can also mean sometimes hundreds of supplementary kilometres if you are hunting in another part of the country.

Such rules are regarded as unbearable chicanery by the concerned individuals.

In some countries (Hungary or the Czech Republic) the customs hardly stamps the CITES certificates as required. Because of the complexity of the CITES regulations, the custom officers are afraid of making any mistakes and therefore to be sued because of a signature or a stamp.

A health certificate from an official veterinary is sufficient to cross most of the borders. This is why some falconers renounce to the complicated process of obtaining a CITES certificate. Doing so, they are not even aware of doing anything wrong because the bird they are taking with has been captive bred, is marked according to the CITES regulations and is their own property. If ever the situation is used to smuggling by irresponsible individuals, the parties contracting to the CITES are mostly to be blamed for it as they are responsible for instructions which are difficult to apply and which disregard any property and are also responsible for the illegality of angry citizens.

In order to issue any import authorisation when a bird has been exported for a hunting trip, the executive authorities request a certificate stating that the consignee has the convenient place and care for living animals at his disposal. This certificate has to be renewed each time the bird has to cross the border for hunting purposes even if the bird of prey is being kept at the same place more than a decade.

In Austria it is necessary to pay ATS 580,00 revenue-stamps and administration duties in order to obtain the necessary Austrian CITES permits in order to import and export one time a bird of prey for hunting purposes. Moreover ATS 170,00 for a veterinary health-certificate are required which makes at the end ATS 750,00 for each hunting trip. This meets no comprehension from the concerned individual as the bird has not been taken in the wild but has been captive bred.

One CITES resolution recommends the use of microchips in order to recognize protected animals although the implantation of a transponder on birds especially on birds of prey being flown for hunting can cause some problems. Some studies show that also for the birds kept in mews the implanted transponder can move up to three centimetres within three years (Grimm 1992). Because of the strength of acceleration and of deceleration during a hunting flight one can expect that the moving transponder can injure the muscular tissues. Therefore this method of marking birds of prey seems to be risky for the protection of birds as for the regulations. The fact that the use of this kind of marking is founded on the theory that rings cannot completely prevent falsifications and can easily be removed to be put on another bird is not tenable. In the age of electronics it is not a problem to build or manipulate (?) microchips. It is also not difficult to take a transponder out of a dead bird even from a living one and implant it in another bird. For all these reasons we recommend to use only the proved rings for birds of prey.



Because of the numerous success in breeding, the need for birds of prey in falconry and other kinds of activities involving birds of prey is covered. The offers are already superior to the demands and therefore make the prices of birds of prey bred in captivity decrease. Therefore the temptation to smuggle birds taken out of the wilds has also decreased excepted for the specially rare species. These are anyway of no use for falconry and no commercial exhibitions of birds of prey dare to acquire them.

The present system for controlling birds of prey crossing the border is of no use, first because it does not make the difference between commerce and hunting journeys and then, because it considers an export permit as an actual export when for the re-import no import appliance has occurred whether because the export never took place or because the controlling authorities had not been in the possession of the certificate and did not send it back. Therefore the statistics are not accurate and the wrong data is used as argument in favour of more drastic measures.

For all the mentioned reasons we demand the contracting parties of the CITES to the crossing of borders with birds of prey for hunting purposes by using the already existing exceptions and special decisions of the convention and to to revise the resolutions which prevent the original aim of these exceptions.

Heinz Pils  
Chairman of the working group.