

The

Falconers

& RAPTOR CONSERVATION MAGAZINE

Spring '92

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INSIDE



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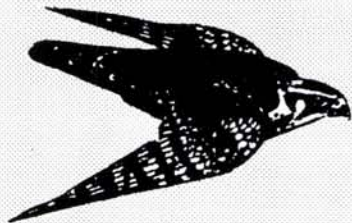
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We are the largest and oldest hawking club in the country. We work closely with the British Field Sports Society (BFSS), The Federation of Field Sports Associations of EEC (FACE) and other organisations to see that legislation in EEC or Britain does not endanger falconry.

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SPRING 1992

No. 10

Front cover photograph:

TOP LEFT: Golden Eagle
BOTTOM LEFT: Merlin by S. Radford
MAIN: Coopers Hawk by R. Haigh

Published quarterly by:
FALCON PUBLISHING

The Falconer & Raptor
Conservation Magazine

D & LR Wilson
20 Bridle Road,
Burton Latimer,
Kettering,
Northants.,
NN15 5QP.
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Printed By:
CROMPTON PRESS LTD.,
JUBILEE ROAD,
LETCHEWORTH,
HERTS. SG6 1NE
TEL: (0462) 673508

Subscriptions
Rates: UK & Eire £12.50
Europe £16.00
Airmail £25.00

Cheque/Postal Order payable to:
The Falconers Magazine,
For more details phone:
0536 722794

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The Falconers

& RAPTOR CONSERVATION MAGAZINE

Two and a half years and ten magazines on "doesn't time fly" the future for us looks good. I wish I could say the same for our sport. The Hawkboard have been working hard through 1991 on your behalf, so please do all you can to help.

Some of you will be preparing for the forthcoming breeding season, best of luck to you all. One of the main events of the year, The British Falconers Fair, to be held yet again at the Stoneleigh Showground and is set to be even bigger than the 1991. The Falconers Fair organisers in conjunction with the Falconers Magazine are giving away 10 Family Passes to the winners of this issue's competition. We look forward to seeing you there.

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT:-

I would like to thank my wife for our fourth CHICK hatched 31st Dec 1991. After 3 falcons we have finally managed a tiercel, Thomas David.

David Wilson Editor

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News

TRAINING GUNDOGS FOR FALCONRY

Sunday 26th April

A Training Day covering all aspects of training gundogs for falconry including pointing live game. Participants are encouraged to bring their own dogs.

Details from Guy Wallace – 0874 754311

DIPLOMA COURSE OFFERS NEW INSIGHT INTO BIRDS OF PREY

Birds of prey enthusiasts have chance to improve their knowledge of the structure and function of viable wild populations by enrolling for a two year University Diploma in Raptor Biology.

The two-year part-time study of birds of prey, including owls, is aimed at enthusiastic amateurs, curators of raptor collections, nature reserve managers and other conservation workers, or indeed anyone else who is seeking an insight into these ecologically-important birds.

The course is run at the Durrell Institute of Conservation & Ecology at the University of Kent by Dr Mike Nicholls, who as well as having an active interest in the evolutionary biology of raptors is also a falconer.

"The Diploma was designed in the spirit of an adult education course" he explains "to give formal credit to those with great expertise and knowledge of raptors and to allow them access to a University award bearing course without the usual qualifications".

Indeed amongst the the present student group are people from all walks of life; including a bricklayer and a gynaecologist, a systems analyst and vet. All share a love of raptors either as raptor keepers or field ornithologists. The course has attracted people from all over Britain as well as overseas.

"There is no single centre of excellence for the study of all aspects of Raptor Biology in

Britain" Mike continued, "so we are doing the next best thing by inviting world renowned experts to come to teach here in Canterbury".

The success of the course seems to be at least partly due to the unique way in which outside experts come to teach each part of the course. For example Prof. David Bird from the MacDonald Raptor Research Centre of McGill University in Canada deals with those aspects of reproduction to do with sperm and egg production. Similarly, Dr. Andy Village deals with aspects of population biology, while John Love discusses habitat management and reintroductions. There are a total ten raptor experts responsible for the teaching and the list further includes Robert Kenward, John Cooper and Jemima Parry-Jones

The taught part of the course occupies three one-week residential blocks held at the University of Kent; one at Easter and two in the Summer. Students successfully completing this first year are allowed to carry on to Year 2, where they carry out an individual supervised project.

Mike Nicholls comments "it is in the second year projects that the enthusiasm and motivation for the subject by the students is mostly revealed". Projects this year have been varied and have

NORTH AMERICAN FALCONERS ASSOCIATION



ROBIN HAIGH has been elected by the board of NAFA as its representative for the United Kingdom and all the countries within the E.E.C.

The cost of mailing NAFA publications to overseas members has soared in recent years to a point where even with members paying the airmail supplement NAFA was losing out on funds and the members were experiencing long delays in receiving their Hawk Chalks & Journals due to poor postal services.

NAFA's policy is one of constant improvement & value for money for its members so from January 92 all NAFA publications will be air freighted in bulk and distributed from the U.K. This system will reduce shipping costs of the publications and enable membership fees to be held steady and should also speed up the delivery time so that U.K. & eventually E.E.C. members should receive their publications at the same time that U.S.A. members do.

We hope eventually to reduce shipment time from the present 16 days down to around 7 days.

All U.K. members are requested to renew their membership directly through NAFA U.K. which will send out renewal notices in January/February each year. The dues for 1992 are £25 which include three Hawk Chalks & one Journal. Late renewals, after march 1st, will incur a £5 penalty.

Any membership renewals sent in error direct to the U.S.A. will eventually be returned for processing in the U.K.

E.E.C. members may also renew their membership through this service by sending a eurocheque or sterling for £25. Their publications will be distributed from the U.K.

All NAFA products and back numbers of publications are only available from the U.S.A. & not through NAFA U.K. at the present time.

To join The North American Falconers Association please send a stamped self addressed envelope to ROBIN HAIGH, NAFA U.K., ABBEY BRIDGE FARMHOUSE, COLONELS LANE, CHERTSEY, SURREY KT16 8RJ. ENGLAND.

included a survey of the internal parasites of raptors, embryology of the Kestrel, the study of goshawk and buzzard territory formation using radio-tracking and a survey of the fate of captive-bred Barn Owls released into the wild. One student has moved to Mauritius while still registered on the course and her project involves monitoring reintroduced Mauritius kestrels.

Every student is paired to an experienced supervisor who gives advice and support throughout the project.

**Further details of the course can be obtained from :
Meredith Johnson, Durrell Institute of Conservation & Ecology,
University of Kent,
CANTERBURY CT2 7NX.
Telephone 0227 475480**

S. W. SPAIN RAPTORS

Philip Snow had produced another superb centre spread painting exclusively for the Falconers and Raptors Conservation Magazine and is offering the original for sale. If you are interested please contact Philip on

0248 351223

HEBOGWYR YNY GOGLEDD

The Welsh Hawking Club's annual field meeting was this year again held amid the spectacular scenery of the Llyn Peninsular, courtesy of Gary Morris of Bodvel Hall and the landowners of his acquaintance whose increasing enthusiasm and hospitality space forbids me to write about here.

Club members and guests arrived on the Wednesday for registration (armed with current game licences of course) and hawking was carried out on the Thursday, Friday and Saturday.

Our club is indeed fortunate in that we attract members from not only Wales, but the rest of Britain, Europe and even America, these people often saying that the appeal to them is the informality of our meetings and the simple fact that most of us actually go out every day and chase

things with hawks.

In all, about 70 - 80 people attended, and we were blessed with fine weather, fit hawks and obliging rabbits.

Two young boys, David Lewis, aged 14, of Pentrefoles, Gwynedd and Paul Meacham, aged 15, of Wilmslow, Manchester, both winners of the Shooting Times Young Shots Prize Draw, were fixed up with gloves, bags and most importantly, hawks. Then, under the expert guidance of "bizarrely bearded" Terry Large, had, in their own words, "the time of their lives" - and so did, I am told, the other members, both in the field and (for those 18 years and over), at the social evenings held at the White House Hotel in Abersoch.

Mike Gambold
Publicity Officer
Clwb Hebogwyr Cymru
Welsh Hawking Club.

CENTRAL FALCONRY & RAPTOR CLUB

1991 was fairly dramatic year with representation at the Stoneleigh Falconers Fair followed shortly after by a static demonstration at Birmingham's new ICC in the centre of the city. Later, a Club display led by Geoff Dalton was given at Warwick Castle in aid of the County Scouts Jamboree. Kim Oakshot has been appointed Field Secretary and is working to achieve the Clubs aim of a minimum of three Club sponsored meets a year.

There's a wealth of knowledge at the Central for any that need it — come along and pay us a visit.

Further details — J. Sealy
021 360 6343



The Owl Centre

(Headquarters of the British Owl Breeding & Release Scheme)

THE LAYBOURN AVIARY

In the past the demands for an easily seen exhibit, high standards of hygiene and trouble-free management often resulted in a sterile life for the animals kept by zoos and other wildlife collections. Sadly, concrete floors, tiled walls and tubular metal fittings were all too common, with few species being kept in anything remotely resembling their natural habitats. Because of this, successful breeding was rare and many species continued to be taken from the wild to replace those that died. Such uninspiring enclosures also belied many zoo's claims to be 'educational' and 'modern-day Noah's Arks'. Indeed, few visitors went away with any idea of how these creatures behave or looked in the wild and-certainly only a handful of zoo-bred specimens were used to replenish wild populations in need of help.

Now, wildlife films and documentaries have made the general public much more aware of the need to preserve dwindling wild places and they demand to see the animals, kept by zoos, in something resembling their natural environment as well as acting in the way they would in the wild.

The Owl Centre fully agrees with this principle and proudly presents their new 'Laybourn Aviary' as not only one of the largest owl aviaries in the world, but the only one housing all the British species together in their own particular habitats.

Mixed woodland for the Tawny and Long-eared owls; heather moor for the Short-eared owls; open, tussocky grassland, rocks and a barn for Barn and Little owls are all featured in this remarkable, two-tiered structure which stands over 5 metres at its highest point and measures 30 x 10 metres in length and breadth.

Here the owls can behave in a perfectly natural manner, using their cryptic plumage to full effect and forcing visitors to use their powers of observation as they would with birds in the wild.

The sheer size of the structure enables each species to indulge in aerial courtship display as well as seek out its own breeding space without conflict from other birds.

The concept is unique, the experience unforgettable. Here at last is 'State of the Art' owl keeping—yet another step along the path of positive conservation which The Owl Centre set itself when it first came to Muncaster Castle in 1987 and for which it is now justifiably famous.

Celebrity opening by TV personality Eric Wallace at 2.00 p.m. on Sunday 19th May when the birds will be liberated into the aviary, followed by wine and light refreshments in the Buttery Restaurant and a 'Meet the Birds' demonstration on the Castle lawns at 3.00 p.m.

Muncaster Castle, Ravenglass, Cumbria, CA18 1RQ. Telephone: (0229) 717393 for more information.



THE GOLDEN EAGLE

I have to admit that, sitting down to write this article, I felt some trepidation. How could I find the right words to express my feelings about the Golden Eagle, a bird I first encountered in the wild over 30 years ago and which has been my special favourite among raptors ever since. Then I remembered the words of an old friend - a falconer - who once said to me that people who fly eagles are all slightly mad; we discussed this, and came to the conclusion that all eagle fanatics, falconers or not, are probably mad, in a happy sort of way. So, I thought, if a little of the madness shows through here - so what? Perhaps, after all, the best way to talk about birds of prey is from a position of great affection for them.

It has been my good fortune to have watched Golden Eagles in several countries and in many different situations. The last one I saw was in the French Pyrenees, giving a masterful display of flying as it chased off a Lammergeier which had wandered too close to the eyrie area. I have watched a nesting pair in the hot red mountains of northern Sinai, and have given an impromptu talk on the birds to students in the Negev desert with a bird sitting on eggs

actually visible behind me. In central Spain, I saw a nest site on what was little more than a razorback of rocks on the top of a low, rounded hill, while in Greece I have marvelled at the effortless soaring of a bird high over the sacred site at Delphi - just as the ancient Greeks must have marvelled over two

by

Mike Everett

would never have believed it possible.

For many years, I was closely involved in the RSPB's protection scheme in the Lake District, a scheme which has enabled the one regular English pair to survive for so long and to produce young at a rather steadier rate than many Scottish pairs

Ten years ago, we realised for the first time just how important our breeding population is in an international context. It probably accounts for 20% of the Golden Eagle population of western Europe.

thousand years ago. My most bizarre encounter was in the mountains of California, where I helped American colleagues to trap, measure, weigh and ring two wintering birds which had been caught by hand. Yes, by hand, using an old Indian technique of digging, disguising and then hiding in a pit, baiting the ground with a dead calf and springing up to catch the feeding eagle by the legs . . . If I had not actually seen it done, I

achieve. My fondest memories, though, are of the first Golden Eagle Survey we conducted in the Scottish Highlands, back in the 1960s. For the first time, an attempt was made to assess the size and status of the Scottish population and to get a realistic idea of the conservation problems faced by one of our rarest birds of prey. There was a lot of memorable eagle watching then, which helped to make some of the long treks involved that much easier (and

even made the masses of Survey paperwork bearable). We learned a great deal too.

Our best guess as to the size of the population was somewhere around 300 pairs. Some workers thought the figure was rather lower, but nobody was really prepared to stick his neck out and put the figure higher. Our estimate, based as it was on half-a-dozen sample areas worked with limited manpower, plus such historical data as we possessed, was pretty crude when compared to that which came from the much more comprehensive and sophisticated census conducted by the RSPB and the Nature Conservancy Council in 1981-82. That second survey astonished everybody - it produced an estimate of at least 424 breeding pairs; when single birds in traditional areas were added, it became clear that there were some 500 occupied home ranges. There is no way that the population could have increased so dramatically in a mere dozen years: our earlier figures had simply been far too low.

The later survey, and the increasingly detailed ecological studies carried out then and later, confirmed our earlier conclusions that Golden

Eagles were still threatened (as they are to this day) by illegal and totally unjustifiable human persecution at the hands of some gamekeepers and some sheep farmers, by various forms of human disturbance and, in some areas, by egg collecting. It also revealed another problem which is probably more serious than all the others, that of continuing habitat loss and degradation, caused by overgrazing, too much burning and blanket afforestation. These all cause serious losses of hunting habitat and available prey.

It is still necessary to do as much as we can to prevent illegal persecution and to thwart the egg thieves, as well as to minimise disturbance. We must also exploit the advantages we have gained from a growing understanding and appreciation of these magnificent birds in the Highlands generally. What is more important, though, is that we do our utmost to encourage the movement towards a better and more fully integrated system of land-use in these uplands, in particular away from massive

forestry schemes and towards a more sustainable use of hill grazing lands and better heather moor management. There is no reason why we should not be able to sustain our Golden Eagle population, given the amount of goodwill there is towards the "big birds" nowadays, and if we can persuade government and those who own and work the land that here is

something worth keeping and being proud of.

By the time you read this, a new year will have begun and on fine days in the hills the male eagles will be displaying high over their home ranges. Watching a Golden Eagle in full aerial display is an unforgettable experience: the bird crosses the sky in a series of headlong dives on almost closed wings, each fall followed by a climb back to somewhere

near the original height - still with the wings folded in. If you have ever seen a display session, you will at once understand what I mean when I say this bird is "special". You might also agree with me that the current ornithological jargon for this display, "sky dancing", is rather inappropriate and, for such a mighty bird, just a little undignified!

* * * * *



Female Golden Eagle with chick at Eyrrie.

Photograph by C. Palmer.



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Sparrowhawk - The joys of an imprint

By David Rampling

The parent reared Sparrowhawk I flew last season, though a terrific flyer and huntress, was bloody hard work. Even as the season wore on, she needed handling for some time before I flew her if I was not to spend the whole day living on my nerves, and although I never lost her, and she was flown almost every day, I never had the impression she was at all happy, (except perhaps for those first few moments after she had subdued some quarry).

On top of that she was a terrible feather breaker and would spend most of the day bating from her perch. Like I said, bloody hard work.

This year I wanted an imprint Sparrowhawk, one I could make bombproof and that would at least be 'happy' about its lot.

So, when the time came I stocked up with up with a freezer full of mice, sparrows, chicks and rat and went to have a look at some young Sparrowhawks that had been advertised.

When I arrived at the address I had been given I was shown the aviaries. They were superbly clean and this chaps method was to take and rear half the chicks by hand and leave half with the females to be reared naturally.

As he had half a dozen pairs of birds I had quite a choice. They were kept in boxes, with ages ranging from ten days to three weeks. Their bedding was changed twice daily and they had been reared, up 'till then, on minced sparrow and starling. Perfect.

I had already decided to get as young a bird as possible so I picked the largest, strongest chick from the youngest clutch, ten days old.

She was just a little white ball of fluff with very long legs and a large appetite. She weighed, even at that age, 7¼ oz and feeding her about eight times a day on a good varied diet she grew at quite a rate. She slept in a box in the bedroom, and came with me in her box on my daily work around the farm. She got used to the horses, sheep, cattle, goats and pigs, and when old

enough would sit on the Land-rover seat when I was driving anywhere.

Soon she was flying around the garden and was fitted with a tail-bell and anklets. At this stage she weighed nearly eleven ounces, but would come to my whistle and land on either my head or my glove to be fed.

The corner of Scotland in which I live is practically tree-less, except for the odd forestry plantation and during the summer months the only birds anywhere near my house are sky-larks and she learned very soon that these were beyond her powers.

If I took the dogs for a walk she would follow, often soaring for minutes at a time, and when I turned for home she would leave me and be waiting when I got there.

To make her obedient instantly it was only necessary to drop her to 9¾ oz and

when her training began she was flown at semi-hack.

That is to say she was tied to her perch, where she would bathe, (which she loved) until lunchtime, then I would untie her and turn her loose to amuse herself until the evening when I could whistle her up and get in the car to go hunting, spending a lot of time on the wing and never straying from the house. She got very fit indeed and had a chest a page three model would be proud of.

Late autumn meant the Island is flooding with migrants that would prove easier to catch than her elusive larks, so that meant tying her to her perch until flying time.

She only screamed at feeding time and if she disappeared from sight when chasing quarry she would come looking for me, or if flown within a few miles from home she would make her own way back to the house. Though if she killed, it may not be until the following morning.

She caught a reasonable head of

quarry, but refused anything "sky-larkish" and that included sparrows, strangely enough, they would have been easily within her powers had she not ignored them. Had I dropped her weight a little it would have been a different story, but I was not prepared to do that.

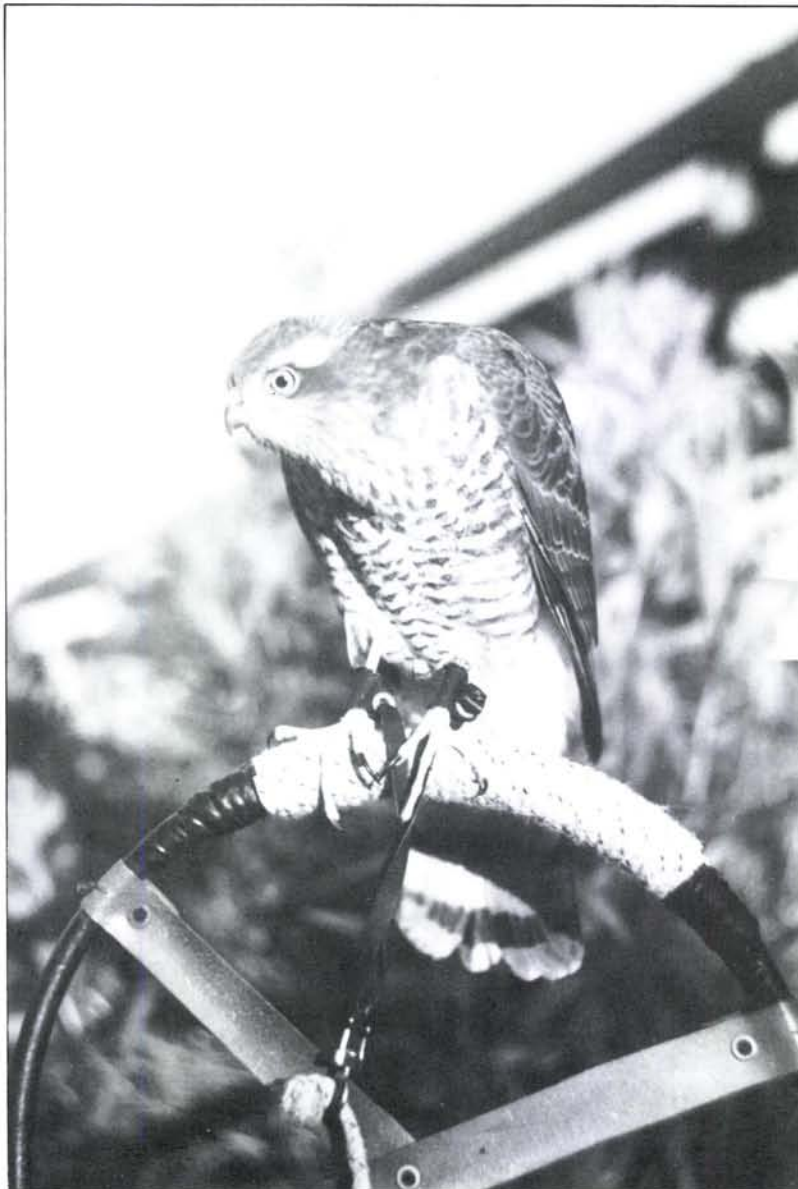
Anything starling size or larger was what turned her on, and she would chase even if the quarry had a very good lead, the lack of cover over much of the Island meant that even something with fifty yards head-start often ended up in the bag.

All in all she had all the advantages and very few of the disadvantages. Being flown high means a minimum of bad manners.

She always keeps herself in perfect feather and compared to a parent reared Spar is a joy to fly. There is no possible excuse or even reason to take the spar too low and risk its health.

Of all the spars I have flown, all but this one parent reared, makes it hard to believe that this is even the same species.

I believe you have a much happier bird, and in the end, that is what it's all about.



A female imprint Sparrowhawk

-HAWKBOARD NEWS-

FIELDSPORTS IN PARLIAMENT

On the 4th December 1991 Kevin McNamara, Labour MP for Kingston upon Hull (North) introduced a Private Members bill entitled "The Wild Mammals (Protection) Bill" 1991. This is due for its second reading on Friday 14 February. It is listed first item for the day and therefore could have up to five hours of debate. If it goes through to Committee stage it could re-emerge in late March or early April when it should then be overtaken by the General Election.

The point of it is to enable Labour to test the water. The extent to which the Bill clears the various parliamentary stages will be a good indication of whether the issue is a vote-earner and whether or not Labour should pursue the proposals in their manifesto to introduce an anti-hunting Bill of their own with an unwhipped vote. Whichever way the cards fall we are going to see a concerted attempt at anti-hunting legislation and the Second Reading of this Bill on 14 February is going to raise the profile of the whole issue. We are in for a crop of lurid and emotional publicity.

McNamara's Bill is not concerned with protecting wild animals from cruelty. If it had been it would have included birds and fish, as does the Protection of Animals Act 1911 which covers domestic and captive animals. If it had included birds and fish it would have alienated the shooting and fishing lobbies which are too strong for the anti's. It therefore has no logic to it. Instead it is carefully phrased to condemn hunting and coursing. But rather than come out and propose that hunting and coursing would be legal offences, it ties it up in legal phraseology which introduces all sorts of anachronisms and injustices. For example it would become illegal to allow your dog to chase a hare but legal for it to chase a rabbit or rat, provided that it was for crop or stock protection. It doesn't mention the use of cats or ferrets.

Clause 1 could be interpreted that shooting is a cruel ill-treatment of a wild mammal. It does not appear to include the use of other animals for hunting, such as dogs, cats, ferrets or hawks because dogs are covered specifically in clause 2. Clause 3 makes snares illegal and it is unclear whether or not this would include other forms of traps. All this will upset shooters, as well as hunters. The result of such legislation is inevitable; without hounds and terriers more foxes will be killed with shotguns and .22 rifles, neither of which are very humane, and we will see an increase in illegal poisoning.

We had hoped that the anti-hunting bill would not come out until after the election; now there is even more urgency. By the time you read this the 14th February may have passed. But it is still not too late to act because with the election looming the parliamentary candidates will be hoping to woo your vote. Now is the time for you to write to them. Details of MPS and parliamentary candidates can be obtained from:

**The British Field Sports Society,
59 Kennington Road,
London SE1 7PZ. Tel. 071 928 4742.**

Mention where you live in the constituency and which fieldsports you support. Put forward a maximum of two or three arguments, such as those outlined under Facts about Falconry issued by the Hawk Board on page 17 of the Winter 91 issue of the Falconers Magazine. Illustrate if possible with local examples and the consequences to your area if fieldsports are abolished. Remember to refer to 'domestic breeding' rather than 'captive breeding' which has connotations of birds taken from the wild. And talk about 'fieldsports' or 'country sports' rather than 'bloodsports'. Be brief and positive. Don't be aggressive or abusive. Don't enclose literature. Offer to provide more information or to meet him or her.

This is your chance to do something positive for falconry. If you do nothing we could well lose rabbit and hare-hawking, with worse to follow. A survey in The Field (December 1991) showed that 91-97% of Labour MPS would support the McNamara Bill and only 3% would oppose it.

The Hawk Board has had some successes. A number of MPs who wrote to the Secretary of State following the League Against Cruel Sports report received a reply from him which was very supportive of our case and followed closely some of the points we ourselves had made.

On the question of the RSPB's campaign to halt the import of wild birds we are pleased to note that they are being much more

careful to differentiate between wild-caught birds and domestic-bred ones and indeed have become more positive about the sustainable benefits of domestic breeding.

In an effort to keep up-dated on the situation in Brussels we have made formal approaches to a number of organisations including: FACE (Federation of Hunters Association of the EEC) for copies of the draft EC Directives. IAF (International Association of Falconers) to request

information on pending legislation. MEPS (Members of the European Parliament). Sympathetic members are being asked to inform the Hawk Board of any developments which may be of concern. JNCC (the Joint Nature Conservation Council) for advice on pending legislation. European Falconry Clubs - to advise of any pending legislation which they hear about. This will be a two-way traffic. They will also be asked to identify the MEPS in their country sympathetic to fieldsports so that we can assess the weight of support in the European Parliament.

The Hawk Board has also been involved in discussions at the Draft level with the Department of the Environment on CITES and the way in which the EC legislation will be brought into line with CITES. We anticipate further developments on this soon.

Following our discussions in the autumn on Quarry Licences we were pleased to receive good feed-back of views from the clubs and representatives from the Hawk Board spent a whole evening with the Welsh Hawking Club going over the issues. This subject is obviously of great concern to falconers and following the feed back we have decided on a course of action. Firstly we do not propose to launch a high profile campaign in the media in support of quarry licences because we feel that this would be misinterpreted by the general public and do more harm than good.

We would again ask all hawk-keepers to look closely at their activities with regards to welfare. In the autumn the RSPCA propose to start an in-depth 21 month study of animal welfare in hawk-keeping and falconry and we hope that there will be no cause for criticism. The last major enquiry into fieldsports (The Scott-Henderson report) was commissioned by the Atlee government. Falconry passed such an examination with flying colours.

Instead we are pursuing it behind the scenes with various organisations and sympathetic MPS who would be in a position to support us. Secondly we ask all falconers to reduce their applications for quarry licences, and numbers of quarry to be licensed, to an absolute minimum. This is not in order to voluntarily phase out quarry licences. The reason for it is that if licences are issued to take thousands of small birds, the antis can latch on to this and use it as propaganda material. The reality that only 448 quarry were taken under licence in 1990 is less headline-grabbing and not used by the antis. Obviously it is easier for the Hawk Board to defend the lower figure than to justify 'thousands'. Therefore please do not apply for any more quarry than you are realistically likely to take. This won't affect your quota in future applications. Make sure that your end of season return is in promptly and refers only to the species named on the licence.

Are you on the electoral roll of the Hawk Board?

If no, why not?

IT NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT!!!

In March-April 1992, you will receive a form, via the D.O.E. which you should fill in and return to the Hawk Board Secretary.

You will then be on their electoral roll, this is important because then the Hawk Board can fight issues such as the current one knowing it has your full support and more importantly, be able to show it. So please don't forget. **For the sake of your sport.**

The Wild Animals (Protection) Bill 1991.

1. If, save as permitted by this Act, a person wilfully inflicts unnecessary suffering on, or cruelly ill-treats a wild mammal, he shall be guilty of an offence.
2. If, save as permitted by this Act, a person wilfully causes a dog to kill injure, pursue or attack a wild mammal, he shall be guilty of an offence.
3. If, save as permitted by this Act, a person sets a snare for the purpose of killing, taking or injuring any wild mammal, he shall be guilty of an offence.
4. A person shall not be guilty of an offence under section 2 above in respect of causing a dog to pursue a wild mammal if he shows that he was using the dog to track a wild mammal which he had reason to believe was seriously wounded or was suffering from a serious disease.
5. A person shall not be guilty of an offence under section 2 above if he shows a) that his action was necessary for the immediate protection of any domestic or captive animal which was being attacked by a wild mammal: and b) that he was the owner of that domestic or captive animal or was acting in the owner's interest.
6. A person shall not be guilty of an offence under section 2 above in respect of causing a dog to kill, injure, pursue or attack a) a wild rabbit or b) a wild rodent not otherwise protected under the provisions of the Wild and Countryside Act 1981 if he shows that his action was (i) necessary for the protection of any domestic or captive animal, or a crop, or other property; and (ii) that he was the owner of that domestic or captive animal or crop, or other property, or was acting as the owner's agent or in the owners interest.
7. A person shall not be guilty of an offence under this Act by reason only of:
 - (a) the taking or attempted taking of any wild mammal which had been disabled otherwise than by his act and was taken or to be taken solely for the purpose of tending it; or
 - (b) the killing or attempted killing of any wild mammal which appeared to be so seriously injured or in such condition that to kill it would have been an act of mercy; or
 - (c) the unavoidable killing or injuring of any wild mammal as an incidental result of a lawful action.
8. (1) A licence may be granted to any person authorising that person, notwithstanding anything in the foregoing provisions of this Act, but subject to compliance with any condition specified in the licence -
 - (a) for scientific or educational purposes or for the conservation of wildlife, to kill or take any species of wild mammal specified in the licence, by the use of any method so specified, within an area so specified; or
 - (b) for the purpose of ringing, marking or tagging to take any species of wild mammal specified in the licence, by the use of any method so specified, within an area so specified; or
 - (c) for the purpose of preventing serious damage to land, poultry or other property, to kill or take any species of wild mammal specified in the licence, by any method so specified, within the area so specified; or
 - (d) for the purpose of preventing the spread of disease, to kill or take any species of wild mammal specified in the licence, by any method so specified, within the area so specified.
- (2) The appropriate authority for a grant of a licence under subsection (1) above shall be -
 - (a) in the case of a licence under paragraphs (a) and (b) of that subsection, the Nature Conservancy Council, or
 - (b) in the case of a licence under paragraphs (c) and (d) of that subsection, the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food or, in Scotland, the Secretary of State.
- (3) A licence granted under this section may be revoked at any time by the authority by whom it was granted, and without prejudice to any other liability to a penalty which he may have incurred under this or any other Act, a person who contravenes or fails to comply with a condition imposed on the grant of a licence under this section shall be guilty of an offence.
- (4) The Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food and the Secretary of State shall from time to time consult the Nature Conservancy Council as to the exercise of their functions under subsection (1) (c) and (d) above and neither of them shall grant a licence of any description unless the Council has given advice on circumstances in which, in the Council's opinion, licences of that description should be granted.
- (5) A licensing authority may charge an applicant for a licence a fee to cover the reasonable administrative expenses of dealing with his application.
9. In this Act, the expression 'wild mammal' means any mammal which is living free or which is feral, or which has been liberated.
10. A person guilty of an offence under this Act shall be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level 5 on the standard scale, or a term of imprisonment not exceeding six months, or both;

Providing that where the offence was committed in respect of more than one wild mammal, the maximum fine which may be imposed shall be determined as if the person convicted had been convicted of a separate offence in respect of each wild mammal.
11. The court before whom any person is convicted of an offence under section 2 of this Act may order his disqualification from ownership or custody of any dog for such period as the court sees fit.
12. (1) This Act may be cited as the Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1992.
 - (2) This Act shall come into force with the expiration of the period of three months beginning with its passing.
 - (3) This Act does not extend to Northern Ireland.

NORTH AMERICAN FALCONERS ASSOCIATION FIELD MEET 1991

by Robin Haigh

A long way from anywhere, the small oil & farming community of Liberal Kansas played host to the 1991 field meet of the North American Falconers Association.

The town of Liberals' only claim to fame is that it is home to the official 'Dorothy's House' from the Wizard of Oz which is sited just across highway 54 from the Gateway Inn, the meet headquarters. Why Liberal was chosen for this honour is hard to fathom when the author gives no clue to the actual location other than that it was in the tornado belt somewhere in Kansas.

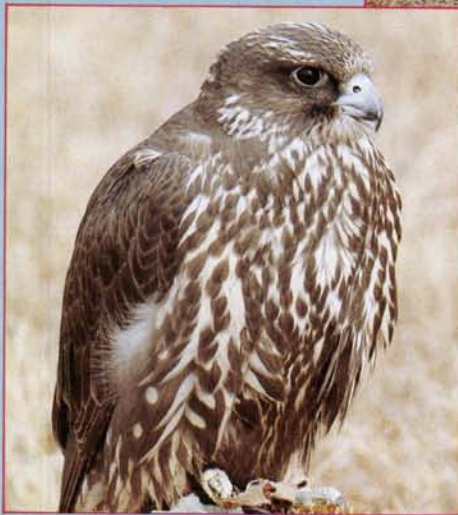
The NAFA FIELD MEET is now a tradition which originated in Denver Colorado in 1961 and has taken place each year except for 1972. This the thirtieth anniversary meet was the first in Kansas as the state has only recently brought in the required regulations to make falconry legal in line with the majority of states throughout the U.S.A.

Previous meets have been held as far apart as Colorado, South Dakota, Missouri, Indiana, Utah, Nebraska, Oklahoma & Texas.

With over three hundred falconers plus their families,

hawks and dogs attending, the meet headquarters was fully booked months earlier, but there was plenty of overspill accommodation in motels nearby.

Unfortunately the Gateway Inn, while being as hospitable



Immature Gyr Falcon (female)

as they could be, was short on creature comforts such as a restaurant, indoor pool and hot tub which help to make the difference between a mediocre meet and a good one! However there was a 24 hour Dennys restaurant right outside the door which even offered falconers a 10% discount on all

usual wardened over by Bruce Clements from 7.30 am to sunset in often freezing conditions.

Although temperatures were comfortable early in the week the wind and lows of 16F later on combined to make the last few days pretty unpleasant.

The Gyrs & Gyr hybrids, Redtails and Ferruginous Buzzards seemed immune to the cold and wind while the Harris Hawks were only weathered for short periods.

In spite of the cold a good variety of quarry was taken including prairie chicken, duck, pheasant and both jack and cotton tail rabbit in some quantity.



Adult Gyr Hybrid

meals.

Combined with the poor facilities the all too obvious lack of organisation made the Liberal meet among the less memorable that I have attended.

The weathering yard at the rear of the motel was as

The weeks activities included a welcome party, with free beer! NAFA directors board meetings, guest speakers, nightly raffles, equipment sales, a bison barbeque with genuine farm raised buffalo burgers and a banquet on the Friday night. Daily trips had been laid on to places of interest and shopping for the wives and children.

For '92 the NAFA meet returns to The Cow Palace Hotel in Lamar Colorado, real wild west country! The Meet organisers have already done a considerable amount of preparatory work and are confident that this will be one of the best ever and a great social occasion.



Bruce Clements - Weathering Area Warden



Immature male European Goshawk

Opposite: Adult female American Goshawk.



Training Gundogs For Falconry

by Guy Wallace

Part Three

Management of the Young Dog

This article deals with looking after your dog from seven weeks old to the start of serious training. When you get the pup home harden your heart and start as you mean to go on. If it is going to be kept in an outside kennel put it in the kennel with a light meal and some warm milk and let it settle down. (Warn your neighbours beforehand - it will probably howl!) If it is going to live in a part of the house provide it with a bed that is the pup's "territory" in a draught-proof place again with a light meal and some milk and leave it alone. If kept in a house it is advisable to put its bed in a weldmesh cage that will be large enough to accommodate the dog as an adult and will eventually double up as a car cage if necessary. They are great for temporarily confining a pup or young dog. Young pups require a lot of sleep usually preceded by frantic rushing around! A seven week old pup needs four meals a day gradually reduced to one by about 15 months. Give the pup as much as it can eat at a sitting and then remove any leftovers. If you have acquired a companion "mutt" or already have an older dog, feed them separately - one inside and the greedier one outside the kennel. Feed a proprietary all-in-one puppy food and gradually change it over at 5 to 6 months to the adult equivalent brand (I have used Skinners for years). Make sure that fresh drinking water is ALWAYS available. A large, raw meaty ox's shin bone (out of sight of the hawks) will keep a single pup amused for days. Two pups will fight over a bone in a kennel.

A puppy will want to "empty" almost immediately after feeding or waking up. Initially carry and then encourage the pup to the part of the garden where it least

matters (by the compost heap or whatever) and after a week or two it will use that area for the rest of its life. Four concrete paving slabs in a square make it easier to pick up the muck at intervals and "hot" bitches urinating on a lawn will "burn" it. Until it has had both its puppy vaccinations confine it to the house and garden. If it is kennelled, a ten minute scamper round the garden morning and evening is sufficient. If in the house, a scamper morning, lunchtime, evening and last thing should be the routine while it is young.

Depending on what hawks or falcons you keep will depend on at what age you introduce your pup to hawks. If your pup can harm the hawks (spars, merlins etc.) a smack on the nose with a rolled-up newspaper and a sharp "NO" from day one is adequate. If you have a redtail or ferruginous or anything "crusty" leave the pup until it is large enough to risk being footed. NEVER leave any dog or pup loose in a



Young Springer Spaniel responding to basic training.

mews with either loose or tethered hawks.

When it has had both its puppy inoculations you can take it out for a 10 to 20 minute run in a field in the evening. If you have to drive a short way it will soon come to associate the



A young German Wire-haired Pointer starting to show potential.

car with something pleasant. Do NOT take it on "route marches" until after it has been trained. A very young pup is just not up to strenuous exercise and should never become really physically tired

virtually no game, keep it confined to the kennel and garden or walk it on a lead until it is ready to start serious training. That young working gundogs need long walks every day is a COMPLETE FALLACY. It is counter productive to eventual training and only encourages mischief.

When you eventually start serious training you want a "pudding" that sits and looks at you wanting to please. As you increase the fitness with longer training exercises the control is being built in as you go.

Training.

For Heaven's sake let the pup be a pup and do not "nag" at it all the time. FAR MORE GUNDOGS ARE RUINED BY OVERTRAINING THAN BY UNDERTRAINING. Do not fall into the trap of thinking that a well-trained dog is an ultra obedient dog. A "screwed down" dog seldom makes a good hunting dog. When you have the young pup out in a field call it and run away so that the pup follows you, hide and call the pup so that he comes looking for you, put the lead on and take it off at intervals so that it does not associate coming and the lead with the end of play time. Make a game

of it at this stage. Life to a dog should be BLACK or WHITE with no shades of grey. If it does something well you praise it and if it does something bad you immediately scold it. Remember that and you are halfway towards having a trained dog. Sooner or later the pup will decide to "try it on" and ignore a command. Run across to it IMMEDIATELY, grab it by the scruff, take it to the spot where it disobeyed without a word hitherto and shake it as firmly as it can tolerate for its size and repeat the command several times while glaring at it eyeball to eyeball. Then allow it to get itself into the same situation and give the word of command again. This time it will almost certainly comply and you make a big fuss of it. BLACK/WHITE and the pup starts learning right from wrong. Never ever let a

dog get away with ignoring any command.

A celebrated spaniel trainer once said that 50% of them needed pep pills and the other 50% needed hearing aids! If yours tends to be a sensitive wimp give it a lot of carrot in front and if it tends to be a hooligan or a lager-lout a little of the (metaphorical) stick behind is called for. No two dogs are the same and you catch more flies with honey than you do with vinegar.



➤
Your dog should be introduced to your bird at an early age.

C Clubs

Shropshire Hawking Club (SHC)

President: Bryan Paterson

The Shropshire Hawking Club was formed early in 1991 by 5 falconers from the Telford area of Shropshire who held the first meeting at The Falcon Hotel in Bridgnorth, Shropshire and gathered a modest attendance purely by "word of mouth".

Since then the SHC has gathered momentum and now actually has a membership of 50 with a number of applications still awaiting committee approval.

The prime objective of the SHC is the promotion of the sport of falconry using trained hawks, and providing assistance, education and training, including instruction in the rehabilitation of injured birds of prey. During the hawking season Field Meetings are regularly held. Membership is open to all ages and it is not necessary to own a bird of prey in order to join. An important aspect of the sport which is discussed at the meetings is the matter of the law and legislation regarding the

keeping of birds of prey. One of the main aims of the club is to uphold the sport, and to discourage any behaviour which might bring the SHC into disrepute.

Meetings are held at The Falcon Hotel, Bridgnorth.

Members are allowed to bring guests along to the meetings, who, after the close of the committee meeting, are welcome to socialise or to participate in any open discussions.

Guests are asked to pay an admission fee of £1.50.

Ben Longs furniture will be on sale at 10% discount for club members.

Shropshire Hawking Club contacts are as follows:

Steve	Phone	(0952) 612900
Mike	Phone	(0952) 616645
Tim	Phone	(0952) 222105



L to R: Pete Dodd, Steve Cross, Peter Smith, Tim Churm, Mike Veric.

WOLD AUSTRINGERS & FALCONERS CLUB

At the moment the Club meets on the second Wednesday of every month at the Ancholme Inn, Grammar School Lane, Brigg, South Humberside. At our last meeting we had about 45 people present, from as far afield as Wakefield, Spalding, Doncaster, Grimsby and Lincoln, plus the surrounding areas. This level of membership has all been achieved by word-of-mouth as the Club has not advertised as yet.

The Club is very fortunate to have permission to fly hawks and falcons over many, many areas of good ground. We can therefore organise field meetings for our members on a weekly basis, and for practising falconers this must be very exciting news.

We also provide free tuition on Sunday mornings to anyone interested, making sure that enthusiastic but inexperienced members start off on the right foot.

If you would like any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me on Scunthorpe (0724) 733482.

Jonathon Foster

We would like to hear from any clubs that have not yet contacted us.

List of Clubs

AVON & SOMERSET.

Derek Smith. 0373-812950.
D.Sutton. 0225-837530.

BRITISH FALCONERS CLUB.

John Fairclough. 0543-481737.

CENTRAL ENGLAND RAPTOR GROUP.

Sue Dewar. 0734-969501.

CHESHIRE HAWKING CLUB.

P. Rowland. 0625-22299.

EAST LONDON FALCONERS CLUB.

0708-756015./ 081 517 9362.

HEART OF ENGLAND.

Steve Wright. 0789-298365.
Sheila Dalman. 0926-842510.

LONDON HAWKING CLUB.

Paul. 071 515 7754. Rusty. 081 980 2373.

NEW FOREST FALCONRY CLUB.

Frank or Christine. 0202-478862.

NORTHERN ENGLAND FALCONER CLUB.

Barry schofield. 0246-825209.

SOUTH EAST FALCONERS GROUP.

Gary Biddiss. 0268-728860.
Dean White. 0375-671302

WELSH HAWKING CLUB.

Adrian Williams. 0443-206333.



NESTING BOXES FOR KESTRELS

Britain's commonest day bird of prey, the Kestrel is familiar to most people from its habit of hovering while hunting. Although a wide variety of creatures may be taken, from worms and insects to small birds, staple food in many places is the Short-tailed Vole. Kestrels are birds of open country, including moorland, coastal areas and farmland of all types. They have also adapted to cities, but are absent from forests, though they may nest on the edges of woods. Equally catholic in choice of nest sites, they may use a cliff ledge, tree cavity, old crow's nest, building or bale-rick. Well sheltered holes in trees are always popular where available. The nest boxes described here simulate tree cavities and have a high success rate. Artificial stick nests (see leaflet No.5) may also be taken. They are best sited facing roughly southeast, with a clear pathway for flight in and out. Kestrels will often use the same site year after year, but site choice, accompanied by displays and courtship behaviour are chiefly seen in the first quarter of the year. Egg laying may start any time from late March to early June, though the majority commence in late April and the first half of May. 3 to 6 eggs, sometimes 7 are laid, late clutches averaging smaller than early ones. They hatch after about four weeks, and the young make their first flights at about 28 to 30 days. Well grown and newly fledged young spend a period of time perched on or near the nest site attended by the parents while their flying and hunting abilities develop, hence the importance of perching space in the design of the boxes. Once independent, they disperse widely, a few even moving to continental Europe.

Side batten boxes provide more shelter and are easier to inspect, as a ladder can be placed on the tree immediately to the side of the entrance. Back batten boxes allow more perching room for large young actually within the box, and permit better views of the birds' activities at the nest. Tawny Owls readily use side batten boxes, but are less likely to take those with back battens. Barn, Little and even Long-eared Owls also occasionally use the first type, as do Mallard, Stock Dove and Jackdaw. Grey Squirrels will take over large nest boxes of all types, and sometimes may require to be evicted.



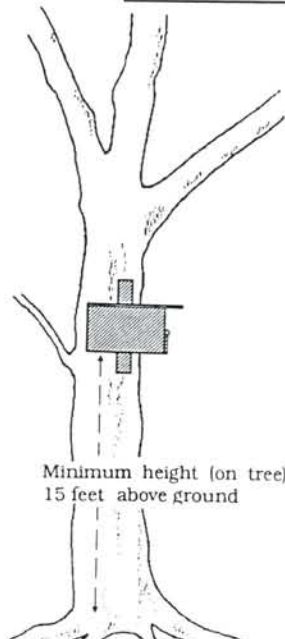
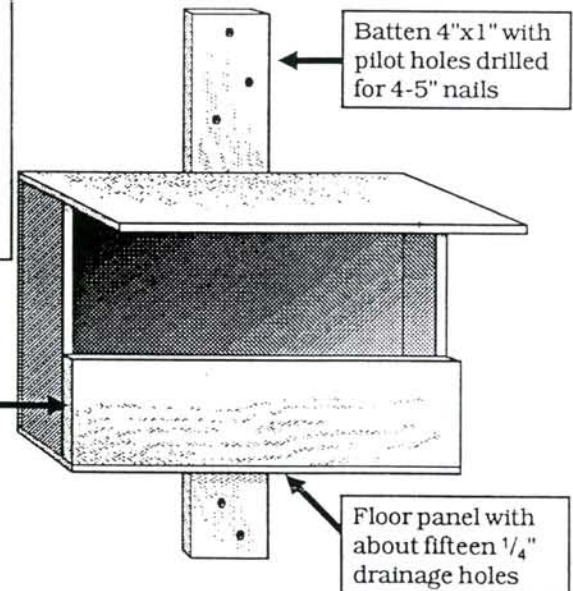
Young Kestrels reared in an artificial nest box.

Back batten type

COMPONENTS:

- 2 Side Panels, 12"x14"x $\frac{3}{4}$ "
- 1 Rear Panel, 12"x21"x $\frac{3}{4}$ "
- 1 Floor Panel, 15 $\frac{1}{2}$ "x21"x $\frac{3}{8}$ "
- 1 Roof Panel, 18"x21"x $\frac{3}{8}$ "
- 1 Front panel, 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ "x21"x $\frac{3}{4}$ "

Long front panel allows plenty of room for young birds to perch; a natural branch may also be added if desired



NEST SITE LEAFLETS

The Hawk & Owl Trust, in conjunction with the BTO, have produced a new set of six leaflets on artificial nest sites for birds of prey. Individual leaflets cover the Barn Owl, Tawny Owl, Little Owl and Kestrel, with a separate one on artificial stick nests and platforms for birds such as the Osprey, Goshawk and Hobby, and a further general leaflet on fixings, materials, techniques, habitats and general conservation measures. They have been written by Hawk & Owl Trust Vice-Chairman Dr Phillip Burton and Conservation Officer Paul Johnson, together with David Glue from the British Trust for Ornithology.

To obtain copies of the leaflets, please write to the Hawk & Owl Conservation Trust, c/o Zoological Society of London, Regent's Park, London NW1 4RY. The leaflets cost 30p each. Please enclose a large stamped addressed envelope when requesting leaflets.



10 Family Passes To Be Won

The Third British Falconers Fair will be held again at the Stoneleigh Showground, Warks on 16th & 17th of May

HOW TO ENTER

All you have to do is name 12 raptors which are resident in Great Britain. Put your name and address on a postcard or sealed envelope and send to:
20 Bridle Road, Burton Latimer, Kettering, Northants NN15 5QP.
The first ten correct entries picked out of the bag after the closing date will win.

Closing date is **30th April 1992**.

Winners will be announced in the Summer Issue (May 1992).

RESULTS FOR WINTER ANAGRAM COMPETITION

1st & 2nd Prize: A quality waistcoat designed for falconers – *donated by DUCK-DRI*
1st Won By P. Davies - Surrey. 2nd Won by C. Morris - Gwent.

3rd Prize: A superb print, Juvenile Peregrine Falcon on crag in the Scottish Highlands
– *donated by Andrew Hutchinson*
Won By W.T. Makin - Manchester.

4th Prize: A copy of this excellent book **GAMEHAWK**. About flying Peregrines at lowland game – *donated by Ray Turner*
Won By M. Towner - Devon.

5th Prize: One of a set of six prints, Lanner Falcon, Sparrowhawk, Hawk Eagle, Goshawk, Peregrine Falcon or Red-tailed Hawk – *donated by Ron Billingsley*
Won By P. Broughton - Oxon.

6th Prize: A pair of beautifully crafted bells – *donated by Roy Hart*
Won By C. Schlechter - Lincs.

SOLUTION

A	YLMERI
C	REANCE
C	ERE
I	MPING
P	LUMAGE
I	MPRINT
T	IERCEL
E	YASS
R	OUSE



w. span
90cm
dark phase
ad. Eleanoras Falcon
passing wheatear to
juvenile, Mallorca.
(Juvenile resembles adult
pale phase)

ad.
Black Vulture
w. span 270 cm

ad.
Imperial
Eagle
w. span
180-215 cm

Black Kite - a
Booted Eagle - b
Red Kite - c

Coto
Donana N. Park
BIRDS NOT TOO SCALE

Andalucia, wonderful and dramatic blend of Mediterranean Europe and Moorish Africa, of high sierras and plains; is so very much more than the Costa Del Sol. Here, including the justly famous Coto Donaña National Park; one can regularly see 25 diurnal and 7 nocturnal raptors.

Within the Med; s.w. Spain is second only to the Bosphorus as a raptor passage area. Although it has much the same ecology problems as elsewhere, some admirable conservation work by ICONA (Spanish National Institute for the Conservation of Nature), both here and in the famed Extramadura Parks, has resulted in large increases for certain rare raptors. Nevertheless, the serious threat to Donaña's vital water table from tourism and agriculture will affect its important numbers of the rare western IMPERIAL EAGLE (*Aquila heliaca adalberti*), recently increased to about 120 pairs in the S.W. Iberian peninsula; almost all of its population.

Both light and dark BOOTED EAGLES (*Hiraaetus pennatus*) can be relatively common breeders, and partial migrants. These smaller eagles often prefer higher ground to the Imperials; like the wooded and rugged valleys beloved of another resident, THE BONELLI'S or 'Partridge' EAGLE (*Hiraaetus fasciatus*). Threatened throughout Europe, it has a precarious stronghold of about 3,500 pairs in Spain and its distinctive black and white form is relatively common in the limestone hills of southern Andelucia.

These spectacular sierras are shared by a few GOLDEN or 'ROYAL' EAGLE (*Aquila chrysaetos homeyeri*), and over the reptile rich slopes the SHORT TOED or 'Serpent' EAGLE (*Circaetus gallicus*) hovers. Spain's decreasing migratory population of about 3,000 pairs, comprises an important three quarters of Europe's.



200,000 raptors, of over 28 species, have been recorded in a single season passing over Gibraltar, and many others will fly nearer Tarifa, to the west. Sometimes over half that number are HONEY BUZZARDS (*Perris apivorus*), a scarce breeder in S. Spain; whilst the BLACK KITE (*Milvus migrans*), a locally common nester, has reached 39,000. Others include 15,000 Booted Eagles; 9,000 Short-toed Eagles; 4,000 EGYPTIAN VULTURES (*Neophron percnopterus*), a declining breeder here; and 2,800 BUZZARDS or 'Common Mouse Eaters' (*Buteo buteo*), another partial migrant.

Also significant counts of MONTAGUS HARRIER or 'Ashgrey Eaglet' (6,000) although widely declining as a breeding species; 'Common' KESTREL (*Falco tinnunculus*) and the communal LESSER or 'Hawk' KESTREL (*Falco naumanni*), so associated with the dramatic white cliff tops towns; as is the largely resident GRIFFON or 'Common' VULTURE (*Gyps fulvus*), slightly increasing to about 4,000 pairs in Spain as a whole.

MARSH HARRIERS or 'Lagoon Eaglets' (*Circus aereginosus*), with about 1,000 pairs in Spain; HOBBIES (*Falco subbuteo*) 8,000 pairs; HEN or, confusingly, 'Pale or Pallid' HARRIERS (*Circus cyaneus*) although non-breeders in S. Spain; locally common RED or 'Royal' KITES (*Milvus milvus*) and OSPREYS (*Pandion halietus*) all pass through. The largely sedentary GOSHAWK (*Accipiter gentilis*) with a reduced Spanish population of about 3,000 pairs (and of course SPARROWHAWKS (*Accipiter nisus*)) are also recorded.

Of the falcons, the PEREGRINE or 'Common' FALCON (*Falco peregrinus brookei*; on the coast) is also declining, with about 2,000 pairs; and MERLINS (*Falco columbarius*) are whiter visitors to coastal places like Donaña. LANNERS (*Falco biarmicus*) and the splendid ELEANORAS FALCON (*Falco eleanorae*) are also occasionally seen. The very rare Eleanoras is supremely aerobatic, and has one of its Mediterranean colonies on nearby Mallorcas wonderful northern cliffs, of about 350 increasing pairs.

The massive BLACK VULTURE (*Aegypius monachus*) is a conservation triumph, doubling from 250 to 500 pairs during the last decade. Largely found around Extramadura, with a small relict population in the Mallorcan Mountains, but regularly seen at Donaña. By contrast, there are probably just 3 pairs of the elegant BEARDED VULTURE (*Gypaetus barbatus*) remaining in the southern sierras. Equally magnetic, the beautiful little BLACK WINGED KITE (*Elanus caeruleus*), has grown to about 100 pairs in Iberia, spreading southwards into Donaña. This apparent increase, alas, is probably due to the clearance of Cork and Holm Oaks; and the loss of this (to man and nature) mutually beneficial and traditional oak and crop landscape would leave Spain a definitely poorer place.

RAPTORS OF S.W. SPAIN

text & sketches by PHILIP SNOW

My Observations On Breeding Harris Hawks

by Bill Carr

I have a pair of young Harris Hawks, the male is coming up to his third year and the female is coming up to her fourth. I flew the female for two seasons with mixed results, the hawk had little interest in anything that flew but if it was brown and ran it was fair game. Near to the end of her second season, with no land to fly on and the promise of a young male from one of Keith Wakefields pairs, I decided to fly the bird as high as I could and observe the changes in her manner. The flying ground for this was to be the banks of the river Tyne. Her normal hunting weight was 2lb 1oz, day by day she would put on weight, until she was over 3½lbs, her obedience to follow and return to the fist never changed, nor did



This male Harris Hawk was left with the parents, which took it in turns to feed.

she lose any interest in hunting, indeed, she was getting too good at catching the dreaded longtails on the shoreline, a rodent I can't stand.

What did change was how aggressive the bird became. Putting her down on the bow perch was even getting to be a problem but this was nothing compared to putting her up for the night on her screen perch, a task that, if I was not careful, would become very painful as the power in Hera I have not felt even in the Goshawks I have flown in the past. However the arrival of a creche reared male was to change all this.

A seclusion aviary was built measuring 12' x 12' x 8', not very big by some standards and I'm sure some will say far too small (a statement I now agree with). Both hawks were introduced to each other, firstly on bow perches, with only the bath to separate them, the male was and still is a very calm bird (he has never been trained), but Hera remained her aggressive self to anyone who would go

near them but never towards the male. Within two days the birds were seen, by my wife, to take a bath together, a sight I was to witness within a week. Both hawks were released into the aviary and I prepared myself

for at least a three year wait, bearing in mind that the male was still in immature plumage. Both birds settled down well and on numerous occasions were seen preening each others necks. The first season passed with both hawks moulting early, then in March of the second season I noticed both hawks playing with twigs I had placed in a car tyre in one corner of the aviary. Eventually they built a nest, the female showed most interest, a fact I put down to her being nearly three years old, the male at this time was nearly two. Then in June, much to my surprise the first of four eggs was laid, only once did I think I saw the end of copulation. Not

knowing much about breeding Harris Hawks I took advice from Keith Wakefield a long-time friend and Harris Hawk breeder. At three weeks the eggs were placed in a bowl of water and each egg started jumping, indicating it was fertile, much to the amazement of both Keith and myself. On replacing the eggs disaster struck, I broke one of them on the aviary door and to my horror saw a young Harris Hawk roll over in the egg, a more sickening sight I have never seen and it is one I never wish to see again. Having no incubator, the eggs were left with the hawks and all three eggs eventually hatched at two day intervals, having been sat by both birds, (I once saw the male feed the female as she sat the eggs). Having no idea if they would feed the young birds, I decided to take the first two away one day after they had hatched, leaving her the last one to bring up on her own. The first two birds were a male and a female and the last one was a male, which both birds would take it in



Bill with Hera and Pointer

turns to feed, the first two birds were crech reared by my wife and myself.

The fact that their immaturity did not hinder their instinct to breed totally amazed me. After the breeding season was over both birds carried on as normal for about six months, then I noticed they both became very restless, always flying or running around the aviary. At first I put this down to boredom and my frequent visits to the spy hole, so my only visits were to feed them or change their water. The breeding was coming up and I naturally expected them to breed again, so a pair of incubators was duly bought ready for the first clutch. Then one day about a month from the first egg, whilst changing the bath water I noticed a small hole in one corner of the aviary, RATS, in my stupidity I thought that was that, not thinking that rats run around at night when the hawks can't see them and this was causing their restlessness during the day. I bought three fen traps, found the run and set them, catching two rats the first night and one about a week later. But by now the damage was done. Throughout the breeding season the hawks remained restless, showing no interest in the nest and no eggs were laid. I had failed to realise the damage that rats can cause to even such big birds as the Harris Hawk, so what was to be done for 1990?

I decided to enlarge the aviary by 12' and put in a wire mesh window, 12' x 3', hoping this would relieve the boredom and calm the birds down. After collecting all the materials required for such a job, which took some time and money, a work force was assembled, myself, my dad and a sick mate (flu) as the job had to be in one day. The hawks were caught up and put on mobile perches in my living room (I have a very understanding wife) and we set about the task in hand. Breeze block footings were placed all around the aviary and a new tree was put in with a built in nest and some new perches and branches, the old nest was



These two were taken away on the second day and creche reared.



Bill's son with the male who was a very calm bird.

not touched or any of the old perches. It took the best part of eight hours to assemble the extension and get everything ready, I was also fortunate to be given a camera and monitor and this was put into place, the monitor ending up in the kitchen. The camera, which had a wide angle lens, pointing towards the new tree.

The extension to the aviary and the open window (approx 10' x 4') has settled the female down and she is about 90% of her normal self, the male is 100% and very tame and will take food off my hand.

The window, I believe has relieved a lot

of the boredom which I think both birds were suffering from, as they both now spend a lot of time sitting together on a perch in front of the window.

Now the bad news! During the previous breeding seasons both birds played a part in re-building the first nest and building a second nest in the alternative position, mostly by the male.

Both birds were seen by my wife and I (and some of my family watching the monitor) copulating on many occasions, and the female choosing the first nest would spend a lot of her time sitting or standing on the nest, but once again she

laid no eggs.

The aviary was checked for intruders (the small ones) but none were found, even traps in the garden proved negative.

In conclusion to this article, I am definitely not an expert on the breeding of birds of prey. These are only my own observations of my own birds.

I do know there are many breeders enjoying success (and the very best of luck to you all), maybe I am doing something wrong, if so, what?

WWF NEWS



Eagle Alert

WWF has appealed to the British public to write urgently to the Finnish Embassy in London to protect against the indiscriminate killing of Finland's endangered golden eagle.

In 1991, only 128 golden eagle pairs were nesting in Finland and the recent massacre could have wiped out more than half this population.

In Finland's best nesting area, more than 75 per cent of the eagle nests have been destroyed and many female adults have been killed. Twenty-one pairs started nesting in

this area and 50 fledglings were expected to grow there.

'The massacre has possibly meant that only three or four fledglings will survive, despite the golden eagle having international legal protection,' says Joanna Hindley, who is WWF UK's Species Conservation Officer. In Finland the situation is now desperate. The authorities believe that reindeer owners are responsible for the killings. These owners claim that the golden eagles kill new born

reindeer; yet conservationists say that most of the reindeer caught are already dead. In Britain there are only 430 pairs of golden eagles and, according to Joanna Hindley, if we are serious about protecting British populations of the magnificent predator, then we must extend this concern to the diminishing populations elsewhere in the world. She says, "We call on the Finnish Environment Minister to bring this massacre to an end immediately. Finland is one of the few remaining countries where golden eagles can still find the wilderness they need to build their nests and raise their young successfully."

For further information contact Susanne Briggs at WWF.

(0483 426444)

TRAINING, FLYING AND HUNTING IMPRINTS AT THE WELSH HAWKING CENTRE.



Female Lanner/Gyr flying at "tame hack"
in the early morning over
the Welsh Hawking Centre.

By Ceri Griffiths.

"WHY BOTHER". This is the question that many may be asking themselves, or saying to each other on the sight of this article, "why have a nasty tempered, screaming, mantling, ready to attack you bird, when you can avoid all this by having a parent raised offspring". If this is true, why is it that as probably one of the largest, if not the largest, breeder of raptors in the UK and patently having first choice of all the birds I breed, I still choose to fly imprints. Perhaps we should look a little further into the pros and cons.

Whilst it is certainly true that there are many fine parent reared and creche reared birds around, I feel it is time someone exploded the imprint myth. Imprints have a largely undeserved bad reputation; well reared, well trained imprints (on humans) are a joy to breed and fly.

I too have owned so called imprints that would make the best of neighbours look like Mrs Mangle! Screamers that not only deafened you during the day, but kept you awake at night!

I even once had a gos that attacked me from irees so badly that I nearly gave up falconry because of her, (some say it was a pity she did not succeed)! So why do I still prefer to fly imprints? Well, I worked out that all these bad manners were due to one thing, bad handling, turning the baby bird from an imprint into a mal imprint. The reason behind this thinking was the parent raised bird is an imprint too, but on its own species, not humans and it does not have all the bad faults that we have spoken about. We must now consider why. Some of the reasons that I will give, many traditional falconers will not like, but I think that they will be hard pressed to refute my reasoning.

Consider this, natural parents in the wild keep their youngsters very fat and only very slightly reduce their weight on two occasions in their life i. e. 1. To get it to leave the nest 2. Much later on to start it hunting. Apart from this it is at full weight. Against this, what does a falconer do to the parent raised bird? In brief, he takes as much fear of man as he can away from the bird (manning). At the same time he reduces the birds weight by about 10% if he's a good falconer, more if he's not (bringing the bird into condition). Once the bird has learned the "trick" of returning to the falconer he will often further reduce the weight in order to make the bird hunt. As the bird becomes a proficient hunter there is often a further reduction in weight to remove the birds new found independence. If this is done by a very skilled falconer wise in the ways of birds at the end of the bird's initial training, the bird's weight is slowly increased, but very carefully. One has only to read any modern book on falconry to realise how dependant the modern falconer is on his pair of scales. If one attends a falconry meet one hears much talk of bird's weight "I may be in trouble today my Gos is 1/2 oz. overweight" or what is far more worrying "My Gos is a bit light and its so cold and windy I better not take her out" At least this owner is showing a sense of responsibility and has realised that his Gos is so light in weight with so little reserves of blood sugar that he will not risk the bird's life. In case you think that I am over-painting the picture, consider this, "what wild Gos is at risk

of dying of the cold"? A fresh trapped female peregrine weighs about 2lb 8oz German Goshawk females about 2lb. 8oz. Finnish females about 3lb. 4oz., female sparrowhawks 11oz., and what weight do falconers fly them at? Why are falconers birds invariably so much lighter than their wild counterparts? Why is it that falconers on seeing wild birds flying at the same time as there own birds will freely admit the wild cousin is a much stronger flyer?

I thought long and hard about this and came up with the conclusion that the reduction in weight, and let us not mince words, starvation of the bird, (the Oxford Dictionary definition of starvation says to deprive of food or to feel hungry, it also says to die of hunger something hopefully no falconer worth his name will let happen to his bird.) comes off the birds big pectoral muscles, i.e. the ones that drive the wings, and it is this that makes the birds fly weaker than their wild cousins. This and the constant association of the handler with food, and often the removal of it causes bad manners. I wondered could a way be devised to overcome both these problems? I thought that it



Spend as much time as you can playing with your "baby".
Hooping must start at an early age.

could. I decided I would try to copy the way the wild birds brought up their babies, as the result they obtained was what I wanted and that only modified by the restraint I needed for that bird to return to me. This is my method.

While the baby is being raised it is never allowed to be the slightest bit hungry, food is always left looking at it. At first in a bowl, later tied to a lure. It will be noticed that using this regime the baby seldom takes a full crop, and that as it grows older it will start to reduce its own food intake. It will also tend to feed at certain times of the day, often early morning and an hour or so before it is dark. If its a falcon, hooping should start at about 20 days old. During the time that the chick is fledging one can not spend too much time with the chick. A friend of mine who was a welder used to take his baby tiercel gos to work with him in its cardboard box nest and at night both slept in the same bedroom. The gos would investigate the world and run around at first, later on flying, always returning back to the box for security and food.

My own falcons are put out in the park, in the grass, long before they can fly or are jessed. At first they hop onto the fence tops with much flapping of wings and eventually start to fly. At this stage they are not tied down but are picked up on the glove and carried back to their blocks which they soon seem to regard as home and security. I confess that I normally hang a transmitter round their neck but I have never had to use it as soon as they see me they will fly to me and if not in sight, a cry of, come on, come on, and they are back. When the bird has been flying for about a week we put jesses through the bracelets and tie the bird up at night. They are now being fed three times a day add lib. When they have been flying about three weeks meals are reduced to twice a day, the birds do this themselves, they fly back to the lure, but do not eat any of the food on it, but run to me and climb onto the gloved hand. The birds are now tethered in the middle of the day with a bath. They are put out early in the morning, taken down at midday, put out at six and taken back in just before dark. This happens rain or shine. It is during this period that I enjoy watching the babies best of all. They play with each other, mock fight, terrorise my racing pigeons and any



A very steady pointing dog that you can trust is an essential for the training of a "waiting on" bird.

stray rooks, crows and seagulls that happen to be passing. They are also very territorial and hand out a lot of stick to the local raptors. To any that do not know the situation of the Hawking Centre it is not on a flat treeless plain, but in a lightly wooded valley. By using telemetry we know that the falcons will often go five or six miles from the Centre. We have (I'll touch wood quickly) never lost

now three years old moults at 2lb. 7oz. flies at 2lb. 10 1/2 oz. and catches rabbits and pheasants on a very regular basis (will not take hares). This is a normal Harris that we bred at the Centre but her parent reared sisters seem to fly between 1lb. 14. and 2lb. My own female peregrine Ashwhat flew at 2lb. 6oz. and did not miss one grouse flushed under her in the '89 season. She moults at 2lb. 4oz. (muscle is heavier than fat). Another female peregrine, Blodwin, flying weight 2lb 6oz caught an English Partridge and while still in the air with it was mobbed by a wild female with a nest site close by. After disputing the sky with the wild one for 20 minutes having driven off the intruder, she landed at my feet still clutching her partridge which had been hanging from her feet all the time. We have often "mislaidd" birds while out flying to find that they have homed to the Centre 6 or 7 miles away and are sat untied up in their own mews. My female Gyr, The Lump, which I had from Steve Tolley, flies at 3lb. 6oz., but apart from carrion crows which she retrieves like a dog has yet to prove herself in the field.

On top of all this, the birds make certain and early breeders using A.1. Why not do yourself a favour, put in some extra time and effort and have a bird that is really super to fly!!

The Ten Golden Rules If You Want To Try Imprints.

1. Get your bird from the breeder as young as possible, as soon as it is DOE rung.
2. Spend all your time with the baby as it grows up.
3. Never ever let it get hungry.
4. Start hooding by 20 days old.
5. Never remove food that the baby wants.
6. Do not be in a rush to make it start hunting.
7. Try to make sure that early hunting is successful.
8. The first 20 kills "belong" to the baby.
9. Do not reduce its weight, find other means to get the same results as weight reduction would give you.
10. Do not be in a hurry to do anything. Let the baby dictate to you when things should happen.



Young imprint tercel Peregrine playing in the grass at the Centre while at tame hack.

a bird and the sight of a very fit falcon dropping from over a thousand feet to your call and then refusing food makes your time and the rows with the wife over non house trained birds in the house all the more worthwhile!

When you feel that the bird is starting to push its attacks home on the local bird population rather than play with them or when the bird returns home on a full crop (yes it will do this too), it is time to start disciplining the baby, showing it that it is more likely to succeed in its hunting if you are a partner. Do not feed or fly in the morning. Take the bird out mid afternoon, this is the extent of the weight reduction. (If a hawk or a falcon you hope to hunt at rooks try to find an easy slip and just watch her go!) Waiting on is a little harder. One must first have a rock steady pointer and game that can be guaranteed every time. Get the point and cast off the bird. It will not wait on ("why should it"?), but will chase everything in the sky, no worries, it is very fit, but inexperienced, when it starts to get fed up, call it back, it will still be strong on the wing, as it goes over the dog, flush immediately. If it catches, fine, if not, on its return, throw out a dead bird and feed up. Keep repeating daily and sooner rather than later, the bird will start to circle you and the dog. It is made at this stage, but it must never be disappointed in the flush, it must be served. It can then be taken down to the lure or a dead bird if it misses. With a bird trained like this I have never found height to be a problem as they are so strong on the wing.

This method has been used for all types of birds including Goshawks, Harris's Peregrines and Gyrs. A few case histories may be the order of the day. Gerry Simpson's female Harris



Blodwin, an imprint female Peregrine with her first grouse of the '91 season taken with a good stoop from around 350 ft on her first day on the moor in Caithness in late September when there are no little ones!

An Evening

by
S. Radford

With Jack

It had been a blazing hot day, but by the time we reached the field that evening, the sun was low and the air felt cooler.

The Merlin, a jack in perfect adult plumage, had made nine kills since the start of the season, and weighing just five ounces, he was keen. It took a matter of seconds to exchange mews jesses for flying ones, then the five of us set out in a line across the stubble.

It wasn't long before the first Lark got up; the Merlin left the fist in the same instant and was right behind it. This Lark, however, managed to get behind us and dived into some cover, just escaping the Merlin's lightning stoop.

He returned to the lure, which was swung up onto the fist, and was rewarded. A quick feak and a rouse,



Jack Merlin. Keen at 5oz

then we were off again.

The next one was not so lucky and after some very fast twisting and dodging, the Merlin, following every turn, took the Lark as it dropped in amongst some teazles on a bank. He

was allowed to partly plume and break into the quarry before being picked up and given another morsel as a reward, on the fist. Again, after he'd feaked, roused and started looking around again, we carried on.

Several more Larks were flushed, providing some interesting sport and one more caught. The most notable flight involved a Lark trying to dive into cover but being prevented from doing so by the Merlin flying under and attacking it from below. This one escaped as it reached the hedge and darted sideways, leaving the Merlin to overshoot and disappear on the other side. He flew a large circle and soon re-appeared, this time to alight on somebody's head before returning to the fist.

Another Lark, when flushed, immediately started to climb almost vertically, and as it did so it began to sing - as soon as this was heard, the Merlin gave up and came back, passing both lure and fist to land on my head!

Another flight came just as the sun sank out of sight: after a long tail-chase the Lark was taken as it dived for cover in some long grass.

The hawk looked as if it might carry it's prey so we all kept our distance and he was allowed to start feeding before being approached and taken up. It was a good note to finish on and he was accordingly fed up on the Lark, eating everything except the beak and gizzard.

This was the first time I'd seen Lark hawking and despite not witnessing the classic ringing flight, it was certainly exciting and enjoyable. Because the birds soon became too strong on the wing, the Lark hawking season is a short one, and I never got another opportunity to go - still, maybe next year. . .



Adult Jack Merlin

L etters

All letters should be addressed to:-
THE EDITORS, THE FALCONERS AND
RAPTOR CONSERVATION MAGAZINE,
20 BRIDLE ROAD, BURTON LATIMER,
NR KETTERING, NORTHANTS., NN15 5QP.

Dear Editor

Lanners & Luggers aren't any good for hunting. How many times have I heard this stupid comment passed amongst so-called Falconers.

They are the comments of Falconers with more foresight, little vision and a total lack of Falcon understanding and general knowledge for Falcons are the most capable hunters in the vast world of Raptors.

How is it that these Falcons are such a so-called flop in the world of British Falconry, when Arabs, our European cousins and Falconers in Pakistan etc, fly all these Falcons with great success taking a variety of quarry from wading birds to rabbits, stone curlew and the occasional houbara (McQueens Bustard).

The problem does not lie in the Falcons but in the so-called (Falconers) flying the birds, your role as a Falconer, and the limits you yourself put on the bird, just so that it is the Falconers lack of skill, basic understanding of the Falcon (species) he is flying that gives rise to so many of these stupid comments that are being all too often heard in the company of so-called experienced Falconers.

If these species are useless at hunting, they would have died out generations ago.

Your true skill in Falconry comes from the basic need to understand the species of bird

you own, study how the hawk lives in its natural habitat and the technique the Falcon or hawk uses to hunt, not all Falcons hunt by waiting on, judge your hawk on its own merits and stop comparing Lanners to Peregrines, Peregrines may be great for grouse but Lanners, Luggers and Sakers are far better at ground quarry, or quarry which hugs the ground when flying.

People who get terminal Peregrine fever never take the time to train other Falcons properly, always judging them by the way Peregrines perform, they are falconers of small sight, little imagination and they are helplessly surrounded by a wall of inexperience and a lack of inspiration within the vast discipline of falconry world-wide.



Saker Falcon

capability to hunt but this still does not forgive UK falconers for not giving Falcons such as Lanners, Luggers, Sakers, species of Buzzard an fair chance to prove themselves and what's more, for giving themselves a chance of proving themselves a competent Falconer.

When I read books written by so-called experienced Falconers saying Lanners & Luggers & Sakers are inferior to Peregrines, I have to sit up and cringe of what they have written.

All these birds are flown with great success at quarry in other parts of the world and although the quarry may be different there is ample suitable quarry, i.e. Moorhen, Magpie, Rook, Starlings and Partridge at which all the above can be flown with a bit of skill and perseverance, and Sakers are good for Pheasant and Rabbit.

On a last note, I think all good Falconers should not look at criticism as a form of attack, but more a form of learning, this way you can correct what you do wrong and improve your professionalism within Falconry. So think hard before you remark in front of a bunch of Falconers again about what's good, what's great and what's useless, because all you are saying something about is YOURSELF.

*Yours Sincerely
W. M. Hawkins. - Pinchers*



Luger Falcon

For as much as the falconer is there to give the Falcon the extra edge when hunting her quarry, we also all too often spoil the element of surprise, giving the quarry the main advantage. All these factors combined help make the Falcons job harder except for the possible exception of game hawking where the falcon already has the advantage of her pitch, and the quarry is served to her.

When you consider the number of species available for falconry, we here in the UK have the most biased attitude towards anything other than a Peregrine or now the current trend the Harris Hawk. I know that habitat and weather can effect a hawk's



Lanner Falcon

LOST

Dear David

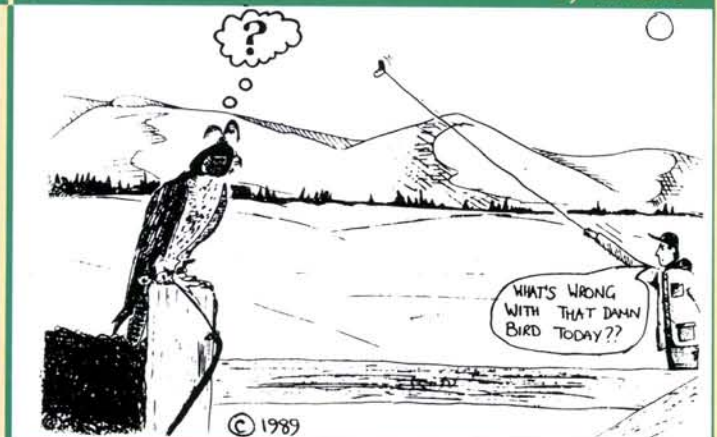
The Falcon lost was a Gyr Peregrine (see photograph) on December 7th near Royston and was last seen around Ashwell, Hertfordshire.

Any information would be gratefully received. There is a reward for information leading to the return of this bird.

If you have any information, please phone Andy on 0438 315091.



THE ADVENTURES OF HARRY THE HAWKER by Williams



An organisation dedicated to ensuring that all injured and sick birds of prey are cared for by suitably qualified persons and whenever possible released back into the wild.

By
Mike Cunningham

**Falconer & L.R.K. Raptor
Rescue
(Vice Chairman)**

SHORTWINGS RETURN

Three sparrowhawks came to us last summer as downy eyass's. We were informed they had been taken off children who were kicking them around a field!

They would have been ideal for hacking in the traditional manner or placing into suitable wild foster nests, but unfortunately this was not possible due to their injuries. We had a disabled female spar. which had been acting broody but could not trust her with them. Cross-fostering was ruled out due to them

going back to the wild eventually and such a rearing could cause its own problems.

Eventually it was decided to creche rear them in full view of the disabled female. The aviary used was one of a block of eight skylight and seclusion with the addition of a small outlook window and partition screen (removable) between each aviary. Food was dropped onto the nest ledge via the observation and service passage which runs along the entire back of all the aviaries, at such times a frozen female specimen was used as a visual fixation, which pacified me, if not the eyass's, although they did start calling to the disabled female as they got older. The birds turned out to be one female and two males (muskets). Training started in late winter in preparation for getting them into the wild before nesting activities began in spring. The actual training was as the same for falconry but less attention paid to manning which meant boxed transportation and careful selection of flying ground. All the birds were entered on a dragged creance, the first to go was the female, her first catch being a magpie which made its escape minus a few tail feathers before I could get in to assist. Her second

catch didn't have the same luck. Her tackle was cut off and she was left feeding up on a Starling which didn't get deep enough into the hawthorn to escape her frenzied pile in, I had every confidence it would be the first of many for her.

The remaining two were petite even in musket terms both weighing just over 4oz fat, yes fat! What followed was I presume an insight into flying sharpys, I proceeded with extreme caution but never the less had a couple of frighteners on the way having to feed up quickly and start from scratch again.

"Red Hawk" called so due to its plumage entered quickly on house sparrows, the second took a lot longer but eventually made the grade, both these males were not left to feed up on their kill like the female they were put into an aviary for three days to be fattened up, just to be on the safe side.

If you find a Raptor in trouble and need help and/or advice please ring - 0920 463649. If you would like to join you can write to Miss A. Rossin, 3 Highwood Road, Hoddesden, Herts EN11 9AJ.

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- 4 - 5 April
Gamekeeper & Countryman Fair
St. Edmunds College, Puckridge, Nr Ware, Herts.
- 19 - 20 April
Midland Festival of Transport
Weston Park, Nr Shifnal, Shropshire.
- 19 - 20 April
Yorkshire Festival of Transport
Chilham Castle, Canterbury, Kent.
- 24 - 25 May
Kent Festival of Transport
Chilham Castle, Canterbury, Kent.
- 27 - 28 June
Midlands Americana Show
Himley Hall, Dudley, West Midlands
- 18 - 19 July
Devon & Dorset Game & Country Fair
Allhallows School, Rousden, Nr Lyme Regis, Dorset.
- 19 July (1993)
Sussex Festival of Transport
St Michaels School, Burton Park, Duncton, Nr Petworth, Sussex.
- 1 - 2 August
Chilham Castle Game & Country Fair
Chilham Castle, Canterbury, Kent.
- 15 - 16 August
Sussex Game & Country Fair
St. Michaels School, Burton Park, Duncton, Nr Petworth, Sussex.
- 29 - 31 August
Lexus National Carriage Driving and Country fair,
Windsor Great Park, Windsor, Berks.
- 30 - 31 August
Midsummer Mania
Chilham Castle, Canterbury, Kent.
- 26 - 27 September
Yorkshire Game & Country Fair
Harewood House, Leeds, Yorkshire.
- 1 November
Firework Fantasia
Chilham Castle, Canterbury, Kent.

For further information on any of the above, please contact:
County Fairs Show Office, 9 Beechfield Rise, West Midlands, WS13 6EL. Tel: 0243 544181 or 0543 264162 Fax: 0243 544068

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WILDART '92

"WILDART'92" is the first of a planned annual wildlife art and conservation exhibition, with the aims of raising funds for wildlife charities and promoting the work of new wildlife artists.

The exhibition is to be held at the new 1,500 sq. ft. Centre of Arts Gallery, 13-15 Victoria St., St. Albans, Herts. from 11 April to 9 May 1992.

Displayed will be the works of some 25 artists, all working in various mediums and depicting wildlife in all its aspects. All exhibits will be for sale, with new works replacing those sold, thus providing a changing display throughout the three weeks of the exhibition.

The event is supporting the 'Royal Society for the Protection of Birds' and the 'Herts. & Middx. Wildlife Trust' with a donation from all sales going to these two charities to help in their conservation work. Both organisations will have displays in the gallery showing the work they do.

A further feature within the gallery will be an impressive "flock of paper birds", made by school children in the local area, who will be encouraged to visit the exhibition and especially the conservation stands.

The exhibition will be widely advertised in the media through newspapers, radio, national wildlife magazines, RSPB groups and Wildlife Trust groups.

Exhibition Co-ordinator: Mark Chester, 10

Twitchell Lane, Aston Clinton, Bucks. HP22 5JJ.

Tel: 0296 631857

**Saturday 4th &
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showing and racing in the all new for 1992 Country Fairs

Regional Championships with cash prizes as well as trophies. Gun Dog Scurry, Dog & Gun Events, casting Demonstrations, The Muzzle Loaders of Great Britain Society, Falconry by Red Tail Falconry, Craft fair, Licenced Bar and Restaurant, Game Cooking demonstrations using Aga, supported by John Cooper Ltd of Chelmsford.

Ten hours of arena activities include Parade of Hounds, Axe Racing, Gun Dog Obedience Trials, Sheep Dog demonstrations, 4 x 4 vehicles, Ferret Racing & Showing will be organised by Hertfordshire Ferret Welfare &

Rescue Centre under the auspices of Chris Tyler - there is £200 prize

FALCONRY FAIR NEWS UP-DATE

New features to be incorporated into this year's British Falconry and Raptor Fair on May 16th and 17th include seminars on both days on a variety of topical subjects which should prove of great interest to falconers and raptor keepers. More details in the next issue of Falconers Magazine.

Terry Large, recently featured in Shooting Times, has joined Bryan Paterson on the team and will be flying birds on both days as, of course, will Bryan.

A novel event will be a transmitter demonstration/competition in which manufacturers of transmitters are invited to take part with successful distance recordings from vehicles being the main objective. Progress will be monitored throughout the demonstration with visual aids and commentary back at the show ground.

Secretary, Ron Morris tells me there is a two day weekend package available with caravan/camping facilities on the N.A.C. which includes access to the on-site live entertainment in the Main Bar Marquee on the Saturday night. This package is only available pre-booked and is limited. Call 0588 672708 for further details.

Look for our Falconry and Raptor Fair Special Feature in the next issue of Falconers Magazine for more information and details of the fair.

There will be a stand for Falconry and other Centres that keep birds of prey, to display their literature.

**For more information, please contact
Bryan Paterson on:**

(Home) 0562 - 850329

(Mobile) 0860 - 832349

money put up by County Fairs for the fastest ferret in the west!! (Mid Herts doesn't sound too good).

An old time funfair, helicopter rides, Archery, Have-A-Go stands for all types of country pursuits etc makes a show that the countryman and his town dwelling cousin can both enjoy with equal satisfaction.

Further information on the show can be obtained by telephoning:

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or 0299 896637.

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THE FALCONERS MAGAZINE

HAWKING IN T OF THE RIVE

Extracts from a
"My Wandering Tri
by Gyorgy

Translated and with occasional

Written in about



Training Golden Eagle (BERKUT) on the Fox Lure

THE first section in this treatise deals with the various species of birds of prey encountered, with their sub-species and also their Khirgizian names. The second one deals with the method of trapping, which does not alter very materially from the traditional do-gazza-type trap used in India and Pakistan. An interesting and rather strange variation on this theme is when an attempt is made to trap the golden eagle. It seems that in those days a lump of meat, perhaps lamb, was put down within the do-gazza and a tame golden eagle was tied beside it. The wild golden eagle to be trapped never came down to the trap with such speed that it could be caught immediately, but first landing near the trap, he or she carefully looked it over and walked to the trap with clumsy steps and then touched the food, but when the other eagle standing by the side of the food saw this, it made it extremely jealous and immediately the two fought, so that they became unaware of the trap around them and both were tangled in the net. The trapper carefully took the eagles from the net and fitted very soft jesses to the wild-caught eagle.

Then follows an explanation on the basic methods of training, which have not altered over the years very much, except that it is extended to the training of flying from horseback carrying the bird on the horse with first a hood and later without the hood, and the



BERKUT on his masters fist after catching a fox.

schooling of the bird continued on horseback until the bird got used to the horse as well, and without fear it flew for an even greater distance to the fist of the mounted falconer. The Khirgiz falconers used to say that even when the falconer could not see the bird because it was out of sight, the bird could see the falconer, his master, and it should fly back to the lure as far

as 10-12 verst. (How far is a verst? The author does not know - neither do I. - de Bastyai.)

For the training of the golden eagle from horseback, the technique was to use a stuffed foxskin with a red lump of meat tied round the back. This then is cast on the ground and the eagle will take it when the horse is standing motionless. Then with the help of an assistant the following technique was used. The assistant, also mounted, dragged the lure on a creance in front of the falconer and the eagle flew from the horse to it. Later in this exercise the speed of the horses increased from a walk to a trot to a full gallop. When the eagle caught the lure the horses were stopped immediately. When this method of training was used the falconer holding the eagle, when reaching the speed of galloping, removed the hood from the eagle, loudly yelling "Praulj-Praulj" and loosed the eagle after the dragged fox-lure, but this particular call was only used for the eagle. When the falconer was flying, the falconers yell "Koo-Koo". (The magic of these particular words escape me, but it seems that the old falconers of Khirgizia set great store by them and were scornful of younger falconers, who did not apply them correctly, so doubtless it had some magic for the birds — Lorant).

"It is a lovely sight when the hawking season starts. The falconers on horseback going and coming round the markets and bazaars with their hawks on their fists. The Khirgiz are so attached to their birds that they carry them every second of the day, and one can see the eagles in the bazaar and the market place and also all other kinds of hawks and many other falconers who carry goshawks and sparrowhawks.

"To get good results in the day one should ensure that the birds be well trained and also the falconer should know which is the right moment to slip after the quarry. When flying falcons, the falconer must first see that the bird has roused and then, waiting until the falcons are 'bobbing' in the direction of their future quarry, only then release the bird towards the direction by throwing it from the gloved fist, thus giving it greater impetus, then he spurs his horse into the gallop to follow the flight.

"When flying the shortwings the falconer may lower his hand beside the horse and so let the falcon fly from the glove in this position."

The author then compares falconry in

THE DISTRICT R ISYK-KUL

Hungarian book

in the Heart of Asia"

Almasy

comments by Lorant de Bastyai

the year 1900

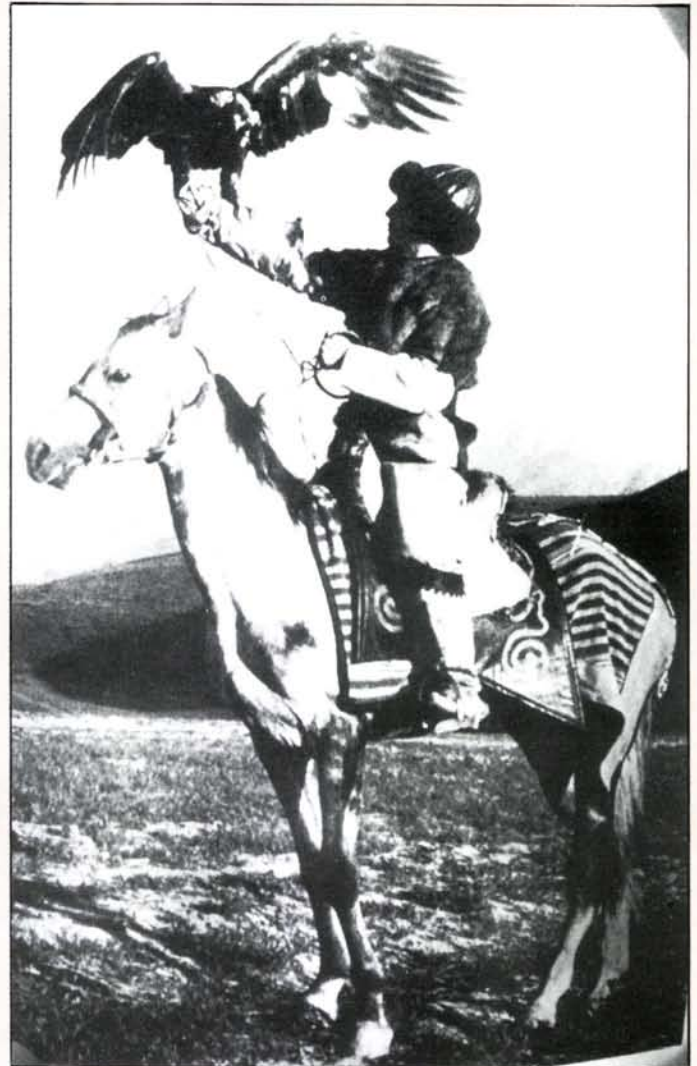
Khirgizia with falconry in mediaeval Europe, which he feels became such a performance with the trappings and the pomp and ceremony associated with it that it priced itself out of existence. (I do not think this was really the answer to the problem. I think the shotgun was the ultimate difficulty in Europe - Lorant). The

author then compares the prices of the various hawks, the cheapest being the sparrowhawk, the price of which was from 5 -10 roubles. An old experienced goshawk raised 30 roubles, the price of quite a good horse. The eagles were very dear. Those good for foxhunting cost 50 - 60 roubles, which was the price of a very good horse indeed. But the best type of eagle is priceless, with prices five to ten times those already mentioned, but with such the Khirgis would expect to take roe-deer.

"One falconer, who belonged to the Sart tribe, had a beautiful altai falcon, a sort of big saker, the altai-gyrfalcon (*Falco gyrfalco alticus mensier*), freshly caught. I wanted to get this bird for my collection and I offered him one of my eagles which the falconer laughingly turned down, then I put three horses on top of this offer. Even then he would not part from his altai falcon. To my great surprise I met him after six weeks. He brought his bird to me and after a big bargain offered it for 1½ roubles. The falconer explained to me that during the training the bird showed cowardice and weakness. and that was why it had lost its worth. After the bargain I felt that the falconer thought he had made a good bargain."

The author ends by saying "The reintroduction of falconry to Europe was not successful because they chose still the mediaeval type of hawking, with horses, a great deal of ritual and personnel, and much expense and unnecessary pomp and circumstance. If only we could take the example from the Khirgiz falconers, I am sure falconry would be reintroduced in Europe".

(The author, Almasy, would be most pleased if he could see how much we have reintroduced falconry in Europe and sincerely hope it will always be popular like this and never forgotten— de Bastyai.)



Above: Training Golden Eagle BERKUT on the Berkutchi fist.

Below left: Kirgiz Falconer with the Altai Gerfalcon.

Below: Kirgiz Falconer or better known as Austringer with Accipiter-Gentilis Buteoides.

Most of these photographs are over 30 years old!



Review

The Compleat Falconer

Frank L. Beebe

Frank L. Beebe has been one of America's leading Falconers for over 40 years. His research with Peales and Gyr Falcons is known worldwide.

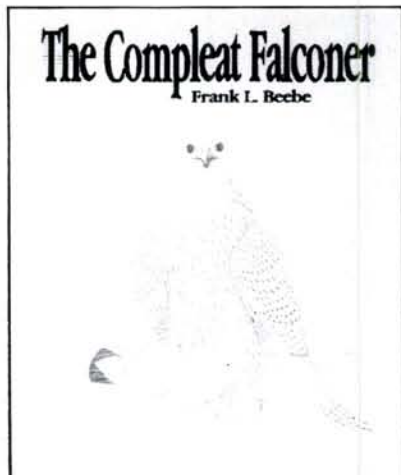
Frank Beebe has been gifted with 3 talents, not only can he fly birds of prey, but paints and writes about them as well. The first



thing you will notice is the size of the book, 8 1/2" x 11" with a hard cover. 300 pages of which there are 32 new full colour paintings, all by Frank Beebe. Unfortunately these were not included in the mock-up I was sent for *Review*, but if they are anything like his other works, then these alone are worth purchasing the book for, and also the 100 line drawings to compliment the text. The book is divided into

four sections. Part one - Historical Falconry, Part two - The Bird in Falconry, Part three - The Art of Falconry and Part four - My Hawking.

All in all, I found the book very easy and enjoyable to read, giving information to the beginner and expert alike and is a must for your collection.



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Falconry Equipment

Myth, Magic & Modern

By
Robin
Haigh

The quality of modern falconry equipment is now so good that products from famous manufacturers of old such as the Mollens & Mohammed Din look very amateurish by comparison. Using the latest materials and machinery today's expert craftsmen produce an incredible range of falconry related products.

Lahore bells mentioned in a dozen old works on falconry and supposedly made from brass with almost magical properties seem very crude when compared with those from the today's major manufacturers Hawkmaster and Pentapoint in the U.K. and Asborno (now made by Valarte in the U.S.A.).

Bewits used to fasten bells to the hawks legs are thankfully out of fashion, they were always a source of trouble, prone to stretching, difficult to put on and liable to conflict with today's assortment of leg rings. Those in the know use double plastic cable ties, which are cheaper & stronger, to fasten the bell to the eyelet on Aylmeri anklets or through the knot on traditional pattern jesses. Cable ties work well also when using a tail bell for fastening the bell to the plectrum and the plectrum to the two centre deck feathers.

In my opinion the riveted on type of Aylmeri anklet is potentially dangerous placing the eyelet too far away from the centre line of the leg thus allowing the eyelet to rub on the back toe and worse to allow the toe or talon to pass through the eyelet. A glued and eyeleted Aylmeri anklet which keeps the eyelet as close to the leg as possible is far preferable.

The false Aylmeri is a pre-eyeleted short jesse and suffers from all the aforementioned problems but is even more likely to get caught up on nail or twig and is not to be recommended.

It must be understood that a raptor flying loose with any type of jesse that has a slit in the exposed end is potentially at risk of becoming hung up, therefore traditional jesses should only be used under the closest supervision.

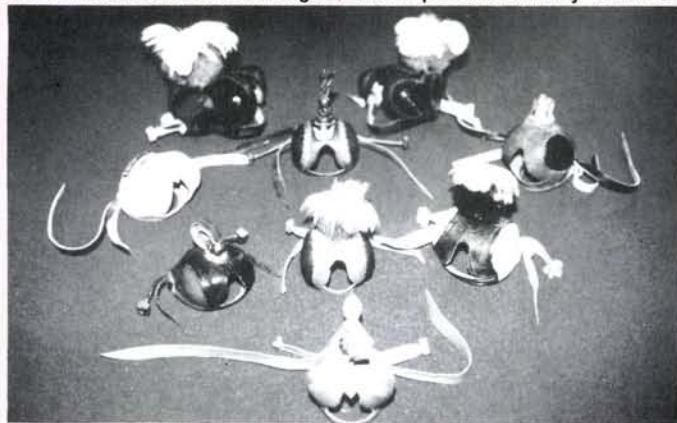
Rawhide leashes are now seldom seen, thank goodness? Rawhide strip, used for lacing lengths of conveyor belt together, is prone to wear and the end knot must be checked constantly. Modern synthetic woven leashes are resistant to wear, weather and stretching and are inexpensive.

Brass swivels should never be used on any raptor for brass is likely to fail without any prior warning, and a bird lost with its jesses fastened together is severely disadvantaged. Stainless

steel swivels may be more expensive but are considerably stronger and so durable that the manufacturers of the Hawkmaster range even offer a 10 year guarantee. Dog lead swivels are made for dog leads... enough said?

The unsupervised weathering of any type of raptor is in my opinion unwise unless they are in a secure enclosure designed specifically for the purpose. A weathering enclosure will keep the occupant safe from predators, both four and two legged, and contain the hawk in the event of an equipment failure.

The weathering quarters should allow the bird access to sun or shade and be equipped with bathing facilities, a suitable perch and have ample headroom it is also advisable to make it large



A selection of hoods from the best of today's craftsmen

enough so that the tips of the wings cannot contact the side or front wire. A locking door is a must. Chicken wire is too abrasive and should never be used for any form of raptor accommodation.

Blocks have really improved during the last few years, with high-tec materials such as ceramics, Astroturf and stainless steel all finding favour. The days of the sawn off table leg are long gone.

Bow perches have been improved as much as the design will allow with scrubbable synthetic padding and galvanised or plated metalwork. The inherently unsafe ring perch has been redesigned with a swiveling top and teardrop shape to allow snagged leashes to safely drop to the ground rather than smash the tail feathers.

Dutch type hoods are an area where the real craftsmen can show their worth. Difficult to manufacture and even more tricky to make fit well the Dutch hood is the pinnacle of the falconry equipment makers art. Keith Wakefield, Ben Long and Martin Jones all produce superb hoods which can compete with any in the

Raptor

world while across the pond Johnson, Bonelli and Moran are among the top manufacturers. Interestingly a few years ago a cased set of hoods and bells came up for sale at auction, they were reputed to be sixteenth century but amongst them were readily identifiable examples from the 20th century!

The majority of Falconers wear a glove on the left hand, left handed people will wear the glove on the right hand. Any falconers seen wearing gloves on both hands are probably suffering from a problem that should have been cured by their mothers when they were much younger!

Buckskin has always been the first choice for falconers gloves. The best quality is thick and very supple offering good protection from penetration by even the

that are overlarge or too small are a nuisance, the ideal bag should be just large enough to accommodate a reasonable amount of quarry plus spare jesses, bells, swivels etc. Separate pockets for equipment and pick-up meat are a good idea. Falconers bags seem to attract clutter rather like ladies handbags, only smellier!

A longwing lure should be just heavy enough to swing. A pair of dried wings tied together with some blind cord and four or five yards of similar cord fastened to a wooden handle at one end and a swivel on the wings at the other is all that is needed. A falcon stooping to the lure can reach a considerable speed and should it inadvertently collide with a correctly made light lure will come to no harm, however if the advice given in a number of the older falconry books is followed and the lure is based on a padded horseshoe the results could be catastrophic! It's a fair bet that anyone advocating a padded horseshoe lure would also be wearing two gloves!

Training a bird on a creance can be potentially dangerous. The amount of line that a bird can get airborne with is impressive. Should the bird escape dragging lengths of line behind it the result is predictable unless it is recovered promptly. An airdried carcass swinging by a length of line from a branch in the wood is not a pretty sight!

A creance should always be fastened by a double knot to a heavy handle. 30 metres of line is plenty. I am not in favour of using a drag creance when entering a hawk as they invariably get snagged and drag the bird down or worse the bird may fly off with it. I would suggest that if the bird is not amenable enough to fly loose it is not yet ready for entering.

And finally whether you are buying equipment or a bird always buy the best quality that you can afford and remember that what appears to be the cheapest may well turn out to be the most expensive in the long run.



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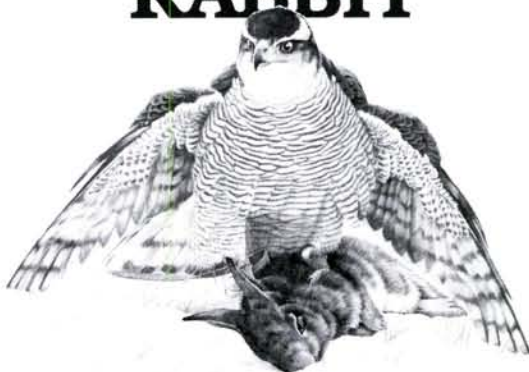
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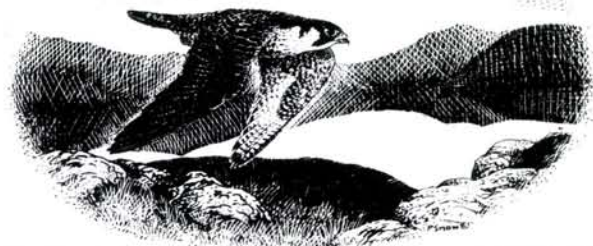
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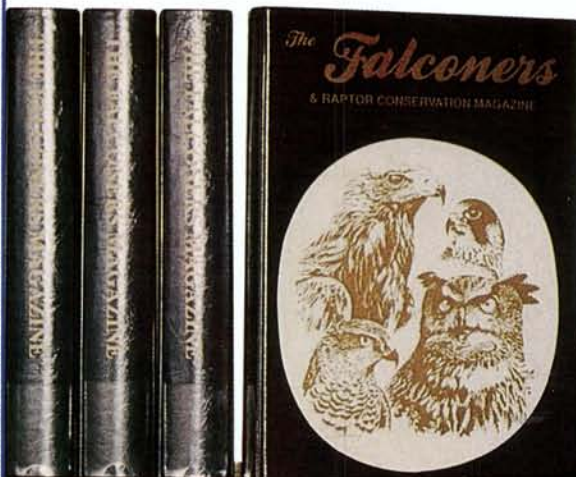
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