

The **Falcons**
— & Raptor Conservation Magazine —

Spring '95

£2.95

A
TOUCH
OF
FROST

HAWKING
DESERT
FLARES



RAPTORS REST

Going on Holiday, away on a business trip or even into Hospital, well

RAPTORS REST

is now open to help your peace of mind.

We will look after your bird/birds on a daily or weekly basis in a clean, well looked after mews, with a variety of food to suit your birds requirements.

Falconers with at least five years experience to care for your bird/birds.

Situated in North Norfolk on the main A149 near Cromer.

We will be pleased to help with any queries, so phone: Terry or Carol on 0263 515849 for rates and details

WE HAVE MOVED

Please note new address

**Falconry
Furniture** 

MARTIN JONES

THE FIRST NAME IN PRACTICAL, TOP QUALITY, ORIGINAL FALCONRY EQUIPMENT

Over 25 years unrivalled experience supplying superior equipment to a wide range of falconers, including many of the worlds leading exponents.

Only top quality materials used in manufacture.

Our unique working knowledge of most birds currently used in falconry enables us to produce a range of equipment unsurpassed for fit, quality and practical use.

Most items are available ex-stock, or can be made to customers requirements

BOOKS, VIDEOS AND LONG RANGE TELEMETRY

We stock one of the largest range of books currently in print, as well as several out-of-print titles, plus a comprehensive range of videos.

COLOUR CATALOGUES

Send S.A.E. for Furniture, Telemetry & Book lists to:
Martin Jones, The Parsonage, Llanrothal, Nr Monmouth
Monmouthshire. NP5 3QJ

Tel: 0600 84300 Fax: 0600 84450

FULL ACCESS/VISA FACILITIES AVAILABLE
FAST MAIL ORDER SERVICE

Customers welcome to visit us weekdays (or weekends by arrangement)

ADVICE: we offer free advice on all falconry and raptor keeping matters (please phone during normal working hours if possible)



Clarence Court Limited

QUAIL

For large regular supplies of best quality stock from leading quail breeder.



Please contact: 0242 621228
0242 620145 Fax
P.O. Box 2
Winchcombe Glos
GL54 5YA

Clyde Valley Hawks

BIRD OF PREY CENTRE
&
SPORTING AGENCY



Bookings taken now for '94 Grouse & Black Game, Partridge, Pheasant, Duck, Hill Hare & Rabbit hawking by the day.

Full range of Falconry Furniture available at discount prices.

Falconry courses and hunting trips throughout the season.

All field sport activities catered for.

CLYDE VALLEY HAWKS

Clyde Valley Country Est. Crossford, Carluke, ML8 5NJ
Tel: 0555 860 787

Independent Bird Register

For all Falcons, Hawks and Owls.
Inexpensive registration to maintain legal origin and ownership.
Effective recovery service for lost or stolen birds.

Split and closed rings provided free with registration, if required.

You know it makes sense.

Apply now for application form to:

**184 Warwick Road, Kenilworth
Warks. CV8 1HU
Telephone: (01926) 50000**

SPRING 1995 No. 22

features

9 **OBITUARIES**
REGINALD SMITH &
RONALD STEVENS

10 **ANDREW MARK
ELLIS. A PROFILE**
BY DAVID GLYNNE

13 **THE BLACK
FALCON**
LOOKING AT THIS
VERSATILE BIRD

15 **FACTS ON
FALCONERS.**
AN INTERVIEW
WITH JIM CHICK

16 **A TOUCH OF
FROST.**
HAWKING IN SNOW
CLAD CAMBRIDGE-
SHIRE
COUNTRYSIDE

20 **HAWKING
DESERT HARES**
NICK FOX

22 **SKYE'S THE LIMIT
FOR THE SCOTTISH
HAWKING CLUB**

25 **SELECTIVE
BREEDING**
PETER GILL

34 **RUIIN THE MUSKET**
DAVID RAMPLING

regulars

18 **THE TAWNY OWL
BRITANS MOST
WIDESPREAD OWL**
MIKE EVERETT

24 **CLUB DIRECTORY**

28 **RAPTORS OF
ISRAEL**
FIRST OF A OF THREE
PART STUDY BY PHILIP
SNOW

36 **RAPTORK**
TETHERED BIRDS AND
THE BEST WAY TO
ENSURE THEIR WELL-
BEING



A Touch of Frost p16

up-to-date

4-7 **NEWS. MORE CON-
VICTIONS AND STOLEN
BIRDS. A REPORT FROM
THE HAWK BOARD.**

8 **& CLUBS.**
NEWS ABOUT THE WELSH
HAWKING CLUBS A.G.M

14 **COURSES AT THE
NATIONAL BIRDS OF
PREY CENTRE.
AND
CROSSWORD
COMPETITION**

33 **RAPTOR RESCUE.**
A BOUNTY OF
BUZZARDS

30-31 **LETTERS.**

38 **CLASSIFIEDS.**



Skye's the Limit p22

EDITORIAL TEAM

EDITORS: LYN & DAVID WILSON
DESIGN: D PERKINS
ADVERTISING: LYN WILSON
PUBLISHED QUARTERLY BY:
THE FALCONERS & RAPTOR CONSERVATION MAGAZINE
20 Bridle Road, Burton Latimer, Kettering, Northants. NN15 5QP
Telephone: (0536) 722794 **Fax:** (0536) 722794
Subscriptions: UK & Eire £14.00, Europe £18.00, Airmail
£26.00
Cheque/Postal Order payable to: The Falconers Magazine.
For more details phone 0536 722794

The views expressed in this magazine are the views of the author. No responsibility for the quality of goods or services offered in this magazine can be accepted by the publishers or the printers, and the advertisements are accepted in good faith.

All material included in the Falconers and Raptors Conservation Magazine is copyright Falconers Magazine 1994, and may not be reproduced in part or whole without written permission of the publishers.

COVER:Harris Hawk. Golden Eagle. Photos: David Wilson

COMMENT

Dear Readers,

Happy New Year everybody. Hope you all had a nice Christmas. In this issue we have re-run the crossword, this time with all the clues. With seventeen great prizes it is worth having a go.

Sadly we have two obituaries this time one for Ronald Stevens who died in December and one for Reg Smith who died in January, we would like to express our sympathy to their families and let them know we are thinking of them at this sad time.

Once again we have some great articles, we have three about falconry around the world, and plenty from the home scene.

This years Falconers Fair is at Althorp again on the 28th & 29th May, there will be more about it in the next issue.

Before we go we would like to remind you that the Subscription rates have now gone up to £14, £18, & £26 respectively.

David & Lyn

CONVICTIONS

(1) Robert ASHCROFT of Fazakerley, Merseyside

Appeared at Liverpool Magistrates Court on 5 July 1994. He was charged with the following offences:-

- (1) (2) (3) (4) Possession of a wild Goshawk
 - (5) Selling a wild Goshawk
 - (6) Possession of an unregistered Goshawk
- For these offences he was fined as follows:-
- (1) (2) (3) (4) Fined £330.00. Bird forfeited
 - (5) Fined £330.00
 - (6) Fined £330.00. Bird forfeited
- Costs £150.00 Compensation £200.00
Total £2330.00

(2) Peter ASHCROFT same address

- (1) (2) (3) (4) Possession of a wild Goshawk
 - (5) Making a false declaration to obtain registration
- For these offences he was fined as follows:-
- (1) (2) (3) (4) Fined £230.00. Bird forfeited
 - (5) Fined £80.00
- Costs £150.00 Compensation £200.00
Total £1350.00
- This case was the fifth successful prosecution involving DNA fingerprinting that was used to prove or disprove breeding claims.

RECENT STOLEN BIRDS.

1) Stolen from Staffordshire 31.12.94

Female Common Buzzard. Ring No. 9NBA81W.
At the time of the theft this bird was halfway through laying a clutch of eggs.

2) Stolen from Kent 21.12.94

Male Goshawk Ring No. 6729W 5yrs. +

3) Stolen from Wales October 94

- 1 Common Buzzard Ring No 14288W
- 2 Common Buzzard Ring No 13698W
- 3 Common Buzzard Ring no 8302W

4) Stolen from Hampshire October 94

Male Redtail Ring No's 1998X and 1823Y

5) Stolen from Lincs. November 94

- 1 Harris Hawk, Female Ring No 10284W
- 2 Harris Hawk, Male Ring No 9668W
- 3 Harris Hawk, Female Ring No UK80798
- 4 Harris Hawk, Male Ring No UK80799
- 5 Redtail, Female Ring No UK83115
- 6 Redtail, Male Ring No's 1530X/0523Y
- 7 Redtail, Female Ring No UK60716
- 8 Redtail, Male Ring No's UK60714/RJHC801.

5) Stolen from Suffolk. 1.12.92

Female peregrine. Ring No 7808W

Anyone with any information about the above birds can contact either PC Paul Beecroft on 0734 536000 or ring the Falconers Magazine on 0536 722794.

MIDDLESEX MAN PROSECUTED

On Thursday 14 July 1994. Jason Andrew WARD of Whitethorn Ave. Tewsey, Middlesex appeared at Uxbridge Magistrates Court in connection with offences relating to unnecessary suffering to a common Buzzard and a Barn Owl.

The circumstances are that; on Friday 4 March 1994 Officers from the Metropolitan Police and Thames Valley Police visited the address of WARD and in a bedroom they found the Buzzard tethered to an old pram handle and the Barn Owl free flying in the same room.

The Buzzard, although in a reasonable condition, was tethered by a length of cord approximately 4 feet in length. The leather Jesses were hard and had not been oiled for some time. The pram handle had been covered with what appeared to be pipe lagging, which had become damaged. It was totally unsuitable for this bird.

The bird was surrounded by dirty and soiled newspapers with various amounts of rotting food around the area. The smell in the room was indescribable and the overall picture was disgusting.

On examination the Barn Owl was found to have an injury to the leg. There was congealed blood around the full circumference of its leg and appeared to be consistent with something that had been tied too tightly to the leg or had become too tight. A Veterinary Surgeon later confirmed that the injury had gone

through the flesh clear to the bone and also the bird was 40% underweight.

At Uxbridge Magistrates Court WARD pleaded guilty to the charges of causing Unnecessary Suffering to both birds. The Court was shown photographs and a Video of the birds in the bedroom. The Court then heard that WARD had not taken the Owl to see a Vet as he could not afford it and that it was his intention to build some aviaries in his garden. It is believed the birds had been kept in this way for at least 3 months.

The Court also heard that WARD had stated that he had been caused Unnecessary Suffering by giving up his bedroom for the birds. WARD received a Conditional Discharge for 2 years, was ordered to pay costs of £549.81, forfeiture of the birds and banned for 5 years from keeping Birds of Prey.



Cruelty Case Golden Eagle Forfeited

On 13th & 20th October 1994 Henry James SMITH of Pan Lane, East Hanningfield, Nr Chelmsford. Essex appeared at Chelmsford Magistrates court in answer to the following charges:

- (1) Possession of a Golden Eagle. Contrary to Section 1(2)(a) Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981
- (2) Confining a Golden Eagle in too small a cage. Contrary to Section 8 Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981.
- (3) Causing unnecessary suffering to a Golden Eagle. Contrary to Section 1 Protection of Animals Act 1911.

The circumstances of this case are that on 12 October 1993, a juvenile Golden Eagle was allegedly left outside the address of SMITH. An anonymous note with the bird stated a retired couple had found the bird as a chick

and believed it to be a Buzzard. It had grown too large to handle and please could Mr SMITH look after it. SMITH registered the bird with the DOE and stated that he believed the bird was totally imprinted and therefore wild disabled.

Following further information being received a search warrant was later executed at his address and the bird was seized. An avian vet in attendance provided a detailed statement about the condition of the bird and its housing. The Mews was only 4' x 4'4" in depth and breadth and clearly insufficient to allow the bird to stretch its wings freely. There was also minor damage to the cere and wing of the bird and the head was found to be infested with lice.

After pleading not guilty to all offences the Court found him guilty on Counts 2 & 3 and Not Guilty on Count 1.

For this he received the following
Count 2 - Conditional Discharge.

Count 3 - Fined £200

Also ordered to pay Veterinary costs of £1351.

Bird Forfeited.

ART CONTEST WINNERS MEET CHRIS PACKHAM

The first ever Raptor Rescue Junior Art Competition had a memorable conclusion recently, as television personality Chris Packham was on hand to present the awards to the three lucky winners.

The ceremony was held at the Bird and Wildlife Bookshop in London's West End, where Chris handed over special certificates, 'Really Wild Show' T-shirts and a host of other prizes, before spending some considerable time answering questions, chatting to guests and signing autographs.

He revealed that amongst his all time favourite species of bird are the Sparrowhawk and the Little Owl! As someone who has had experience of caring for injured birds of prey, Chris is well aware of the dedication required to be successful in raptor rehabilitation.

HIGH STANDARD

Entries for the competition had been coming in throughout the summer from locations as far apart as Edinburgh and South Wales. Owls were the most popular subjects and in particular the Barn Owl. The standard of the illustrations was high and made judging a very difficult task. However, the eventual winners and runners up were:

UNDER 8 YEARS:

First Prize: Nicholas Hodson, Newcastle under Lyme, Staffs

Runners up: Alick J Jacklin, Shortstown, Beds
Charlotte Allen, Little Hadham, Herts

8 TO 12 YEARS:

First Prize: Craig Cooper, Blackwood, Gwent
Runners up: Sarah Anthony, Harlow, Essex
Angela Harrison, Rugeley, Staffordshire

OVER 12 YEARS:

First Prize: Catherine Parr, Macclesfield, Ches.
Runners up: Katy Thornton, Clwyd, N Wales
Marie Claridge, Chichester, W. Sussex

GENEROSITY

Raptor Rescue would like to express their appreciation to Chris Packham for helping to make

the presentation so enjoyable for all the children concerned - not to mention the adults!!

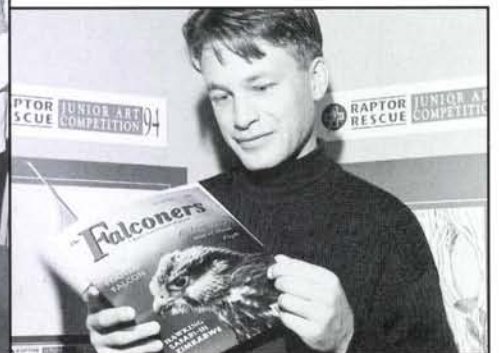
We are very grateful to all the companies who so generously supplied prizes for the contest.

They were:

Binney & Smith Ltd; Collins & Brown; Focus Optics; The Hawk Conservancy; J W Spear & Sons Ltd. A special mention is due to our friends at COUNTY FAIRS and also to Lyn and David Wilson of the FALCONERS MAGAZINE. A final debt of gratitude goes to Andrew Johnson and the staff of the Bird and Wildlife Bookshop. In addition to some magnificent prizes for all the winners AND the runners up, they also turned over their premises in London to us for the best part of a day, in order to hold the presentation.

Thanks again to everyone concerned.

Hopefully the new friendships forged during the creation of this event will prove to be long-lasting and beneficial to the cause of raptor rehabilitation.



MIDDLE EAST FALCON RESEARCH GROUP

The Middle East Falcon Research Group held its first meeting in March 1994 at the invitation of Dr Nick Fox at the National Avian Research Centre in Abu Dhabi.

Those present included Mrs Theresa Bailey, BSc, CED, (Public Relations Officer, NARC), Me Tom Bailey BVSc, MRCVS (Veterinary Officer, NARC), Dr Nigel Barton BSc, PhD, (Dubai Falcon Hospital), Mr Mohamed Al Bowardi, (Managing Director NARC), Prof. John Cooper, BVSc, CertLAS, DTVM, MRCPPath, FIBiol, FRCVS, (Volcano Veterinary Centre, Rwanda), Mr Richard Day (The Falcon Research Hospital, Abu Dhabi), Mr Neil Forbes, BVM, MRCVS, (The Clockhouse Veterinary Hospital, UK), Dr Nick Fox, BSc, CED, PhD, RF, (Director of Falcon Management and Research, NARC), Mrs Barbro Fox, BA, BED, (Falcon Facility, NARC) Dr Brahim Haddane, (Senior Veterinary Officer, Parc Zoologique National de Rabar, Morocco), Dr Richard Hornby, PhD, (General Manager, NARC), Dr Robert Kenward, DPil, (Institute of Terrestrial Ecology, UK), Mr Peter McKinney, MVB, MRCVS, (The veterinary Hospital, Dubai), Mr Khalifa Saif Al-Qumzi (Falcon Management, NARC), Dr David Remple, DVM (Director, Dubai Falcon Hospital), Mrs Cheryl Remple (Dubai Falcon Hospital), Dr Kenton Riddle, DVM (Director, The Falcon Research Hospital, Abu Dhabi), Dr Jamie Samour, MVZ, PhD, (Senior Veterinary Officer, NARC), Mr Bader Ibrahim Al-Sharlan (The Falcon Research Hospital, Abu Dhabi), Mr Jacek Streck (Ivory Tower Studio, Vancouver), and Dr Faris Al-Timimi, (Doha Veterinary Clinic, Qatar). Since the inaugural meeting, numbers have increased to about 50 and the Group has had its first Workshop meetings and produced its newsletter 'Falco'.

The main objectives of the MEFRG are to provide a central body for the coordination of research activities related to falcons and falconry

in the Middle East and to provide a common forum for exchange of information and for collaborating on research programmes. Also, to promote research on health and diseases in falcons, moulting, nutrition, captive breeding, semen cryopreservation, and artificial insemination. To promote field studies on falcon migration, taxonomy, morphometrics, reproductive biology, nutritional ecology and behaviour. To improve management conditions for captive falcons through educational awareness programmes and to promote a better understanding of falconry as part of Arabic cultural heritage.

The Group holds regional workshops on veterinary aspects, falcon biology, falconry and conservation issues. Planned for this year is the production of a video film in Arabic on aspergillosis, its prevention, recognition and treatment. The Group aims, by improving the standards of health in captive falcons, to reduce the turnover and demand for wild falcons in the Middle East. Also many of the Group vets and biologists are equipped with microchip scanners to detect newly imported wild sakers which have been chipped in their nests in khazakhstan and Mongolia. Over 180 wild sakers have been chipped so far as part of our studies on demography of wild and captive sakers. Many more captive ones have been chipped at the Falcon Hospitals.

The microchipping database is run at NARC by Dr Jamie Samour, who is also Chairman of the MEFRG.

The Group also coordinates the collection of veterinary specimens, site visits, secondments for specialist raptor vets, and the collection of houbara samples during hawking trips, tying in with research programmes on houbara ecology and management.

For further information contact Jamie Samour, National Avian Research Centre, PO Box 45553, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, or in UK, Dr Nick Fox, Tel: (0267) 233864.

STUDENT SUCCESS AT EASTON COLLEGE

The performance of Easton College students in the last year has been excellent. Results are given in the first edition of Easton College News. 89.3% of students gained qualifications and over 90% went on to employment or further or higher education. David Lawrence, Principal says, "The percentage of students going on to employment or further courses is slightly better than last year and is very encouraging in the current economic climate. We were particularly pleased with the achievement of BTEC National students where 60% went into jobs and many others into higher education." The first edition of Easton College News also includes a list of the colleges' full-time and part-time courses. The courses are in the following curriculum areas:

- Agriculture inc Poultry & Pigs
- Rural Engineering
- Amenity Horticulture
- Landscape Construction
- Arboriculture & Tree Surgery
- Countryskills
- Countryside Management
- Business
- Equestrian
- Floristry
- Small Animal Care

For further details on the Easton College News and student performance contact David Lawrence at the College, Norwich (01603) 742105.

THE RED KITE A SUCCESS STORY

In contrast to the decline of many species of bird, the breeding success of the Red Kite in mid-Wales and now northern Scotland and southern England gives hope that this elegant raptor will once more become a frequently-seen bird, according to an exclusive article in the December issue of BIRDWATCH magazine. Once a common sight in the streets of Elizabethan London, the Kite steadily declined until it reached near-extinction in the mid-20th century, the article reveals. Thanks to planned conservation and nest protection from the SAS and the Gurkhas, however, over 100 breeding pairs now nest in Wales, and young birds have also been introduced to England and Scotland from Sweden and northern Spain. But the battle is not yet won, and the species' expansion is threatened by illegal poisons, food shortages and egg robbery.

RSPB TO BUY FLOW COUNTRY ESTATE

The Forsinard Estate, an area of prime peatland in the Flow Country of East Sutherland, is to be bought by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds from Fountain International Ltd. This 17,600 acre (7,123 hectare) estate, which holds some of the most important peatlands in Caithness and Sutherland, will be the second largest area ever purchased by the RSPB in its 105-year history. The peatlands of Caithness and Sutherland are of international importance for their wildlife and habitats and are one of the largest remaining tracts of 'wild land' in western Europe. They are of outstanding significance to global biodiversity and are listed as requiring special protection under European conservation law. Breeding birds like the greenshank, black-throated diver and common scoter have their British stronghold in the Flow Country. Other breeding species found on the Forsinard estate include merlin, red-throated diver, dunlin, wigeon, short-eared owl and hen harrier.

RSPB Director of Scotland, Stuart Housden, said: "Our aims will be to safeguard the internationally important breeding bird populations and to ensure that the peatlands are protected for all time. Deer stalking and fishing will continue at levels compatible with the site's conservation importance, helping to maintain local employment. One of our most experienced Scottish staff will be moving to Forsinard soon to talk to local people about the future of the estate, and we will also be advertising for an estate manager for Forsinard, who will live locally. We look forward to playing our part in the local community and meeting our new neighbours." The RSPB will be launching a major appeal to its members to help buy this outstanding area and to ensure that resources are available to manage it efficiently and effectively in perpetuity. An application for financial support towards the purchase and running costs of this priority conservation area has been refused by Scottish Natural Heritage.

A FOND FAREWELL TO DUSK

David Musket.

As an avid falconer I would like to pay tribute to Dusk, a 10 year old female Barn Owl, I first saw flown by John Bennett two years ago at Fritton Lake Country Park. Although not always valued very highly by many falconers I think most would agree that barn owls have proved an invaluable asset in drawing the attention of the public to the need for conservation of birds of prey.

Dusk started her life at the Welsh Hawking Centre where John worked as a falconer. She moved with him to various falconry centres and came with him to settle at Fritton when he took up the position of head falconer.

She formed part of the display, which included eagles, hawks and falcons and I have never failed to be impressed by the quality of the demonstration which she gave, even in such excellent company. She always proved a real favourite with the

public. Dusk died of natural causes in December and I know that John felt a sense of great personal loss, which I am sure will be shared by all who came to admire and love this remarkable bird during her flying career. She will be sadly missed.



"TRAINING GUNDOGS FOR FALCONRY

There will be a training day at The Warren Gundog Training Centre on Sunday 23rd April 1995. Covering all aspects of training a gundog for falconry, including pointing live game. Participants are encouraged to bring their own dogs. Details from Guy or Marian Wallace on: 0874 754311

Hawk Board News

The de-registration of many raptor species in early summer has meant that the numbers of keepers of registered hawks is now much reduced, which in turn means that most of the Clubs no longer have sufficient members for Recognised Club status. There are now only 4,500 registered Schedule 4 birds as opposed to 18,300 before the review. The Department of the Environment has not yet decided whether or not to continue with the Club Inspection Scheme. All of this affects the make-up and funding of the Hawk Board.

Will the Hawk Board be able to continue? We hope so, because without it falconry and hawk-keeping will be completely defenceless against the constant barrage of threats eroding our freedom. None of the British Clubs have sufficient expertise or political muscle to challenge or achieve much on their own. But when we pool our resources with the Hawk Board then we just about manage to keep our heads above water. Representatives from the DoE, the Joint Nature Conservancy Council and the Ministry of Agriculture, regularly attend the Hawk Board meetings.

A sub-committee will meet on 18-19 January to investigate possible re-structuring for the Hawk Board and to discuss these matters with the DoE. A number of ideas are on the table, for example constituting the Hawk Board from Representatives from Clubs, or groups of small clubs, representing a certain minimum number of audited, paid up members. The elections are very expensive and unproductive in terms of output so at present it seems unlikely that we will be able to afford them. Another alternative would be to amalgamate with the British Field Sports Society Falconry Committee and thus reduce some duplication. Meanwhile the Hawk Board will remain as it is until June 1995, the end of the current three year term.

The Hawk Board investigated alternatives for registering or micro-chipping raptors of non-(DoE)-registerable species. It was decided not to recommend any one particular system, but a two page letter detailing advice about this was sent to every one who wrote in. As suspected, furore caused by de-registration soon died down and despite a lot of noise, not many hawk-keepers have taken up alternatives to DoE registration. Thefts of domestic raptors have increased slightly, but at about 0.3% pa are probably less than for many similar items.

There have been a continuing number of small cases of thefts of wild raptors and many of these have been exposed by DNA testing. Most convictions are the result of information received. If you have good reason to believe someone is laundering wild birds, contact the DoE or police. DNA tests now at least give people the opportunity to prove their innocence.

There have been some requests to reinstate licences to take raptors from the wild, in view of the increases in the wild populations. The last such licence was issued in 1988 and licence holders experienced major hostility from the RSPB and the Press among others. Given the extreme difficulties in implementing

the licence and fulfilling the restricting conditions, and given the very counter-productive bad publicity entailed, together with the large numbers of domestic raptors easily available, it was decided to discontinue licences to take from the wild. This decision was not made by the Hawk Board. Wild taken eyasses taken under licence cost about the same as a domestic one. They therefore have no major advantage or justification. The trapping of passage falcons ceased in 1954 and it would require a change in the Wildism and Countryside Act to reinstate. It would seem wiser therefore to stick to hacked peregrines.

Rather than beat a shut door, it may be possible to make progress with a door which is slowly opening. The goshawk is increasing throughout Britain and causing major concerns for game-rearers and even for the RSPB. A number of species, such as black grouse, already threatened by habitat changes, are being affected by goshawk depredation to the point where it is likely that there will be calls for control measures. The Hawk Board would strongly oppose any control measures on goshawks which would entail the killing of birds or their eggs. Instead we would be seeking alternative, humane solutions whereby surplus birds were taken into captivity for breeding or for falconry and we would also seek a change in scheduling for the species. So do not think that the Hawk Board is against everything; rather it is a question of taking action when the time is right, with the welfare of the birds and the sport as a whole our prime consideration, instead of saying 'I want.... I want....'

You probably know that there was an international CITES meeting in Florida in early November. Jemima Parry-Jones and I sent documents representing the Hawk Board, via the RSPB, calling for a recognition of CITES of domestic raptors and a streamline system for moving non-wild-source birds of prey. At present there is a yawning gap between the idealistic bureaucracy of CITES, and the real world. I also discussed with members of the North American Falconers' association Board of Directors in November, and with Christian de Coune of the International Falconry Association, and with Eckart Schormair from the Deutsche Falkenorden in Germany, the possibility of setting up a computer link between all the organisations with a public E-mail file and some restricted files for confidential business. Several countries already have a limited press search service, searching the newspapers and magazines each day for articles on subjects selected by keywords. We are looking at how to structure this and fund it as a service to falconry all over the world. It would also have implications for falconry clubs within Britain and Europe, coping with local issues and with common EEC problems.

For the past 18 months I have been working on an investigation into the nature and extent of animal suffering caused by current methods of pest control and field sports. This is based on consultations with many professional specialists in field sports and animal welfare and

should be completed by February 1995. We now have a very extensive scientific database on the impact of the domestic cat on wildlife. This material is essential background information for the defence of falconry and we already have used it for two problem areas this year.

The first is that a Private Members' Bill is scheduled for a reading in the commons on Friday 3rd March entitled the *Wild Mammals (protection) Bill*, introduced by Labour MP John Mc Fall. This Bill will make provision for the protection of wild mammals from being taken, killed, or injured by the use of dogs or snares and from certain other cruel acts'. We hope that his Bill will fail through lack of parliamentary time but we are disappointed by the defence put up by the pro-hunting lobby. The pro-hunting arguments have been the same old theme without much attempt (on either side of the debate) to face real facts and figures. We know that falconry will, being such a minority sport, receive only very limited support from other field sports, and therefore it is up to us to *conduct our own defence*. This is what we are doing and we believe that of all the fieldsports, we are the most effective defenders, for our size and budget. So please, please, support your Hawk Board. Most of its costs are borne directly by individual members. Just to transport my carcass to a meeting costs me £60. Multiply that by an average of 12 meetings a year, plus the number of days spent working in the office, phone and fax bills, and it all mounts up. I have not submitted a bill to the Hawk board for over two years, nor I know, have many others. If I actually charged my normal professional rates I would empty the Hawk Board coffers in eight days! If you value your sport and your freedom to keep hawks, please think carefully about how much you have contributed to its defence and its future and look at ways of either sending some funds, or raising some funds, or helping in other ways, such as in services or expertise. Thankyou Falconers' Fair organisers for the proceeds of the raffle for the Hawk Board.

Another area in which we need our facts and figures is the National Trust. The National Trust quietly banned falconry from its lands in 1986 without telling anybody. Now we are faced with the task of getting it reinstated. This will involve us in making scientific presentations, attending meetings and so on, similar to that faced by the stag-hunters on Exmoor. The 1986 decision came about as a result of irresponsible acts on the part of a small number of falconers. Now we have to struggle to get back to where we started. Personally I'd rather go hawking.

Spanish falconry is currently split up into numerous local, small clubs. Now efforts are being made to form a National Spanish Club, fulfilling a role similar to our Hawk Board. They also hope to establish an annual Falconry Fieldmeet, so that Falconers can come together for genuine falconry, rather than just a Sky Trials as is now the case. Spanish falconers seeking more details should contact Jose-Manuel Rodriguez-Villa, Mazda, Tecnitrade RV, SA. Po de la Castellana, 86. 28046 Madrid. Spain.

May all your problems have hooked beaks. ★

Nick Fox

SCOTTISH HAWKING CLUB NEWS

The Scottish Hawking Club's Winter Programme has been progressing well with no major hiccups so far. Our 4-day meet on the Isle of Skye was a resounding success (see the article later on in this magazine). The December meet was on a clear day at Broughton, South of Edinburgh. The morning was a bit windy and as we were out on an open hill, boy was it cold. During the morning a few rabbits were accounted for with one notable slip by Gordon Kirkwoods female Goshawk. Mid afternoon saw the Golden Eagle flown in the next valley where he accounted for 2 rabbits. At the same time the wind had dropped, so enabling the others to bolt a good number of rabbits and increase the tally to over a dozen bunnies. One small problem at the end of the day was a Goshawk suffering from Hypoglycaemia due to the very cold wind. Fortunately, a first aid kit was handy, (thanks to the first aid seminar held last summer) and a quick drop tube of glucose and water with a warm car brought her around. The Christmas bash held at Andrew and Jackie Knowles-Brown's brought a fine, blue, clear, windless day. Once again the sun shone on the righteous!

After mince pies and drinks, we set off with a good crew of spectators. The first flush were the five farmyard guinea-fowl which Iain Campbell's female Harris chased, but was unsure what to do with when she caught up with them. Probably, their ugly helmeted heads putting her off. Next flush were 3 cock pheasants with their rocket boosters on. Graham Whiting's 1st year female Harris tried very hard to catch them, but with no luck. We moved on through the rushes and thick cover flushing the odd pheasant and rabbit, and ferreting the smaller buries until it started to get dark at 4.30 pm. Plenty of flights were had and a good bag made it a good hawking day. We finished the day back at Andrew and Jackie's for some well needed sustenance in front of a roaring fire discussing the finer points of falconry.

The SHC has been invited to attend the last meetings of the the Hawk Board prior to the elections in the Summer. So hopefully our members can now have a say in helping to protect our sport. We are also applying to the IAF for membership, so we can be kept informed as to what is happening on the International front. In the meantime Good Hawking. Iain Campbell



B.H.A FORM REGIONAL GROUP

The Snowdonia region of North Wales is much larger than you might imagine (I read somewhere that if you were to flatten out all the mountains and valleys it would cover the unlikely area of some 300 square miles) and contains some very fine hawking ground indeed. Unfortunately, there is also a great deal of wild inaccessible terrain which, apart from making it hard to follow a miscreant hawk, may account for the resident falconers' insular attitude towards their fellow austringer. The geographical obstacles have long been a problem but now The British Hawking Association is attempting to end our splendid isolation with the formation of a Snowdonia group.

If you live in, or near the area and would like to get together with like-minded individuals who enjoy the delights of frost-bite and extremely bad head colds then 'phone 0766 590657 for a chat. Remember, the BHA is an equal opportunities organisation so, no-matter what you're flying, your experience or gender, don't be shy and give us a call.

Welsh Hawking Club News

The Welsh Hawking Club, despite its origin in South Wales as part of a shooting club, over thirty years ago now, has many members outside Wales. Indeed the majority live in England, although the club boasts a truly International fellowship, with members throughout Europe, North and South America, Canada, Arabia, The Far East, Israel and Southern Africa.

The widespread membership in the UK has prompted consideration of the club becoming regionalised for the benefit of members who wish to play a greater part in club affairs, enjoy the company of like-minded individuals and increase the potential of the club. Consequently the first move towards promoting this important change will be made at the club's Annual General Meeting on the 4th

February 1995. If sufficient interest is shown to warrant and support such a move, then it is expected that pilot schemes will, at first, operate in those areas where numbers of members exist. Several other matters of interest, such as the breeding project, club insurance and several rule changes will be considered at the AGM. A field meeting will be held on the following day for shortwings and broadwings. Many members have, however, already cut short the season due to the continuing bad weather and difficulties in finding sufficient quarry, notably a shortage of rabbits in some areas. Many have expressed fears that this may be due to VHD (Chinese Rabbit Disease) but figures from the MAFF at the end of December have thankfully confirmed that the disease is almost entirely con-

finned to domestic rabbits at present (only five cases confirmed in wild rabbits).

Speakers on the following subjects are arranged for the next few meetings; Falconry and Raptor Safari in Africa, Taxidermy, hunting with Cheetahs, and Investigations into Wildlife Casualties. There will also be open discussions and debates on various subjects as required. The club currently holds meetings near Usk in South Wales and near Chester covering the North Wales/Midlands area. These meetings are informal, friendly and informative. Advice is freely available but the beer has to be paid for! Come along and see for yourself.

Subscriptions are £27.50 for individuals. For further details call the Secretary, Adrian Williams on 01443-206333.

OBITUARIES

REGINALD DAVID SMITH

1932 - 1995

Jim Chick

Reg Smith, falconer, broadcaster, conservationist and the founder and inspiration behind the Hawk Conservancy died in the Countess of Breknock Hospice, Andover, on the 10th January 1995 in his 63rd year. Reg was born and educated in the Andover area and had, from a very early age, an intense interest in all species of natural history. He would often recall his Sunday afternoon rambles with Uncle Fred and of how they would sit and watch a stoat or kestrel hunting. His love of wildlife was passionate and infectious and this, coupled with an outstanding ability to communicate, especially with children, accounted for his popularity with his audiences.



As a young man Reg was very involved with the Andover Young Farmers' Club and as Chairman worked closely with Hilary, who at that time was the secretary. This was to become a lifetime partnership and they were married in 1956 at Abbots Ann Church. In the early years of their married life they farmed the land that was, in 1966, to become Weyhill Wildlife Park and they raised the cash needed to make

this transformation possible, by selling the produce they grew, around the local villages. By 1980 the future of small zoos was looking bleak, Reg and Hilary decided to become a specialist bird of prey collection and the Hawk Conservancy as we know it today was started.

For many years Reg served on the Hawk Board and the BFSS Falconry committee, helping to frame much of the current legislation. We would travel up to London together much earlier than necessary in order that he could take me to the various art galleries which he so loved, in a vain attempt to instill in me some vestige of culture.

During his lifetime, Reg came into contact with many people from all walks of life. He was comfortable in any company and his influence had a profound effect on all. It was indeed a privilege for those of us who worked with him to call him our friend. His wit, humour and friendship will be sadly missed by the falconry fraternity and our thoughts are with Hilary, Martin, Ashley and the family at this time.

RONALD STEVENS "THE FALCONER GENTLE" Liam O'Broin

Ronald Stevens died peacefully on December 11th, 1994 aged 92, at his home in Bunnagippaun near Oughterard, Co. Galway, Ireland. Born in 1902 in England, Ronald lived at the family home, Walcott Hall in Shropshire. It was much later, 1956 in fact, when he settled in Ireland, having fallen in love with Connemara as a result of frequent fishing trips. He had by then established himself worldwide as an authority on Falconry and his books on the subject remain classics to this day. The fact that he received such acclaim was a surprise to the man, he loved writing for the pleasure of it - as his *raison d'être* was to clarify his thinking - success, acclaim was never sought by him. It was in his intellectual approach to falconry that Stevens impressed so many. Yes, he hawked - and very successfully. But in Ronald Stevens we had someone who thought it through as well. "Successful, consistent falconry at its best, demands a mental approach, a process of thinking out what one wants to do", he once said, and added "see it from the falcons point of view". Besides falconry, he also loved fishing and another one of his great passions was collecting wildfowl. By 1939 he had returned to England with a large wildfowl collection from Africa. This collection was given to Sir Peter Scott. That trip by Ronald to Africa at his own expense resulted in two years collecting pairs of exotic waterfowl hitherto not seen in England. He had in fact achieved his goal in twelve months. However the transport truck overturned near Mombasa and many of the collection were lost. Undaunted, and typical of his determination, Ronald turned back and spent a further year replacing the lost birds.

When he eventually came to live in the west of Ireland, he bought Fermoy Lodge. In the space of two decades Ronald and the house became synonymous with hospitality. Visiting falconers from the UK, Europe and North America stayed and hawked, returning regularly. Later, as Fermoy became too large for Ronald, now in his seventies, he moved a few miles closer to the village of Oughterard head, still in Connemara, in the townland of Bunnagippaun. It was there that I first met Ronald Stevens, and found myself travelling west one July day to stay at his home. As a result of that first meeting we became friends and corresponded regularly, until failing eyesight hampered his letter writing just two years before his death. I remember that first meeting with him very vividly:

"The house at Bunnagippaun, just a few miles into the Connemara hills from Oughterard village, was spacious and full of light from large windows. Two storied, and split-level, it lay tucked into a hillside overlooking two small lakes. Beyond the village in the distant landscape Lough Corrib looked like a finger of mercury running across the umber coloured landscape. The day of my arrival was windy and also, typical of Connemara, clouds in between bright blue changed continuously, rolling in the warm thermals high above.

My arrival was noisy. As the car rattled over the cattle grid, and then the soft crunching of tyres on the granite gravel driveway. Ronald Stevens rose from within the framework of a large picture window in the kitchen, and came outside in greeting. He was not tall but his frame, despite his age, suggested a well built and fit man in his younger years. His eyes were alert and shone with an enthusiastic greeting which matched his warm handshake. With the wind swirling around us we didn't know the sound of each others voices until inside the warm and calm interior of the kitchen. I was introduced to Peter Walsh,

Ronalds' houseman and then taken on a tour of the house. In contrast to the wildness of the landscape outside everything here was exceptionally bright and cheerful. Each window we came to, and there were many, gave the impression of an exhibition of paintings of the Connemara landscape. Peter, who has worked for Ronald since his early days at Fermoy, made tea and the chat began. The real conversation however began over dinner later that evening, and Ronald became quite animated as he remembered one thing, then the next. We talked of falcons and grouse in Scotland, hunting the sand grouse in Morocco. Then by the middle of the main course I was fascinated to find the conversation was about waterfowl. Very quickly I realised that this man, whom I came to meet was not just a falconer - but a great lover of every species of bird. Easily, knowledgeably, he talked, now about pigeons and then on to doves, racers and back to waterfowl. As we talked I could clearly see the boyish enthusiasm still obvious as he described his first real present - two tame ducks. He was then twelve. He recalled how the ducks eventually hatched two wild duck eggs which he had got.. "Oh!" he exclaimed in that typical burst of remembered delight, "I thought, now I have real ducks, not just ten-a-penny ones." Ronald's next problem was that they should have somewhere to swim. So he set off at twelve years of age and walked, with the complete family of ducks in a box, several miles to the nearest lake. There he set down his most prized possessions and watched with fascination as the family splashed about enjoying their new found freedom. As the conversation progressed, falcons always came to the surface and it was as a falconer that Ronald was unique. Perhaps also it is the scale and breadth of his experiences. The falcons he has flown, each is remembered. Its' image is etched into memory and brought to life again in an instant. "Oh yes, I remember that wonderful flight off the

Scilly Isles - it was during the war you see" Engrossed, I listened to Ronalds account of flying peregrine falcons at pigeons suspected of carrying weather reports from German submarines. He had been approached by the war office on the possibility of flying trained falcons at the offending pigeons. During his stay he was visited by some V.I.P.'s from the Air Ministry. To test out the effectiveness of the falcons, a pigeon was taken out to sea by a boat. "Rather a long distance I thought," he added "The falcon was somewhere up in the sky, they usually stayed up for several hours. However, I had lost sight of her and - very nearly the boat. Then, in my glasses from the cliff-top I saw a tiny dot skirting across the sea. It was the pigeon heading for the nearest landfall. Suddenly, the falcon came out of nowhere and struck it into the sea, then threw up and minutes later came back over my head."

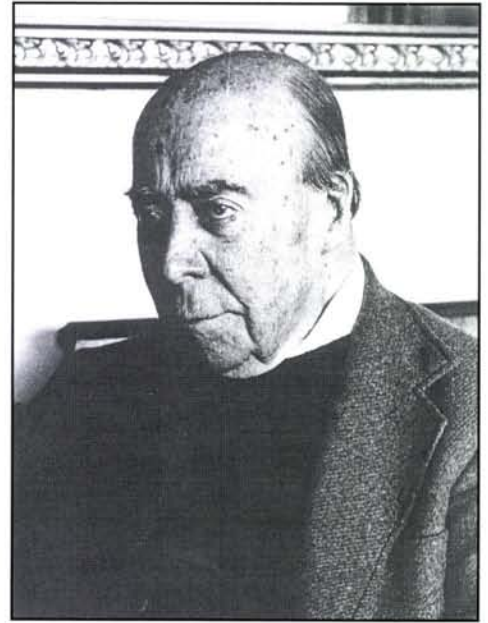
It was Ronalds insights into falcons, their behaviour and relationship with man, through his several books as said earlier, on that subject, which was to result in his becoming a considered expert worldwide. In particular observations on *Modern Falconry*, is still the classic work on the training and hunting of falcons at game. *Ghengis*, another classic featured yet another of his great pre-occupations, the Gyr falcon. However, for a look inside the man himself, his book *Laggard* gives us the greatest insights into his personality and character. Set in shropshire at Walcott Hall, *Laggard* contains, throughout

its pages a deep sense of place, a oneness with the author's environment in a very detailed way. Never boring or tedious, the descriptive narrative is clearly coming from a man with a deep sense of spirituality, he saw in everything around him the work of a greater, omnipotent God, and marvelled in that. The Very Rev. Anthony Previte, Dean of Taum, a close friend of Ronalds, in his homily address at the funeral service quoted from another of Ronalds books, *The Deep Sleep*.

"The psalmist sang, when I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars...what is man that thou art mindful of him...and visitest him?" This book, *The Deep Sleep*, is a personal collection of Ronalds feelings and ideas on religion and mans sense of God. He was undoubtedly a deeply spiritual man and had a profound sense of mortality. That in turn imbued in him a deep sense of satisfaction and pleasure in life itself.

Ronald Stevens is at peace, laid to rest in the small, ancient and tranquil graveyard at Kilcummin, Oughterard Co. Galway. He was laid there by relatives and friends, including John Morris who stood by the graveside with a hooded falcon - a tribute no doubt Ronald would have loved. He is at rest against the rugged backcloth of the majestic mountains of Connemara. His image and personality, a living

memory lives on in the minds and hearts of every person with whom he came into contact. for his close friends, particularly Peter Walsh, his bereaved brother William, sister Dot, niece and nephew, Susie and Adam, his passing is for a loved one. For his acquaintances and those who knew him but casually, the loss of a gentle, warm-hearted person. For falconers, he leaves us the rich legacy of his writings and they will continue to fascinate countless generations to come.



ANDREW MARK ELLIS WILDLIFE ARTIST

For regular subscribers to the *Falconers and Raptor Conservation Magazine* and visitors to the British Falconry and Raptor Fair at Althorp House, Northants, the name of Andrew Ellis will need no introduction from me. Andrew's magnificent paintings have been reproduced in the former magazine and admired by visitors to the latter fair for several years now. In fact, it was at the Falconers Fair where I first became spell-bound by Andrew's work. Unfortunately, I had already spent my spare cash on falconry books prior to encountering Andrew and his work.

I have subconsciously been interested in wildlife art since birth, for my father is an accomplished wildlife artist, several of his paintings adorning my walls as I write. But it is really during the last five years or so that I have become obsessed by it and begun to seriously collect and dream wildlife art. The names of Archibald Thorburn, Joseph Wolf, George Lodge and David Reid-Henry I grew up with, for being a practising falconer for over thirty years, the works of these fine artists are more of less synonymous with the sport, particularly Lodge and Reid-Henry for their many



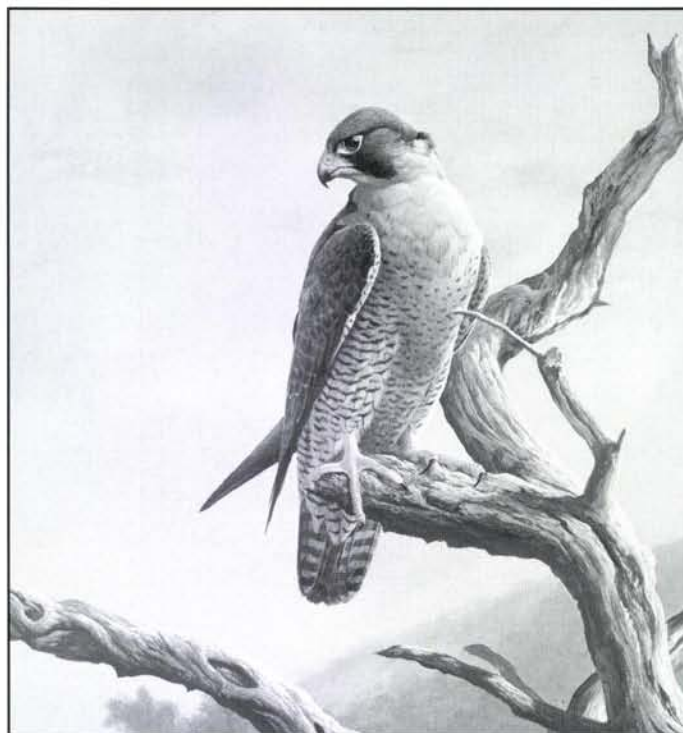
Immature Martial Eagle

paintings of raptors and their game bird quarry.

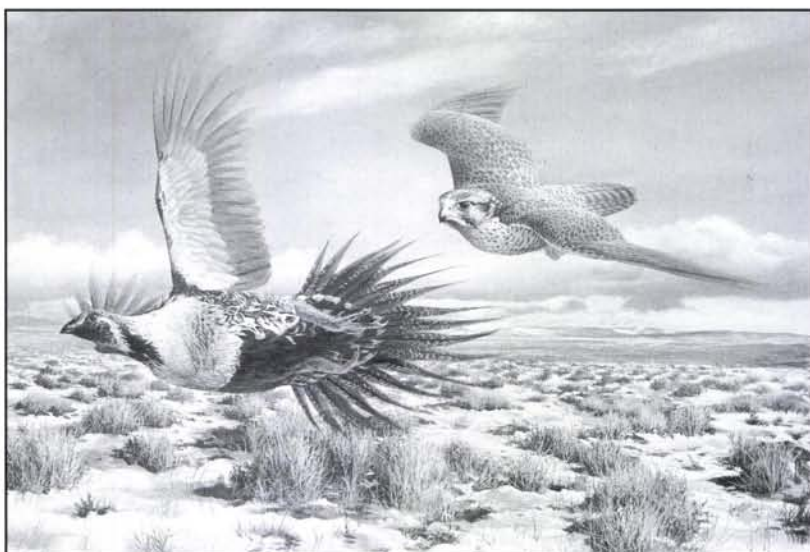
Today, these great artists have been replaced by others following in their footsteps and none more so than the young and highly talented West Country artist Andrew Ellis. Andrew was one of the main reasons for my attendance at the 1993 Falconers Fair, determined not to miss out this time and to come away from this prestigious event with an original painting by this master craftsman. And sure enough, I purchased two large originals in acrylic, one of a dark phase Gyr-Falcon on a rocky outcrop and the other of a pair of male Cheetahs stalking a herd of Wildebeest and entitled "Brothers In Arms" which my wife Gill particularly admired. Since the purchase of these two paintings, Andrew and I have become firm friends.

At the time of writing, Andrew, who is passionately fond of falconry, is flying an intermewed female Lanner and anyone viewing his raptor paintings will be well aware that he is a shrewd observer of their habits, form and function. His immaculately painted Peregrines really are stooping hard at Red Grouse across the moors and one is found willing his Gyr -Falcons to make contact with the huge Sage Grouse of the American plains. The underlying muscular structure over which the feathers are painted and the highly realistic and individual expressions on the hawks faces give testimony to this superb artists' powers of observation. If he were to paint your own bird, you would be under no illusions that it was just another of the same species, for Andrew captures the personality which we all know every hawk possesses as well as distinguishing feather details.

Born in 1971, Andrew had illustrated his first book "The Story of the Sporting Gun" by Ranulf Rayner, no mean feat for an experienced artist of many years standing, let alone one in his late teens. The book



Black Shaheen



Gyr/Peregrine hybrid stooping at a Grouse.

was subsequently published in 1991 and is lavishly illustrated throughout with Andrews lovely full plate watercolours, supported by smaller watercolours and pencil sketches. Also included are some very nice game bird plates by George Lodge and others. I subsequently purchased one of the original major paintings from this superb book to enhance my small but growing collection of Andrew Ellis paintings.

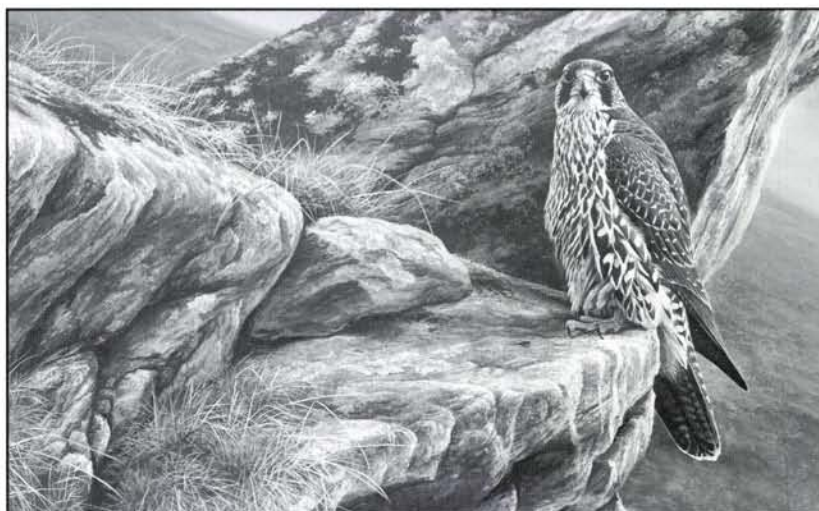
Andrew attended the Teign School in Kingsteignton before attending Exeter College of Art and Design and received GCSE O and A levels in Art and Geometrical Drawing. He also obtained a BTEC National Diploma in General Art and Design. In 1986 he was elected the BASC Junior Wildlife Artist of the Year. In 1992 he was a finalist in the Birdwatching Magazine Art Awards and in the same year received the Liquitox Award for the Best Work produced in Acrylics and Oils at the Wild Arts Exhibition. In 1993, again at the Wild Arts Exhibition he was awarded the Most Popular Exhibit Award.

Beginning his career using watercolours, and occa-

sionally oils, Andrew now paints almost exclusively in acrylics and is just as happy painting big cats, gorillas and wolves as he is painting his undoubted favourites, the birds of prey.

His artwork is now of such a high standard that the highly acclaimed international wildlife artist Alan Hunt, put him in touch with an American agent who now handles his work in the USA. In fact, a fair proportion of Andrews' work is now beginning to sell well across the pond and for increasingly higher prices. He has forthcoming exhibitions planned in the States and I rather suspect that fewer of his fine works will be seen in Britain in the not too distant future, due to the very real fact that good quality wildlife art, of the right kind, sells for far higher prices in America than in Britain where the market, it would appear, seems insatiable.

It would indeed be a great loss to the British wildlife art scene if we were to lose Andrew Ellis solely to the American market, but hopefully, for the immediate future at least, his work will continue to be published by the Falconers Magazine, be on view at the Falconers Fair and also, for those who cannot wait to visit the



Dark phase Gyr Falcon



Top left: Saker falcon on Arab block.

Top right: Sparrowhawk chasing Blackbird.

Right: Peregrine stooping at grouse.



Fair, the recently opened Wildlife Originals Art Gallery at Wollaton Park in Nottingham, run by the author and his wife Gill, houses a selection of his works for sale. Those who are lucky enough to own an original Andrew Ellis indeed have a gem to be treasured. Knowing of my passion for Golden Eagles, Andrew recently sent me a transparency of his latest painting of this magnificent bird, a superb rendering of a Golden Eagle on the moors. Few artists succeed in capturing the Golden Eagle properly but Andrew is an exception. Viewing this transparency was a real torment for me, for I knew that I could not purchase it. Like so many of his latest works, it was destined for his American agent to be used as a ceramic plate design, like his earlier rendition of a Bald Eagle. One day, when he is free from calendars, commissions and book work, I hope to commission a similar image of my favourite bird to adorn my own lounge. In the meantime, I continue to admire the Andrew Ellis originals in my private collection and consider myself indeed fortunate to have as a friend, this extremely modest yet magical artist.

David Glynne Fox



Tiercel peregrine on partridge.

Langley Mews
 Setting new standards in hawking equipment

For our colour brochure please send a large S.A.E to:

LANGLEY MEWS
 PLEYDELLS FARM
 SUTTON ROAD
 LANGLEY
 KENT ME17 3ND
 ENGLAND

TEL: 01622 863297
 FAX: 01622 861319

The Black Falcon of Australia

Richard Naisbitt.

The Black Falcon is one of Australia's more enigmatic falcons. Confined to the dryer regions of the Australian continent, this falcon is something of a virtuoso when it comes to versatility. Less heavily armed than the Peregrine, and with a lighter wing loading, the Black Falcon is extremely buoyant and her long tail betrays her trust in manoeuvrability, and the small muscular feet allow for a powerful grip when grappling with prey on the ground.

All in all, the Black Falcon is designed for taking ground based quarry, and with a feather texture that is extremely pliable, a good deal of knocks can be endured without any major breaks occurring. Tail chasing invariably comes with taking ground quarry and the Black Falcon is particularly tenacious, often pursuing birds for long distances literally flying down on their tar-



Her manoeuvrability is aided by her very long tail

gets. This is perhaps more of a vice than a virtue and telemetry is certainly a requirement when flying this falcon.

Of temperament, one could sum up the Black Falcon in a few words but they certainly deserve more - they can be deceitful, cunning and yet very honest, confusing and very frustrating. They can be given to tameness but often betray the dark side of their nature by having temper tantrums, uncontrolled moments of anger, when they will bate wildly and scream. Playfulness certainly is part of their nature. Mock stoops and chases suddenly break off when you are certain of a catch, and on occasion they will seize a small bird and let it go - (Playfulness?).

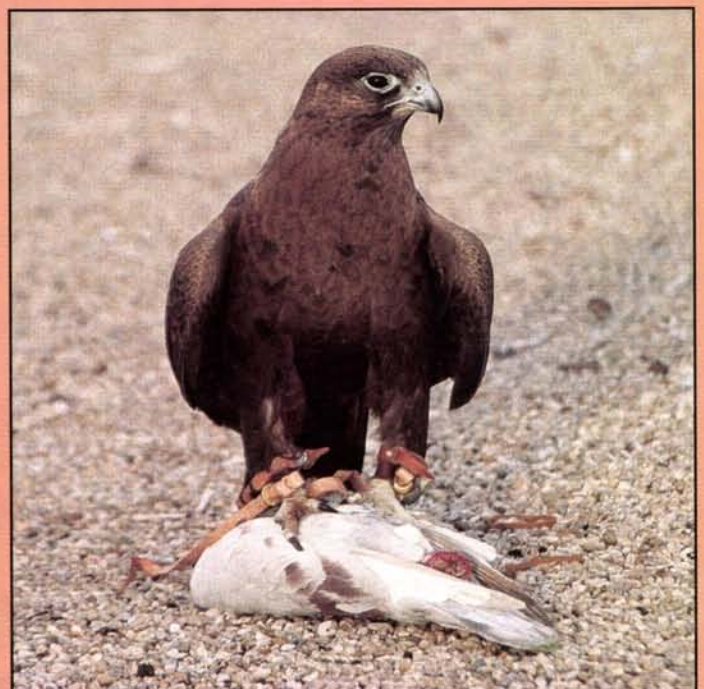
The Black Falcon does have a serious side that is not marred by temper fits or annoying playfulness - this serious attitude towards life makes this falcon a rewarding bird to fly, but it does come with all the other vices. Persistence in a chase and grim



A rewarding but frustrating raptor to fly.

tenacity when grappling with large quarry is just one of the falcons fortes. The Black Falcon seems to wait on naturally, making full use of its low wing loading. It can gain height incredibly fast and when pursuing flying quarry, such as ducks, it will turn and stoop much quicker than the Peregrine, but sadly it lacks the weight to deliver a devastating stoop. In this case manoeuvrability comes into play and a number of short stoops delivered in quick succession dispatches quarry just as efficiently.

The Black Falcon really should not be compared to any other falcon. Its flying style and personality are unique, but if one had to make a comparison then perhaps the Prairie falcon or the Saker would be good analogues. As I said earlier, one really should not compare this falcon to any other species. It is uniquely Australian and is superbly adapted to a nomadic lifestyle. It is a rewarding yet frustrating raptor to fly and I will certainly make the most of flying the bird I have before she is released. ★



Female Black Falcon on a wild pigeon.

VARIOUS COURSES AT THE

Having spent much of last year negotiating with Kent University to move their diploma course on raptors from Kent to The National Birds of Prey Centre I was delighted not only to have finally succeeded just before Christmas, but also to have 6 fully paid up bookings, which I am told by Dr Mike Nicholls, who is happily flying a Sparrowhawk on these cold days, is very good at this early stage.

However, for any of you who have dismissed the idea of this course through cost or believing it will be beyond you - read on. One of the things I have often stressed is that the more you know about the species or group of birds, the easier it is to train them, fly them, breed from them, look after them and generally have a greater understanding.

Although not many people who fly birds, be it owls, eagles, falcons, buzzards or whatever, are not likely to want a diploma on raptors, many of them, myself included, would benefit enormously from a greater understanding of how they work physically, how they lay eggs, how the eggs develop, how the birds fit into their own specialist environments and so on.

Consequently when Mike Nicholls and I were planning for the course to move here to the Centre, we also planned that parts of the course could be made available to anyone who wanted to improve their general knowledge of the birds they know and love.

The diploma course takes up 15 days in the first year, done here at the centre, having lectures from people such as Neil Forbes MRCVS, Dr Robert Kenwood, Dr Nick Fox, Dr David Bird and many others of the highest quality and

regard throughout the raptor conservation world. Then those considering going on to do a second year of study on their own at home, with a supervisor.

But for those not interested in taking a diploma, instead just in improving their knowledge and understanding of their birds, those 15 days are divided into three five day blocks and anyone can come and join one or more of the blocks. These cover:

Block 1. Basic raptor biology - where they fit in and generally how they work, physically and mentally.

Block 2. Captive aspects - Housing, management, breeding, health and nutrition etc.

Block 3 Covers the wild aspects - breeding, ecology, migration, conservation, release techniques and so on. Although some may think that this block is less useful to those of either flying or breeding birds, actually knowing what they do and need in the wild is surprisingly useful.

Each block costs £376 which is an absolute steal considering the quality of teaching and the information available. If you think you wouldn't understand it you are wrong. All the teachers are really good at making their subjects reachable to anyone, hell if I can understand it, most people can. I have no qualifications worth talking about. £376 is less than you will pay for many birds, its less than I charge for one of our falconry courses!! - but what a chance to be taught by brilliant people, in a nice setting, surrounded by 240 birds of prey and owls and people who know and love them and at the same time gain a greater knowledge of the birds you fly and

breed.

On a different note, yes we are running falconry courses, we have two in February and one in March. We can't run them during the late spring or early summer as I am too busy to teach.

However, as a surprise on these last three courses of our course season my father Philip Glasier will teach one of the mornings. He has moved back down to the area from Scotland - No he is not taking over, I bought the centre from him fair and square in 1985 (then I bought it again from my husband later on and now I am buying it back from the bank!!) It is and always has been my Centre until I turn it charitable or win the lottery! YES!! However, I am sure that during the summer, father will be around occasionally for those who would like to talk to him, and as I said, he will be teaching in February and March here on our falconry courses.

So there we are, I look through the window as my staff freeze their toes off feeding warmed food to the birds. I see white frosted fields lying in bright sunlight, its supposed to rain later - great! A buzzard gets chased across the field by two crows, I wonder which of my birds will be down to weight after the Christmas break as they sit in the Indoor Hawkwalk, warm on their heated perches. I hope all the courses will be well booked and enjoyed by all. I hope for a wonderful breeding season (as I always do each year), although two pairs that should already have laid have not. I refuse to be got down by this, I face our 28th year in existence with as much hope as ever and I wish all of you a wonderful, prosperous and Happy New Year with well, happy and healthy birds.

NATIONAL BIRDS OF PREY CENTRE

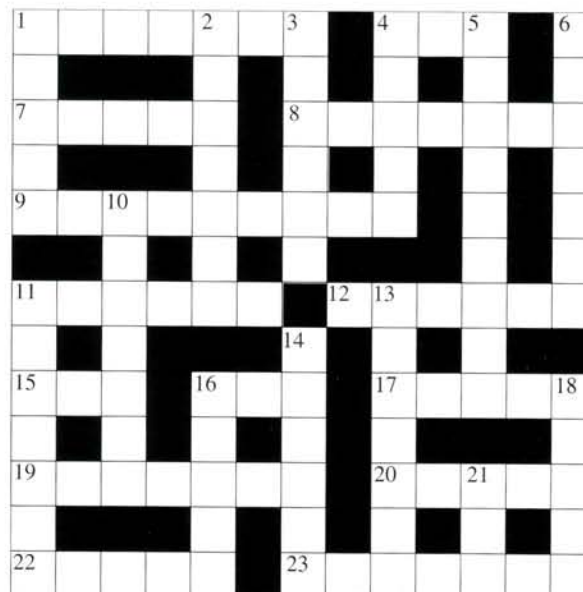
ACROSS

- 1 Masculine (7)
- 4 Vital Fluid (3)
- 7 Classical Place to Give Birth (5)
- 8 Without Fragrant Irises (2,5)
- 9 Subordinate Subject (9)
- 11 Lacking in Richness or Strength (6)
- 12 Utter (6)
- 15 Feminine (3)
- 16 Thrice (3)
- 17 To turn or Set or Become Turned (5)
- 20 Disporged Following a Meal (7)
- 22 Items of Enticement (5)
- 23 Offspring in 7 (7)

DOWN

- 1 Fashion (5)
- 2 Safety Line (7)
- 3 Falco Biarmicus (6)
- 4 To Hunt Game with a Gun (5)
- 5 Held in High Esteem, Worldwide (9)
- 6 Large Accipiter (7)
- 10 Strutting Females (7)
- 11 As Opposed to Surgery (7)
- 13 Accommodation (7)
- 14 Petty (6)
- 16 Attempts (5)
- 18 Numbers to Remember (5)
- 21 Away From the Wind (3)

CROSSWORD COMPETITION

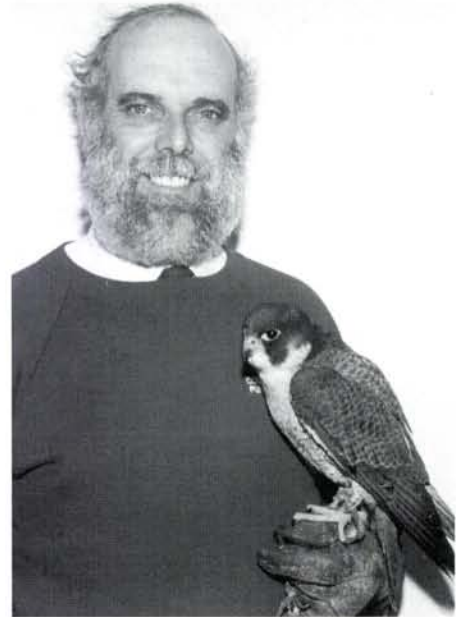


1st & 2nd PRIZES. DUCK DRI FALCONRY WAISTCOATS

Falconry Diaries for
five runners-up.
Also Ten lucky
entrants will win
Tickets to the
Falconers Fair.
28th & 29th May

To enter simply complete
the crossword and write
the answers on a sheet of
paper or postcard and
send, with your name,
address & telephone
number to:
The Falconers Magazine,
20, Bridle Road, Burton
Latimer, Kettering,
Northants. NN15 5QP
Closing date 15th March.

FACTS ON FALCONERS



Jim Chick with

Jim Chick is, or should be, well known to almost every body in falconry. Salisbury born and bred, he is very active, both as a practising falconer and in working hard to secure the future of falconry. He is a past Secretary, Director and Chairman of the BFC and is current Chairman of the Hawkboard and a member of BFSS Falconry Committee.

His hobbies include; Amateur Radio, fly fishing, shooting, hunting and good food. He is married to Liz, former secretary of the Hawkboard and has one daughter Angie.

The first question I asked him was how old he was to which he replied: "Just past my first half century". I thought maybe I was on a fast road to nowhere but as you can see the rest of his answers are very informative.

How did you come to start Falconry?

Before being introduced to falconry my field sports background was hunting and shooting and as a family we were very involved in country pursuits. My first contact with the sport came when I met Jack Mavrogordato and became friendly with his falconer, Derrick Moore. After several unsuccessful applications, I was eventually accepted as a member of the British Falconers Club in 1968. At that time the total membership was about 200 members.

What was your first bird and how did you learn falconry?

Like many of my contemporaries, I started with what must be the most unsuitable of all beginners, the Sparrowhawk. The only reason the bird survived the initial training was the enormous help and supervision I was given. There were no courses or videos and very few modern, relevant books available to guide the beginner at that time.

What bird are you flying at the moment?

I am lucky to be able to spend most days flying birds, this enables me to enjoy flying a range of different birds and quarry. I am currently flying a female Goshawk and training a falcon which will join the rook team in March.

What is your favourite bird and why?

Over the years I have been able to fly

most species of birds, both conventional hunting species as well as what are now termed, exotics, and for a number of reasons the peregrine and the goshawk have no serious rival for the type and style of hawking that interest me.

What is your least favourite bird and why?

I personally have no interest at all in hybrids, the few that I have had contact with have, in the main, been ill-mannered and prone to temper tantrums and, I can see no valid reason, from a sporting point of view, for producing a bird which flies faster and overhauls the quarry in a shorter time. Natural selection has produced an excellent product and these birds are well matched to the chosen quarry. It is sporting flights that we should be striving to provide, not larger bags.

What are the biggest changes you have noticed in falconry since you started?

Falconry has seen the greatest rate of change during the last 30 years. When I started all our birds came from the wild. There were no import licences or restrictions, no regulations or registration or the Wildlife & Countryside Act and virtually no public awareness of our existence, never mind the sport of falconry.

What type of hawking do you prefer?

I can, and do, enjoy hunting many species, but by far the most enjoyable is rook hawking on the Salisbury Plain. This land is still as good today as it was when the Old Hawking Club held

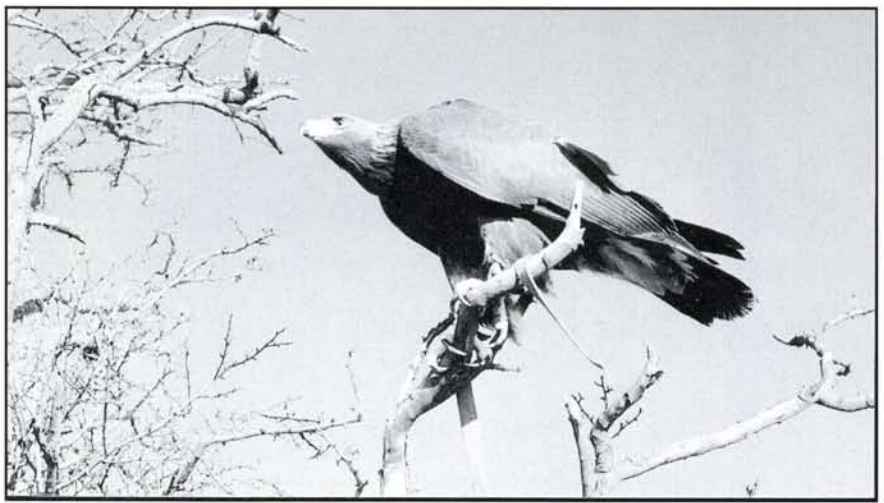
their spring meetings here and it is a great privilege to be able to use it.

If you had the power what law would you introduce/change/abolish within falconry?

Having been actively involved in the current legislation for much of my falconry career I feel that some of the problems, such as the dangerous practice of flying birds to childrens heads etc., may be tackled with the introduction of legislation. However, many other aspects of bird of prey keeping, such as welfare and husbandry, are, perhaps, better addressed in a more low-key, advisory way. We are still one of the least regulated countries in the world when it comes to falconry and I hope we will enjoy this freedom for many years to come.

Who would you most like to go hawking with - past or present?

I have been very lucky and have been able to enjoy some of the best that our sport has to offer, both in the quality of flights and in company and friendship of the falconers I have hawked with over the years. The one falconer from the last generation that I would have liked to have been able to meet is E.B.Mitchell. His book, the Art & Practice of Hawking, published in 1900, is witness to his great depth of practical knowledge of rook and lark hawking. By way of contrast, my daughter Angie, who has lived her whole life with hawks and the falconry fraternity, is great fun to hawk with. There must have been many times in the past when both Angie and my wife Liz have been exasperated and yet I have always enjoyed, not only their passive acceptance, but their active co-operation, for which I will always be grateful.



A TOUCH OF
FROST

DAVID WILSON

My most memorable days out hunting have started with one of those solid, crisp, white frosty mornings, and this day was no exception.

The host was Tizi Hodson with her 7 and a half month old Golden Eagle, Xarra and her 5 year old female Ferruginous Hawk Busby, or if you are in America Ferruginous Eagle. Tizi's female Kestrel, Xraysay came along to keep and eye on things from the Land Rover

dashboard. The place, partially snow covered, (from a freak storm of approximately 45 minutes the day before), but frozen, Cambridgeshire countryside with a -10 chill factor. Inhaling the air took your breath away and any flesh not covered was taken hold of by Jack and his chill factor. The only greenery was about 2 acres of sugar beet, the last to be harvested.

The quarry, hares. The baby, as Tizi calls him, a 9lb male Golden

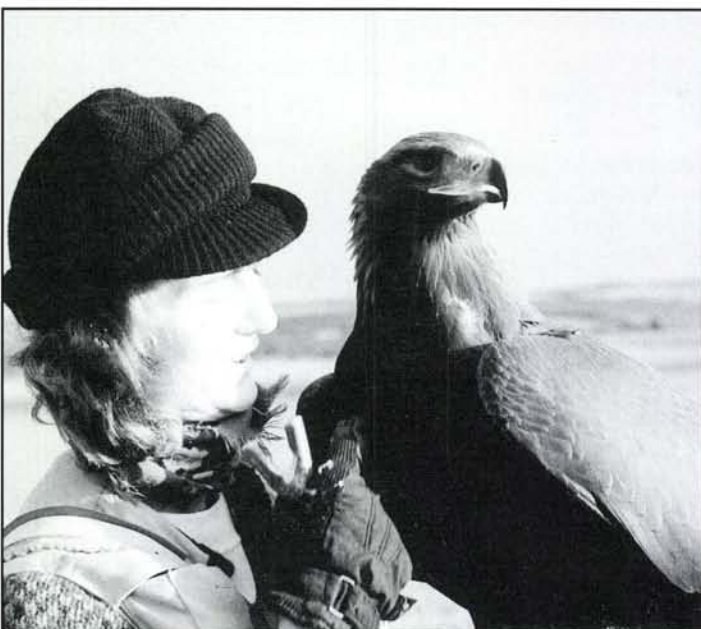
Eagle. He has been entered on rabbit and a few hares. The main reason for today is to find some more hares for him .

On walking just a few yards into the sugar beet Tara, being an imprint and constantly yapping, stopped, which meant he'd spotted something. He left the fist and with his 8ft wing span was soon airborne and heading straight across the green cover. There was a hare moving up the edge of the sugar beet, Tara was just about to connect when the hare jinxed and evaded the Eagle's feet, which by now were firmly embedded in the soil. The Eagle, after watching the hare disappear through a hedge, started to scan the sugar beet, he then rose up into the air, at the same time moving across the ground, to go some 200 yards down-wind only to return up-wind and across our paths, we then started beating the cover in the hope of serving him. He had a few attempts but the hares can do a very good disappearing act even in this sparse cover.

Xarra was in the air quartering back and forth with all the ease

and grace one associates with a Golden Eagle. As we neared the end of the cover a hare got up and did what hares do best, ran up hill into the wind. Xarra gave chase but the incline and head wind were too much for him, so, being out paced, he alighted in the snow covered field. He was called to the fist and rewarded for his efforts. After a short rest two more hares were flown to no avail. Then he did something which he has never done before; on missing the second hare he stood in the field looking around only to rise and fly about 2ft off the ground in a very determined fashion, for about 150 yards. He struck a hare crouching in its form. At that exact moment the hare leapt forward, avoiding the vice like grip of the Eagle.

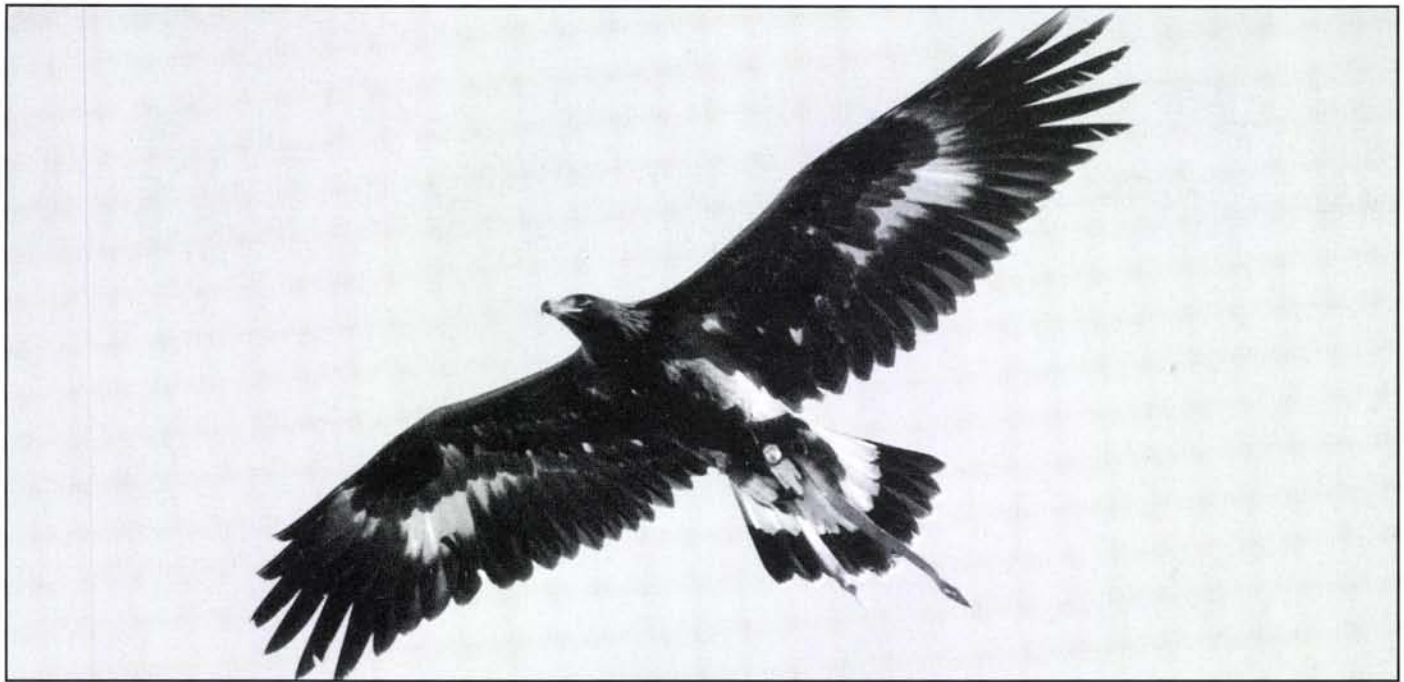
On to some more ground, Xarra was tiring by now. We had been out about 1 and a half hours and for most of that time he was in the air. Three more hares were put up but had too much head start. On returning to the Land Rover Xarra was on the wing, quartering the ground, when over a hedge he folded his wings and



Tizi, my host, with her "baby"?



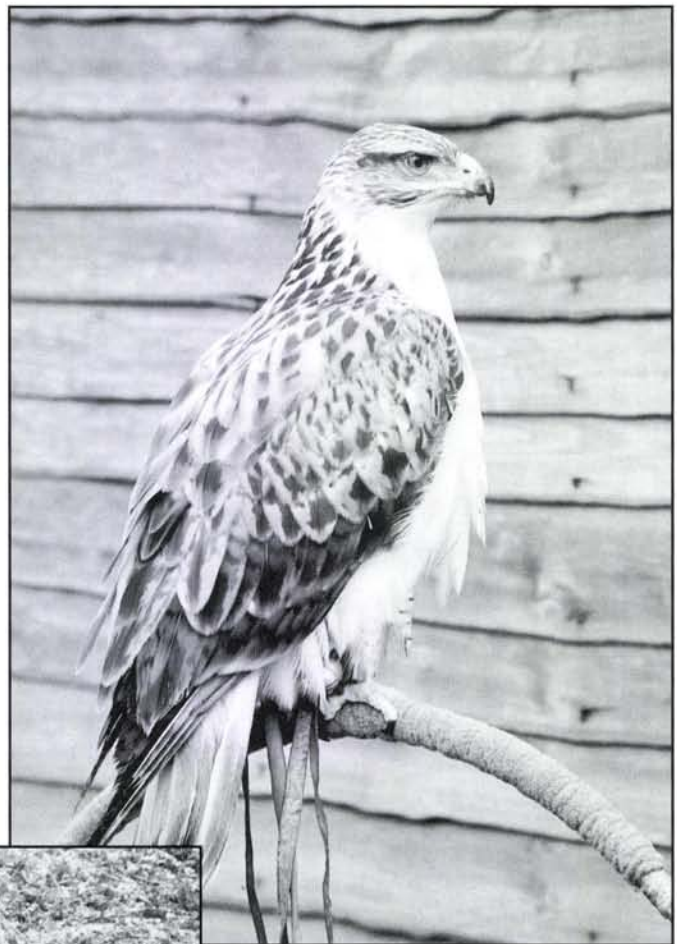
Success at last, Buzz on his rabbit.



put in a vertical stoop taking a rabbit running along the hedge row. He had worked hard and so was rewarded with his catch. Next we flew the 3lb Ferruginous Hawk, a third of the weight of Xarra and with very small feet but in her 5 years she has had numerous rabbits and pheasants and become very adept at hunting hares. She soon learnt that there is an easier way than chasing them around the countryside. She will fly into a field, take stand and look around and with those excellent eyes she can spot a hare squatting in its' form and on doing so she will take flight, just above the ground, on reaching the hare she throws up only to come down and strike it from above. Unfortunately with her small feet and lacking body weight (half that of most hares), nine times out of ten the hare, after a rodeo style bucking bronco, trots off, a little shaken but not stirred. Tizi has become very quick off

the mark as she has approximately 10 seconds to assist Buzz. Her athletic skills were tested on the third hare with Buzz thrown some 3 to 4 ft in the air but managing to hold fast. After this exciting bout the hawk and hare were motionless, just as Tizi approached the hare gave one last kick for freedom, which for one very tired and bruised bird was too much and the long legged critter trotted off to fight another day. Buzz' eyes had fixed on something else 200 yards away, 20 yards in from the hedge. Off the fist she went, into stealth mode. This time it was a rabbit, and although it put up a good fight it was held fast and was her's. Buzz was rewarded well for her battles. From a 9lb Golden Eagle to a 3lb Ferruginous Hawk to an 8oz Kestrel who was to end the day being flown to the lure for her daily exercise. The day would not have been the same without

'A touch of frost'.



Top: Xaara spent approximately two hours on the wing.
Above: On this day Buzbys three pound weight and small feet were no match for the hares.
Left: Tizi politely asks Xaara for a share in his catch.

OPPOSITE PAGE
Top Left: Xraysay, a female Kestrel, keeps a watchful eye on the others.
Top right: Surveying the territory, Xaara, at 9lb, is a very large male Golden Eagle.

The Tawny Owl

To most people, including most bird-watchers, the Tawny Owl is little more than a voice in the night. It may be our commonest and most widespread owl (except in Ireland, where it does not occur), but it remains a difficult bird to see. Of all our owls, it is the most thoroughly nocturnal: in my experience even the Long-Eared Owl is easier to see in daylight, and is usually much more visible at a daytime roost.

A Tawny Owl I chanced upon a few days before I began writing this piece was, I realised afterwards, the first I had actually seen for three months. Like many of those I have seen during the last few years, it was a hunting bird perched near the roadside. Others have been glimpsed floating through the car's headlight beams, or have been found in what were probably temporary daytime roosts after being given away by the frantic and noisy mobbing behaviour of the local small birds.

When my old dog was still alive, our late evening walks on a regular circuit around the village produced many sightings -

nothing like daily, but often enough for me to be able to identify a few regular perches and song posts. One song post we found was on the topmost spring of an ornamental fir in a big garden and I shall never forget a wonderful session watching a hooting male there and noting how he bowed forwards deeply with each new song-phrase. I say "we", incidentally, because the dog was really tuned into owls: most of our contacts were by ear and he got so used to me stopping to listen and look whenever an owl called he would prick up his ears, look up at me and wag his tail. He did the same whenever a Tawny Owl called on a television programme.

Most of what I have learned about our local Tawnies has come from listening to them, although this has become a lot less systematic than it was in my dog-walking days. Fortunately, the Tawny Owl has been intensively studied, both in the UK and in Europe, so it has not been difficult to interpret my findings in the light of what is known about the birds generally.

Tawny Owls are strongly territorial. The males proclaim themselves as territory-holders with a very distinctive and far-carrying advertising call (or song) which, thanks as much to radio and television as the birds themselves, is probably the most famous sound of the British night. It begins with a single, clear note which is followed after a few seconds by a wavering sequence of about four syllables; this is traditionally described as "hooting", but somehow that does not do it justice. With practice, it is not too difficult to identify individual males by slight, but consistent, differences in their calls and this makes it possible to find out how many territory-holders there are in a given area.

My dog-walking circuit, I discovered, included parts of three territories, which as far as I can tell have remained stable for the last 15 years. Once or twice, I suspected a stranger in one or other of the territories, but it was hard to be certain about this: it was necessary to remember that females hoot too, if less consistently (and, to the human ear, less well) than males, and also that individual birds can vary their calls quite a lot. The male Tawny owl who calls regularly outside my office at Sandy certainly does so.

These advertising calls may be heard at any time of the year, but they peak from late winter into early spring, as the pair prepare for breeding, and again in late autumn and early winter as winter territories are confirmed or squabbled over. There can be a lot of variation in this seasonal timing among my local birds, probably related to weather and, I have sometimes thought, the timing of breeding: the young of the year depend on their parents for two or three months after leaving the nest, so the period during which they are finally chased out of the territory must vary a lot from year to year.

Advertising-calls apart, Tawny Owls have a very wide vocabulary; the best known of their calls is probably the loud, ringing "Ke-wick" which both sexes use as a contact note. This is easily the most common owl call heard at night, but surprisingly few people seem to know it. On three or four occasions I have been lucky enough to hear (and once watch) the more intimate phases of courtship, which were accompanied by the most extraordinary variety of cooing, soft bubbling and twit-



Tawny Owls prefer to nest in trees but will also nest on the ground.

Photo: R.T.Smith

Royal Society for the Protection of Birds

tering noises. Most of these were quiet, subdued calls which I would never have heard at all had I not been very close to the birds. More recently, early winter territorial squabbling was very much a feature of the early part of the night around the field edge behind my house. The two or three birds involved kept this up for several weeks, producing the most amazing wailing, screeching and several caterwauling noises.

While I have managed to build up a fairly good picture of the territorial behaviour of our local birds, and have found and watched fledged young in several years, I have little idea of what these owls eat. Direct observation is almost impossible and so far I have not come across a reliable source of pellets. What few clues I have come from occasional sightings of hunting birds in situations which suggest they were looking for voles or mice, and others when the owls were clearly after roosting small birds. Once I was lucky enough to see a Tawny Owl attempt to take a roosting Song Thrush from thick garden shrub.

The chances are that our village birds catch a lot of voles and mice, but that they also eat a fair number of birds. This would fit the pattern shown by numerous detailed studies of Tawny Owl prey carried out in Europe over the last 40 years or so. There is a good deal of local and regional variation, and there are also some seasonal differences, but what all these studies show is that in their original habitat - woodland - Tawnies feed mainly on small mammals. Away from woodland, their diet becomes more varied and the more urban the habitat, the more birds are eaten. London Tawny Owls exist almost entirely on bird prey.

What all these studies tell us is that the Tawny Owl is an adaptable and versatile bird, able to prey on whatever is locally available. This, in a nutshell, is the secret of its' success and explains its ability to thrive in built up areas, even in the very heart of large cities. Nationally, the Tawny Owl is doing well. Some are still illegally killed by a minority of ignorant people, but otherwise it has no real conservation problems.

Mike Everett



Apart from hunting voles and mice Tawny Owls take a large number of roosting birds.. Photo: Richard Revels

THE NATIONAL BIRDS OF PREY CENTRE

Newent Glos. GL18 1JJ

Falconry Course

We have places on the 5 day courses for this season. Feb 6-10. Feb 20-24. Mar 13-17. Includes handling techniques, lure flying, hunting, telemetry, falconry furniture, housing, general welfare and care, veterinary aspects, a morning by Philip Glasier.

Falconry Experience Day

A day learning a little on handling and flying Harris Hawks including an afternoon out hunting.

Please Note: these do not give enough information to take up falconry, but are a good taster for a course, or just a great day out. Phone 0531 820286 for further information.

**ARAB STYLE
BLOCKS
FROM £15.00
BRASS 'D'
SWIVELS SM. £3.00
MED. £3.50
LGE. £4.00
EX-LGE. £4.50**



**GALVANIZED BOW PERCHES.
ALSO TRADE & CLUB ENQUIRIES
TEL 0246 237213**

The Owl's Nest Bookshop

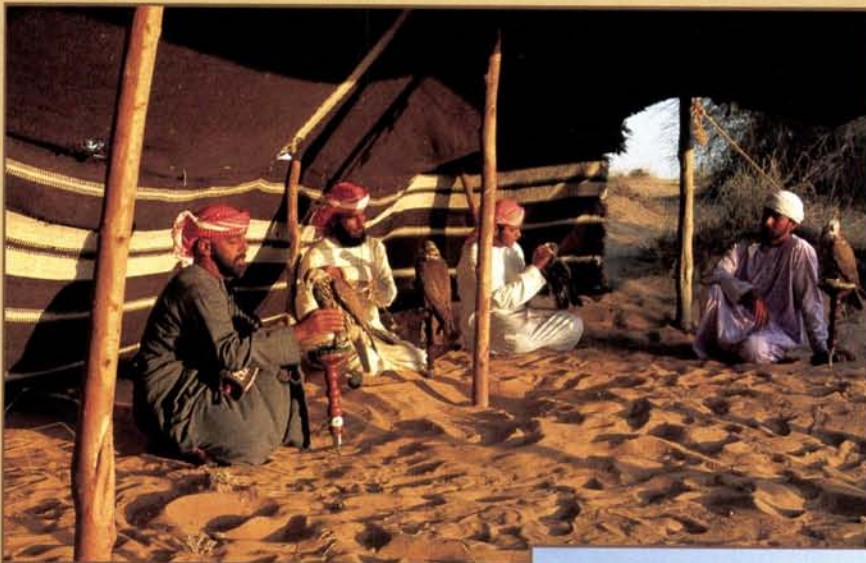
Birdworld, Holt Pound, Nr. Farnham Surrey
GU10 4LD Tel 01420-22668

Over 1000 BIRD books stocked - Open 364 days a year



A Bond With The Wild	No.84521	£30.00
African Birds of Prey	No. 25158	£17.50
Barn Owls In The British Isles	No.18728	£7.99
Barn Owls	No.9290X	£19.95
Barn Owl, The	No.10321	£16.00
Birds Of Prey	No.11313	£14.99
Birds Of Prey	No.63817	£12.95
Birds Of Prey Of Europe, North Africa & Middle E	No.91768	£14.99
Birds Of Prey Of Greece	No.83512	£7.30
Birds Of Prey Of North America, Pocket Guide	No.81297	£6.95
Birds Of Prey Of Southern Africa	No.23821	£30.00
Birds Of Prey Of The British Isles	No.97826	£16.99
Birds Of Prey (1), Life Histories Of North America	No.09318	£10.95
Birds Of Prey (2), Life Histories Of North America	No.09326	£10.95
Birds Of Prey, African	No.80648	£27.00
Birds Of Prey, Eastern North American	No.80272	£9.95
Birds Of Prey, North American Raptors	No.81314	£19.95
Birds Of Prey, Veterinary Aspects Of Captive	No.02044	£17.50
City Peregrines	Frank, Saul	No.9330X £19.95
Eagles, Vanishing	Burton, P & Boyer, T.	No.95754 £14.95
Enchanting Owl	Toops C.	No.01877 £16.95
Falconer, The Complete	Beebe F.	No.92532 £39.95
Falconer, The Modern	Durman Walters D.	No.03683 £19.95
Falconry	Parry Jones J.	No.01055 £16.99
Falconry Manual, A	Beebe F.	No.99782 £11.95
Falconry & Hawking	Glasier P.	No.55551 £35.00
Falconry & Pakistan	Observations On Cox J.	No.00009 £9.95
Falconry, A Manual Of	Woodford	No.5614X £12.50
Falconry, Art & Practice	Ford E.	No.22487 £17.99
Falconry, Principles &	Practice Upton R.	No.32623 £15.95
Falcon, The Hunting	Haak B.	No.92923 £19.95
Flight Of The Falcon	Tennessee M.	No.03667 £19.95
Great Grey Owl: Phantom Of The Northern Forest	Nero R.	No.46736 £9.95
Hawk In The Hand	Glasier P.	No.70742 £14.95
Hawking Ground Quarry	Hollinshead M.	No.93202 £19.95
Hawks	Clark	No.41129 £9.99
Hawks In Flight	Duane P.	No.10228 £7.99
Kestrel, Seasons With The	Riddle G.	No.22436 £16.95
Lords Of The Air	Shrub M.	No.12785 £9.99
Owls	Page & Morton	No.74071 £8.95
Owls	Hoskings E. & Flegg J.	No.16012 £12.99
Owls Of Europe	Mead C.	No.83596 £7.99
Owls Of The Northern Hemisphere	Mikkola H.	No.10348 £21.00
Owls Of The World	Vooos, K.H.	No.94937 £45.00
Peregrine Falcon	Boyer T. & Hume R.	No.81599 £18.95
Peregrine Falcons	Ford E.	No.21053 £45.00
Rage For Falcons	Savage C.	No.49730 £16.95
Raptor Biomedicine	Bodio S.	No.88266 £11.50
Raptor Conservation Today	Redig Cooper Remple	No.71643 £31.00
Romancing The Falcon	Chancellor, Rd	No.0333X £30.00
The Barn Owl	Weiss S.	No.16609 £10.95
Training Birds Of Prey	Parry Jones J.	No.23491 £16.99
		No.0142X £16.99

1000 BIRD TITLES IN STOCK. SEND FOR NEW FREE CATALOGUE
P+P per book up to £8 - 80p, £8 and up 10%, max per book £2.50, max per order £3.95



HAWK DES HA

In Arabia the desert hare or *errneb*, is hunted in two ways. One of the most skilled ways is to track it in the sand. After a windy night in *Rub al Khali*, the vast Empty Quarter, the sand has moved and it is possible to pick up tracks which are only an hour or two old. Alternatively, the trackers get up at about 4am and drive around the hunting area, towing a bush behind the car. Then, at dawn, we go out again and, picking out the fresh car tracks by the bush marks, we follow until we find hare tracks over the tyre prints. Then we know that we have the tracks of a hare which was ready to find a seat for the day. We follow this trail, seeing where the hare has fed, and judging how long ago by the hardness of the droppings. When the foot prints are in pairs, very close together and soft, the hare is near its chosen seat. History is written in the sand. The braces of the falcons hood are loosened and the last string jess or *sabook*, previously attached by a sheetbend bow to the leash or *mursel*,



is untied. Eyes strain to spot the motionless hare crouching under a low camel-browsed bush. Then a cry goes up 'Dormuk! Dormuk!' (Between us!), the hood is whipped off and the saker held high. A moments hesitation and she is off, with the hare disappearing like a pixie through the scrub, bounc-

ing against its shadow across the open ground. Its route marked by the stoops of the falcon and the cries of the falconers. Just as the hare, the falcon and their two shadows all converge at once, the hare throws itself up into the air like a rag doll, the falcon passing harmlessly through the gap between the hare and its shadow. Sometimes it looks as though it will be caught for sure, but a skidding turn sprays sand as it scoots into a bush. As the falcon turns over to dive in, out comes the *errneb* throwing her out of position and making her pant in the overpowering heat. the hare's course describes a large circle but the falcon is fit and a stoop in some open ground tumbles it. In a moment all is over and the falconer runs up and dispatches it with his



Top: Manning the passage Sakers.

Middle: Tracking hares at dawn in Rub al Khali.

Bottom: Picking up a Jurnaas from a hare.

KING VERT RES



knife, murmuring the prayer *Bis'm Allah* (In the name of God). Back at camp it is now too hot to continue hawking and we cook our hares with vegetables on a bed of rice and eat them with our hands. The saker gets the tongue, brain and liver, she maintains a steady weight on this ration in this climate. Curiously she needs to be sharper for hares than for houbara, even though the erneb is small, like a cotton-tail with big ears. Alternatively, the Arabs use saluki dogs to go steadily through the scrub, checking likely bushes by scent. Often the hare, on hearing the approaching falconers, sneaks away and moves quietly ahead (*insellet*) so you cannot come up to it by tracking. The saluki overcomes this problem. Once the hare is roused, the chase is on and the dog keeps the hare moving, working in partnership with the falcon. At the end of the flight the dog guards the falcon from eagles until we arrive. This is a harsh land with death always just around the corner for the unwary or unlucky.



Extracted from: Fox N.C. 1995.
'UNDERSTANDING THE
BIRD OF PREY'.
Hancock House, Blaine
Washington.

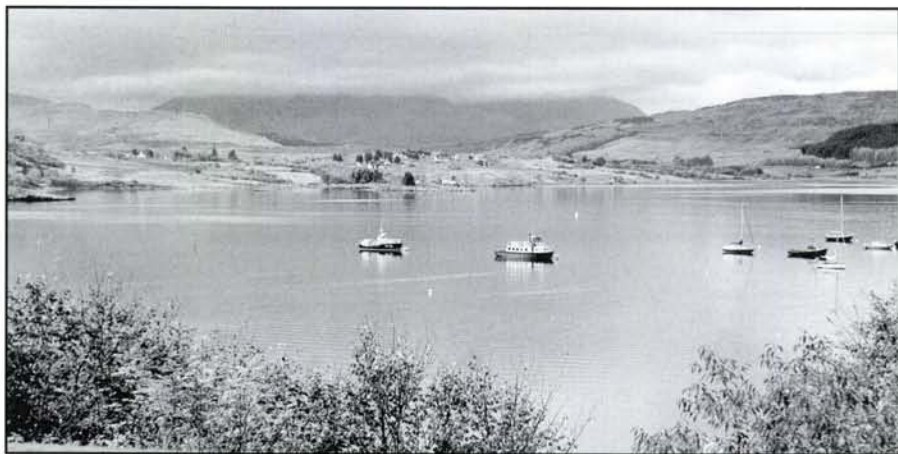
*Top: Hawking with camels is rare now
in Arabia.*

*Middle: Success and all have hare for
dinner.*

*Bottom: After hawking, brewing up
Gower.*

Four days on the Isle of Skye was the Scottish Hawking Clubs venue at the end of October. This was our first 4-day meeting and, judging from its success, will probably not be our last. We had permission to hawk over the whole of the North of the Island, so we had plenty of space to keep groups separated. Although the Sporting had declined greatly recently, we were told we would be guided to where the quarry was.

I arrived on Thursday night along with a few of the stalwarts, so we could be up fresh for the morning after a good nights rest. This we never got as the hotel bar wouldn't let us go until the early hours. So much for good intentions. Friday dawned cloudless, dry and with not a breath of wind. Ideal Hawking conditions. We left at 10.30 am leaving instruction as to our whereabouts for any late comers, and arrived 15 minutes later at our first flying ground. Iain Campbell had been here during Thursday on his recce of the Island and had found plenty of rabbits. He even caught one with his Harris which he conveniently had about his person. After about 1/2 hour walking with not a rabbit seen, we felt things were not as they should be, so we stopped to take stock of the situation. While passing around the flask, some rabbit fur was noticed and on further examination alongside the found fur were 2 jawbones and the two back feet. This was a very recent Eagle kill. We decided that this was why nothing was above ground, so we headed back to the cars. While driving away, no more than 500 yards from where we had parked and almost out of sight sitting on a fence post was a very contented Golden Eagle sunning himself and quite happy with life so we left him and moved on to the next piece of ground. We eventually found a promising bit at the bottom of an almost sheer rock-face amongst some un-frosted bracken. Rabbits were to be found lying out in the bracken and when put under pressure would break out over the open ground to get to their holes. A good bit of sport was had here with some extremely good chases we also picked up quite a few spectators from the road that passed close by who appreciated seeing the birds fly, by mid-afternoon all the rabbits were either under-ground or in the bag and as we didn't have any ferrets with us we retired back to the hotel to meet those that had arrived during the day, and get some much needed sustenance. As we got back so did



Portree Bay

the first long-wing group who had been out and bagged the first grouse of the meeting.

Saturday morning saw virtually everyone present (in body if not in mind, I heard the bar shut at 4am) and perfect weather. Conditions as yesterday, the short-wingers left a 10.30am and I waited behind to go out with the falcons, before we left I took the Eagle out to try and find a hare, about 10 of us walked up one side of a small valley, with there being no wind I had to carry the bird, not something I relish but I kept above everyone with the dog working ahead and below me. The one and only hare we saw I virtually trod on and it made a big mistake by unusually running downhill, the eagle had it before it covered fifty yards, not the best of flights.

The moor we were taken to for the falcons was above a young plantation so it was quite difficult walking. A few of the spectators didn't make it so they retired back to the cars, the rest of us persevered to get to the top. The dogs worked extremely hard to find birds as there were not that many about. We also put up a nice flock of 50 Golden Plovers but unfortunately no falcons were up at the time. Andy Garlic's cast of tiercels were the star performers. In their fifth season they know their business and brought a brace of Grouse to book. They made it look so easy. Andy McDonalds 1st year falcon was unlucky not to catch her grouse but she will have learned a valuable lesson and will know better next time. When we returned to the hotel a mostly happy bunch of short-wingers had had a good day with a good bag of bunnies and a hare caught by Mike Rafferty's female Harris Hawk.

Sunday arrived wet and windy but us hardy

(some would say foolish) falconers decided we would try and find some sport. The short-wingers went out to find a sheltered spot which they did with difficulty. They all had flights but had to retreat back to the hotel by lunch-time, soaked! I took my eagle out along with John McDonnell and his Verreaux Eagle, to a steep glen in the centre of the island, it was raining quite hard and as I had volunteered to fly first I cast the bird off. The wind helped give the eagle lift but within 30 minutes he was soaked and had found a stunted rowan tree to shelter in. We decided to call it a day and go to see if the falcons were going to fly. The only life we saw here was one of the resident eagles disappearing through the clouds never to be seen again. The falcons went out after lunch when the rain had abated slightly. Quarry was difficult to find and we only got 2 points at snipe but these sneaked away before the birds got into position. Right at the end we were able to mark down a Woodcock but once again it evaded us and we never did find out where it went, so, back to the hotel.

Most people had gone home by the Monday but those left went out in the morning to try and catch a hare behind the hotel in some improved pasture and surrounding steep hills. Iain Campbell's Harris Hawk and Paul Burn's Redtail Hawk certainly tried their best and put in some good long, downhill stoops but were unable to connect with anything. I flew the eagle out over the cliffs overlooking Portree Bay. The quite strong wind gave him good flying conditions, he also had a permanent following of Gulls, Ravens and Hoodies which gave him considerable grief. Again he made a few good stoops at hares but was unable to get hold of them. I think they knew exactly how to handle an eagle. We also hoped that he might have enticed over one of the White Tailed Sea Eagles that lived across the bay but if they were at home they certainly didn't put in an appearance. We took the falcons back up to the moor we had been to on Saturday. Once again Andy Garlic's tiercels put in some tremendous flying with one text-book flight. Stooping from 600ft. both singled out one of the fleeing grouse and overhauled it right in front of us. A great performance to end the weekend.

Many thanks to Iain Campbell for all his hard work in organising this meet.

SKYE'S ANDREW KNOWLES

THE BROWN

Ψ LIMIT



ABOVE: The Longwing Group.
 ABOVE RIGHT: A soaked Paul Burns
 & his male Redtail.



ABOVE: Andrew Knowles-Browns male
 Golden Eagle on a rabbit.
 RIGHT: Derek Mayze with his male
 Goshawk



ABOVE: 1st year eyass
 falcon with grouse.



BELOW LEFT : Sam Wilks with Kim.

LEFT:
 Iain Campbell &
 H. Hawk
 Paul Burns &
 Redtail H'k
 A. Knowles-Brown &
 G. Eagle
 J. McDonnell &
 Verreaux Eagle.

RIGHT: Dick Carr &
 his Ferrutail



RIGHT: Andy Garlic's 5 yr. old tiercels on grouse.



CLUB DIRECTORY CLUB DIRECTORY CLUB DIRECTORY

THE SCOTTISH HAWKING CLUB

FOR THE DEDICATED FALCONER
Benefits include:- Individual insurance
to £25,000

Affiliation to British Field Sports
Society & North American Falconers
Assn. £2,000,000 Public Liability at
field meetings.

For Further details send S.A.E. to:
THE SCOTTISH HAWKING CLUB
CROOKEDSTONE ELVANFOOT,
BY BIGGAR LANARKS
ML12 6RL

BRITISH HAWKING ASSOCIATION

We meet on the first Thursday of
every month at the Shipley Boat

Inn, Nr. Eastwood. Notts.

For more information please ring:

George Roach, 0623 751339

AVON & SOMERSET RAPTOR GROUP

Our aims, much like other clubs,
are to promote all aspects of
Falconry, including keeping, breed-
ing and hunting Birds of Prey.

**We meet on the first Tuesday of
every month between
Bristol & Bath.**

For further information contact:
Guy Whitmarsh on: 0272 660770

THE WELSH HAWKING CLUB

Est 1962

•••

**An International Club with
countrywide membership.**

We meet once a month.

Northern Meetings nr. Chester.

Southern Meetings at Usk.

For further information, please contact

Adrian Williams on:

0443 206333

THE LONDON HAWKING AND OWL CLUB

*The only Falconry Club in
London with flying and
breeding experience with
birds of prey.*

**For more information call:
Paul Barham on 071 515 7754**

or

Bill Fiveash on 071 639 9087.

NEW FOREST FALCONRY CLUB

We are a small but very active Club based
in the New Forest area. We have some 80
members. We encourage all our mem-
bers, experienced or inexperienced, to par-
ticipate in all activities of the Club.

We are very keen on conservation and
attend local shows with our Conservation
Display Unit.

We have access to 98,000 acres and
organise meetings every week throughout
the hunting season.

We meet the first Wednesday of every
month and for more information please
telephone FRANK or CHRIS on

0202 478862.

BRITISH FALCONERS CLUB

Founded in 1927

**The oldest and largest Hawking
Club in the country.**

"and now offers a free apprenticeship
scheme in each of its 9 regions"

Nine Regional Groups -

Scotland, Wales & Borders, Midlands,
Cotswolds, Eastern, North Western, North
Eastern, Southern and South Western.

For details send large SAE with 52p P & P to:-

**THE BRITISH FALCONERS CLUB,
HOME FARM F.M., HINTS, Nr. TAM-
WORTH, STAFFS. B78 3DW.**

SOUTHERN COUNTIES RAPTOR CLUB

We are a small club, nearly two years old,
and welcome new members, with or with-
out birds, who are interested in all aspects
of Falconry, Hawking and Owl keeping.

We have our own club birds and give
displays at local fetes.

We meet every second tuesday each month
in Brighton, for informal discussions,
slide shows and guest speakers.

For more information contact:

Terry Pearce 0273 542971 eves/w/ends.

RAPTOR BREEDERS ASSOCIATION

Founded in 1976, the Association
aims to facilitate the exchange of
ideas and experiences relating to the
breeding of raptorial species.

Interested persons are invited to seek
further details from our membership

secretary: Robin Pote

2 Old Bell Cottages,

Ludford, Ludlow,

Shrops. SY8 1PP

Tel: 0584 874874

HAWKERS & WALKERS KLUB

We are a small club which
meets on the first Friday of each
month in Harlow, Essex. We
welcome new members, includ-
ing falconers or anyone who is
interested in birds of prey.

**For further information call:
Roger : 01279 437157**

or

Terry or Jill : 01279 416516

ANDERSEY QUAIL

Whether you are flying or breeding Birds
of Prey, Quail are recognised as being an
excellent quality food source.

We can supply any number of

Top Class Quail at 50p each,

plus delivery.

Sorry, no live birds.

Tel: (0235) 772040

SELECTIVE **B**REEDING

Artificial insemination of falcons has now become a standard procedure in falcon breeding facilities worldwide.

However, within the UK there are still only a small percentage of falcon breeders proficient in the use of A.I. Between our joint breeding project, my partner (Graham Butterworth) and myself, have produced several hundred falcons by A.I. in the last ten years, which contributes to nearly seventy percent of our total production of large falcons.

It is a fact that most of the large breeding projects throughout the world have tried to move away from imprinted female falcons, and co-operative A.I. due to the large amount of time each female requires to be spent with it. Most of these projects only use A.I. on non-copulating, paired females.

As a whole we have reached a compromise by imprinting females and using forced insemination techniques on them. We have found the fertility rate using this technique to be higher than using voluntary inseminations. The stress levels of these females is kept to a bare minimum with the correct handling, and most will solicit voluntary copulation within 30 minutes of being forced inseminated. Some of the falcons are voluntarily inseminated prior to the laying of the first egg. Using this technique our fertility rate of eggs inseminated for is in excess of ninety percent. Because of the large amount of imprinted females and a few non-copulating paired females that we have to inseminate, we keep at least one tiercel for each female for semen production. By keeping so many tiercels we not only have a large continuous supply of semen, but we also have a vast genetic pool to use at will.

Although we have several voluntary semen donors eighty percent of all inseminations are done with stripped semen. It would be possible to do most of our inseminations from the semen given by these donors. However this would greatly degenerate the genetic pool of the large amount of young which we produce annually. Plus we are trying to keep our sub-species pure whenever possible. The semen from the voluntary donors is generally used in hybrid production.

We have had good results when using semen stripped from injured wild tiercel peregrines (unfit for release) on our

imprinted females, thus adding to our genetic pool. To date we have in excess of forty separate blood lines in British peregrines.

Several breeders have stated that voluntary given semen is superior over stripped semen for both fertility and storage. We have not found this to be the case. On the subject of semen storage we generally use semen as soon as required and hardly ever use semen over six hours from production and usually within ten minutes. Occasionally we move semen from one facility to the other - a journey of some sixty miles. Although we have had reasonable success doing this, the overall fertility rate has been slightly reduced.

All semen is checked by microscope, not against samples from different tiercels, but from a mental note of how semen from that particular tiercel generally looks. We have found no correlation in sperm counts from one tiercel to another as to the fertility rate of each tiercel. However, a sudden drop in quality from one strip to another in the same tiercel can prove to be a sign that that particular tiercels fertility rate is dropping.

Graham had an interesting occurrence this breeding season when he stripped two Gyr x peregrine tiercels for the first time. The semen when viewed under a microscope had over fifty percent misshapen sperm in each sample from both tiercels. He decided to do two inseminations on a peregrine female with sperm from one of the hybrids. This resulted to our slight amazement in two eyass 1/4 Gyr x 3/4 peregrine. The male of the two having an aviary weight of twenty nine ounces and the female forty four.

This year we were forced into giving our female Red-headed merlin a single insemination of peregrine semen after failing to get any semen from our male. This resulted in a female hybrid being produced, and as much as it is nice to breed probably the worlds first hybrid from a Red-headed merlin, we would have preferred to have bred a pure one, as this species could soon become extinct in captivity in the western world. I would like to pause at this point to ask if anybody who has any Red-headed merlins would get in touch with me, as we need to get them paired up as quickly as possible, before it is too late.

I do not want to get into the great hybrid debate, but wish to say that all hybrids bred at our facilities are bred from a pre-structured plan to produce a falcon for a certain niche market where hybrid is advantageous over a pure bred species, thought to be so by both us and the prospective purchaser.

It is not uncommon for us to breed eight or ten young from a particular falcon in a single season fathered by up to six separate males. By doing this and collecting data on each eyass (unfortunately we depend heavily on reports from purchasing Falconers to supply us with data, who always promise, but rarely supply the information) we can build up a data bank on which tiercel to use with which female when a specific task is required i.e game hawking, rook hawking. This would be impossible if using natural breeding.

In my own opinion, to breed falcons on a large scale it would be unrealistic and uneconomical not to use A.I. in one form or another to maximise productivity. Even today fifty percent of the Peregrine Fund annual captive production of peregrines are conceived by A.I. Several Falconers and breeders have questioned the future use of eyasses conceived by A.I. for future flying and natural breeding. All I can say is, how a bird is conceived has no future effect on its life. If it did, there are several thousand peregrines flying around North America with big question marks on their backs.

A recent article I read gave reference to poor quality birds being bred, which supposedly resulted from the parent birds being egg pulled or double clutched. There is no scientific evidence to support this theory, in fact quite the opposite. Poor quality young come from poor initial breeding stock, poor overall hygiene and living standards and probably the biggest problem is a poor or inadequate diet, particularly the lack of essential vitamins and minerals. Now a word of warning! If you intend to carry out any form of A.I. particularly forced inseminations please be totally conversant with what you are about to do. Read as much as possible on the subject and talk to people who have experience with A.I. If at all possible, try to watch someone perform the task. Please remember the birds health and safety should be paramount at all times.

PETER GILL

RAPTOR REHABILITATION IN NORTHERN ALBERTA

Alberta is Canada's second most western province with mountains to the west and prairies to the east. It is home to an amazing variety of watchable Raptors which I soon discovered after moving here two years ago with my family. My wife hails from Canada and we decided to make the big move, and arrived here in August of 1992. I remember standing in my mother-in-law's backyard and watching the soaring Red-Tails above. After two years here, I still pull the car over on the highway to watch a Red-Tail hunt gopher from a fence post (common here) or rarer still to catch a fleeting glimpse of a Northern Goshawk down a country lane. Having a lifelong interest in birds, especially Raptors and having had recent falconry tuition from Ray Prior, immediately after our arrival I began enquiries into falconry in Alberta. Falconry is relatively new to Alberta and quite tightly regulated. A small



Debbie Mooney and Northern Goshawk preparing for blood tests.

group of dedicated falconers fly Peregrines and Prairie Falcons, Northern Goshawks, Red-Tails and Merlin's (and others) at a variety of prey. They (and I) are looking forward to the first Annual Canadian Falconry Meet to be held in Saskatchewan in October, 1994. As I was not able to have a bird until a year after my arrival in Canada I was fortunate to discover the Strathcona Raptor Shelter. One afternoon my wife and I were walking along our local shopping area when we came upon a large display of photographs and information concerning injured Raptors. We discovered that the Strathcona Raptor Shelter was located a short (by Canadian standards) twenty minute drive from our home. I immediately set out to discover what the Shelter was all about.

In Alberta there are two main centres for the Rehabilitation of Injured Raptors. In Southern Alberta injured raptors are directed to the Alberta Centre of Birds of Prey. For Northern Alberta and even up into the

Northwest Territories injured raptors find their way to the Strathcona Raptor Shelter.

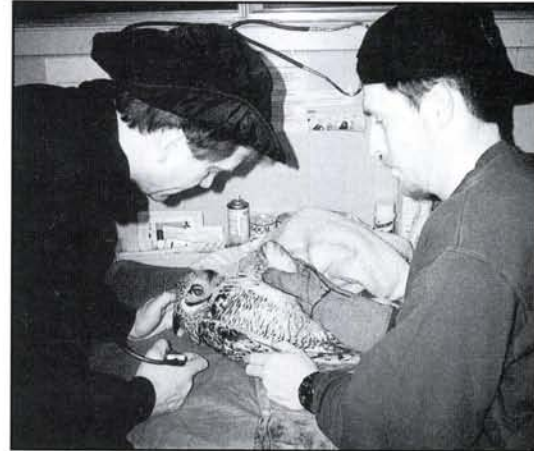
The Strathcona Raptor Shelter is run by the Alberta Society for Injured Birds of Prey of which my wife is now treasurer. The executive is Karl Grantmyre who began the Society in 1987. But caring for injured Raptors has been a way of life for Karl and his wife Eva. The Shelter is located on their acreage home and consists of numerous aviaries, a large hawk house, main hospital and the recent addition of a wind tunnel.

The aviaries are all of different sizes and have housed everything from Sharp-Shinned hawks to Osprey. The Shelter deals with up to 500 birds a year, some 60 species. Frequent visitors are Great Horned Owls (average 80-90 per year), Red-Tails (50) and Swainson hawks (40). The birds of the same species are often housed together after leaving Intensive Care. For a variety of reasons some birds are never able to be released back to the wild. These birds are used to help calm the newcomers. We have found that Great Horned Owls in captivity can become quite social. Bubb, Mrs Hoots and Sir Oliver are Great Horned Owls who are permanent residents and help welcome the new arrivals. These birds also help with fund-raising and educational events.

In one of the other aviaries sit four beautiful but shy Snowy Owls, (my wife's favourites). These birds are still here from last winter, when an unprecedented number of Snowy Owls were brought into the shelter. Three of these birds will remain here at the shelter and the fourth will be released this winter. Due to a large population which was caused by an exceptionally large Lemming boom, many immature birds were forced into new hunting grounds. Last winter was a harsh one with lots of snow. (I know, I shovelled it!) Of the one hundred deceased Snowy Owls found, over 50% had been hit by cars. The majority of all injuries seen by us at the shelter have been caused by vehicle-bird collisions.

In the largest of the aviaries sit a variety of eagles and hawks. There is Thor, a Bald Eagle, who has lost a wing to a hunters bullet and is the matriarch of the large aviary. Two other Bald Eagles remain here and on the largest bow a Golden Eagle and a Swainsons Hawk sit together. Numerous other Red-Tails and Swainsons Hawks also call this aviary home.

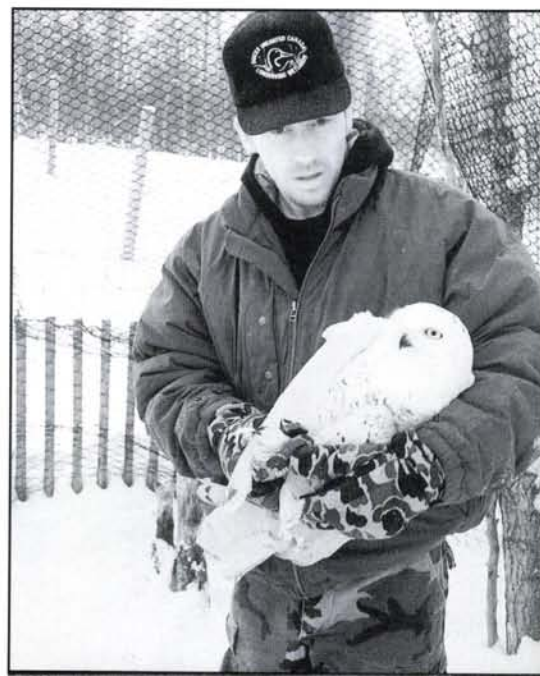
Next to the large aviary is the hawk house. This is a long building which encases seven different pens. This area is wired for sound and the birds are serenaded by classical music and environmental tapes. These pens hold a variety of birds including three Northern Goshawks. These birds were brought to the shelter as pest birds. Occasionally a bird discovers that taking a farmers penned chickens is easier than hunting for wild prey. In this case the farmers will contact the shelter and we will trap the



Karl Grantmyre and Richard Mooney with a Great-Horned Owl using laser treatment to stimulate a damaged retina.

bird, return it to the shelter and train it on a new prey base. The bird is then released in an area to hopefully continue on its new food. I'm looking forward to the release of these birds and hope they continue to hunt on the wild quarry that they have been trained on, as too many encounters with the farmers chickens could prove disastrous, (if you know what I mean) and this would truly be an unfitting end to this majestic hunter of the northern woods.

The newest addition to the Shelter is the wind tunnel. This is used to help in the conditioning of the birds prior to release. After not using their wings for a while and not used to flying in wind, the wind tunnel allows them to practice in a safe environment. The wind is supplied by a large fan which is run by a generator and the birds are allowed to soar to their hearts content. It also helps them practice and perfect their landing. The second stage of flight conditioning is done in a large field near the shelter. A light line, Creance, is attached to the bird's jesses and they are allowed to fly for



Richard Mooney and Snowy Owl

up to a 1/4 of a mile, across open fields. This is a good way to evaluate their flight and check for any weaknesses. Flights are done a few times to ensure the bird is ready to be released. People who have adopted a bird and donated a specific amount are often allowed to participate in their release.

The next stop on our tour is the hospital building. This is used as a laboratory, treatment area and intensive care. This is where the birds are first brought for treatment. Upon arriving at the shelter, the birds are entered into the records, identified, and examined. The birds weight is taken and a sample of blood is obtained. Sometimes a birds injury is not always apparent and blood samples can tell us if the bird has been eating or has any parasites in their blood. By using a Refractometer we are able to determine totals proteins in the blood. As a rule of thumb, the reading should be between 4 and 6, recently we had a Red-Tail in whose blood protein was 0.8, (she now has 8 lives left) this bird is now doing fine and will be released for the fall migration. One Red-Tail

*Below: Karl & Eva Grantmyre
tube-feeding a Merlin*



that was brought to the shelter was found, after an autopsy, to have cancer of many vital organs. Another interesting case in the shelter's history was a mature Turkey Vulture which seemed to be in constant moult. It was diagnosed as having a pituitary disorder.

One of my fondest memories is of a mature Great Gray Owl which was brought into the Shelter in the winter of 1993. As we were knee-deep in snow most days it wasn't surprising that a lot of birds were finding it difficult to find food. This Great Gray had been found by the side of a highway so we assumed it had been hit by a vehicle. This is the largest of Alberta's Owls and one of the most uncommon. It's size can be very deceiving however, as its bulk is mostly feathers. It is a very shy bird and the stress of human presence can sometimes do more damage than the actual injury. Great care was taken to ensure his privacy and after using laser treatment on his bruised elbow he

was successfully released.

The shelter is staffed by volunteers and relies solely on the generosity of the community. The local business community has been extremely generous donating medical equipment, the hospital building and a large transport van. Volunteers are used for many different purposes and we are able to use their many different skills. The shelter also works closely with a number of veterinarians who possess a knowledge of wildlife rehabilitation. Every year the Shelter offers rehabilitation courses run by the International Wildlife Rehabilitation Council which are taken by volunteers, veterinarians and Fish and Wildlife Officers. I found the courses to be highly informative and when I was able to have my own falconry bird it proved to be useful.

One of the main priorities of the shelter when dealing with Injured or Orphaned Raptors is to return the birds to a family situation. In spring the shelter receives numerous calls concerning young birds which have been found out of the nests. We always

advise people to return the fledgling to the nest and the parents will return. The shelter does not only deal with immature birds but in late summer we find mature birds making their way to the shelter. It has been noticed that some Mature Female Red-Tails will spend all their energy feeding their young. Once the young have fledged the female is left with little energy for hunting. If some bad weather hits, the female is often too weak to survive. These birds are brought to the shelter and we concentrate on having them regain their strength in order to return them to the wild.

One of my more memorable encounters with an owl occurred when Karl and I were carrying out our weekly pest control program at a local steel plant. Sometimes businesses have problems with pest birds (pigeons) and contact the shelter. We don't normally get there until about eleven or so at night, so the birds will be



*Left: Richard Mooney and Great
Grey Owl after treatment*

roosting and are easier to catch. This particular evening we booked in with security and made our way to the main building. Coveralls, respirators, torches and nets and away we go. It's about one hundred feet up. Karl started at one end and I the other. I had



*Debbie and Connor Mooney with a Short-
Eared Owl at the Shelter, Summer 1993*

just bent down to gather up a pigeon when I turned around to see a huge Great-Horned Owl bearing down, wings outstretched. I tried to yell to Karl, but all that came out through the respirator was "mmmgle owmem owwww!!!" I finally got his attention, and explained what I had seen, my heart was still in my throat and I was very excited. We decided to hang around and wait in the shadows to see if she would come back, which she did hovering right over the top of us for about ten seconds, then again for a quick fly by. As we were leaving we saw her on the roof opposite and so we left her a snack on a post!!

Being involved with the Strathcona Raptor Shelter for the past two years has provided me with an outlet for my interests in Birds of Prey. I have increased my knowledge in the field of wildlife rehabilitation and I have obtained a variety of information regarding raptors in North America. It has also provided my wife with the opportunity to become involved in my (time consuming!!) interests.

My wife and I are confirmed Raptorphiles and hope that wherever we go there will be some for us to watch in awe. As we brought this article to its conclusion, we received a call from the shelter to go and pick up a Great Blue Heron in distress from a local pond. After we finished his blood work, we found his total proteins to be normal. However, on looking at his slide he was definitely fighting an infection, as his white blood cell count was quite high. Although not a Bird of Prey, a feathered friend nonetheless. *

By Richard & Debbie Mooney

WHITE TAILED EAGLE is uncommon winter in north, with a reintroduction scheme. w. span. apt 245 cm.

SHORT TOED EAGLE adult (Circus gallicus) can be seen all year, resident breeder & passage. A few overwinter. w. span 171 cm.

LESSER SPOTTED EAGLE (Aquila pomarina). w. span c. 150 cm. rare winter bird.

Pale adult BOOTED EAGLE (Hieraaetus pennatus) Passage & rare winterer. w. span c. 120 cm

RAPTORS IN ISRAEL

PHILIP SNOW

PART 1 • The spring migration of 2½ Billion birds, of which perhaps 3 million are birds of prey, makes Israel & neighbours one of the most important passage areas in the world. Forty four species of diurnal raptor, & eight of owls have been recorded in these not biblical lands that bridge Africa & Asia; an essential crossroads. Thirty species are regularly seen, but six dominate: 850,000 HONEY BUZZARDS; 465,000 STEPPE BUZZARDS; 141,000 LESSER SPOTTED EAGLES; 36,000 BLACK KITES; 49,000 LEVANT SPARROWHAWKS & 76,000 STEPPE EAGLES were logged in the mid-eighties; all bound for Asia & eastern Europe.

SPOTTED EAGLE (Aquila clanga) w. span c. 170 cm. 'Common' winter resident in N. Israel & passage.

dark phase BOOTED EAGLE

adult IMPERIAL EAGLE [Aquila heliaca] Like the Steppe E. (which has similar immature plumage), passage & winter resident: especially in the northern Hula Valley & in the western Negev (in Beersheva). However, I also sketched them at the Eilat kibbutz fields & Yotvata.





adult
STEPPE EAGLE
Languid & easy
flight, approx.
a dozen winter
in Israel.
w. span: c 175-230 cm.



Immature Eagles:
STEPPE IMPERIAL



& GOLDEN E.
Resident &
locally 'common'
w. span = 217 cm



Immature IMPERIAL EAGLE
Flies on drooping wings,
as do Steppe, Lesser
spotted & Booted Eagles.
Prefers lowlands.
w. span: 180-215 cm



adult
BONELLI'S EAGLE
(*Hieraaetus fasciatus*)
w. span: c 162 cm
Rare migrant &
sparse resident.



2nd yr
STEPPE EAGLES



adult BLACK OR VERREAUX
EAGLE (*Aquila
verreauxii*)
w. span: up to
245 cm
Regularly seen near
Eilat as breeds in
nearby Sinai.

STEPPE EAGLES (*Aquila nipalensis*) from Mt. Yoash, looking down to Eilat & the Gulf of Aquaba, Jordan; & on the right the precipitous Wadi Gushon & the Egyptian border (The wilderness of Sinai). This is a favoured morning spot for raptor watchers in the Spring; as tens of thousands of birds press northwards, some passing very close by. The mountains & wadis are kaliedescopes of multi coloured sandstones, limestones, chalk & igneous rocks, & offer good walking. Brown necked Ravens & Sinai Rosefinch are resident, & typical birds. © Philip Snow 2.95

GOLDEN OLDIES

Dear David and Lyn

I have recently been given a copy of your excellent magazine which I found very interesting and was especially pleased to see some of the old names mentioned that I used to know in the falconry world. I started my involvement with hawks in 1958 after having met James Robertson Justice at a lecture he was giving, and I got to close quarters for the first time with a Peregrine and a Peale's Falcon, belonging to the Duke of Edinburgh. From then on I was hooked and have been fortunate to have had every type of "Hawk" on the British List, (except for a Marsh Harrier), in my care at some time or other over the past 36 years.

I was the first person to be granted a license to take a Scottish Eagle and they are, without a doubt, my favourite species. When I took up the sport, there were only about 25 Falconers in Britain, with only 3 of them in Scotland. My first Eagle was an adult female which was found with a badly broken wing, on the Isle of Lewis. Sadly she died whilst undergoing surgery in the Veterinary Hospital in Glasgow. My second was a male Tawny which had been rescued from a pet shop in London by Mrs Susie Stirling of Keir. It had all its primaries shorn off at the quill base, presumably to fit it in a cage. It passed from Susie to Humphrey

Drummond, then on to Walter Joynson who sold it to me for the princely sum of £4.50. Three years later, I sold it to Peter Tew for £10.00. He flew it at rabbits but it was electrocuted by flying into power cables. My next eagle was the infamous "Lochinvar" who was an eyas male brought over from Spain for Walter. It had a disturbing life as a film star and became rather snappy, so Walter sold him to me for £30.00. I ended our rather stormy relationship by selling him to the Welsh Mountain Zoo for £75.00.

Oh, the outrageous prices that were being bandied about in those bygone days.

However, enough of this reminiscing and on to the main point of my letter. With Eagles in mind, I thought you may be interested in printing a report of what I consider to be a unique and exciting meeting I had with a pair of Golden Eagles in the Sonora Desert Museum, near Tuscon, Arizona, whilst on holiday there in April this year. This establishment is in reality a mixture of Zoo, Botanic Garden and Museum where I could have spent two or three days instead of a single afternoon. Amongst their interesting collection of Raptors, all having been injured at some time or other, they have a magnificent pair of Golden Eagles. The aviary is, to my mind, rather on the small side being wedge-shaped, about 25 feet wide and the same in depth, with a height of 10 feet. I was admiring the male which

was perched right next to the wire mesh when I was aware of being watched myself. I then saw the female sitting on a bulky pile of sticks in a sort of hammock made of wire mesh and suspended about 4 feet from the floor on wooden stakes. You can imagine my surprise when she stood up and I saw a chick of about 10-14 days old. I took several minutes of video of this amazing sight only a few feet away from me, then, as time was pressing, we had to leave the park. After my return home, I wrote to the Museum to ask about the breeding success of their Eagles and received an amazing reply which I think you will find interesting.

This pair of Eagles arrived in the park in 1956, 2 years before I started playing with their Scottish cousins. One of them had been caught in a leg trap. 22 years later in 1976 they laid their first eggs and have laid nearly every year since. The first clutch has always been infertile. This was found out in 1985 when it was removed for artificial incubation. However, the second clutch was fertile and this has also been the case ever since. The first chick was not raised successfully until 1987 but since then they have reared 7 chicks, all of which have been successfully released in a re-establishment project in Kansas. They are kept at hack for a few weeks and released at 10 weeks old, suitably radio tagged, and are monitored all through the summer. The chick that I had the great excitement of seeing is

now doing very well for itself in its new environment. After making lots of infantile mistakes at first, it is now an accomplished hunter. It is almost unbelievable that such a pair of "old timers" are doing their bit for the conservation effort of their species in the USA.

John Bishop Murray,
"Another old timer"

MOCK TEST

Dear Dave and Lyn,

Regarding the letter in your last issue by Alex Heming, What an excellent idea of taking a test to prove competence in teaching falconry.

I myself am considering opening a Falconry School in London. I have been practising the art of falconry for two years. I can now paint a picture of a Kestrel and fly my Barn Owl (Tyto Alba) to the fist at ten feet. (My bedroom is only twelve feet.)

I am now in the process of changing my name to Ashley by deed poll, to avoid sitting such a 'test' in the future. Hopefully, not many people will latch on to this idea, so in the future all others will sit a rigid test and we will all be able to form a guild of falconry instructors.

Yours almost sincerely
Ashley Glove-Hanger
Aged 16 1/2

OVER WEIGHT

Dear David and Lyn,

Having read your winter issue on Harris Hawks, I have an opinion that once a bird has been trained and entered, it will fly obedient at any weight and partially hunt. For example, I went away on holiday for a week. The next day I put my birds in boxes and went out hunting with the intention of flying my birds on a creance as my female was 5oz overweight and my male 3 1/2 oz overweight. When I got to the hunting ground my birds looked keen. I took a risk and cast the birds into the trees. Within 15 minutes, I had a 8 1/2 lb hare and 2 rabbits. There is no way that my birds were flying at 100%.

At 2lb 4oz, my female will fly and hunt all day and it's best is 15 rabbits in one day. My male, which flies at 1lb 6 oz has caught 10 head in a day. There is no way my birds could do this at a higher weight.

I think 90% of Austringers in this country are flying their Harris a lot overweight. I have put my birds down for breeding with 211 head for my female and 154 for my male. Not bad for Harrisers! A Satisfied Austringer with Harrisers.

Thomas Clark

FOOD FOR THOUGHT!

Dear Lyn & Dave,

I would first like to congratulate the Falconers magazine on its 5 year success. You have opened up channels of communication which would otherwise have been closed to so many falconers. Secondly, regarding my last letter published, just a few mistakes I would like to be made clear on. Firstly, the article should have read Gyr x Sakers, Gyr x Peregrines **bred** by the Scottish Academy. Secondly, where you printed Z blocks, it should have read 2 blocks. Now I hope it makes sense to those who have quizzed me!

Regarding capture breeding all you breeders out there, I've heard lots of reports this year that many middle ranged hawks and falcons have failed to breed. Often I'm told they bred last year and the year before, then all of a sudden pairs start to fail. This failure happens more amongst falcons and hawks in this medium sized bracket, ie Peregrines, Sakers, Goshawks etc. Could we as breeders be over-looking the fact that these medium ranged birds need to change their partners more often. If we look at Birds of Prey in general, many larger hawks and eagles pair for life, because of their size and how long they need to mature. Smaller hawks

breed more readily because they mature quicker, and they produce more eggs etc. Because their mortality rate is high, they most likely change their breeding partner every year or at least every two years in the wild. Now for our middle ranged Hawks and Falcons. Most cases I've heard of breed a few years (2 to 4 years) then failure sets in. I understand that no-one wants to break up a breeding pair, but I think once all other possibilities have been eliminated concerning a pairs failure, it's time to put either a new male or female in the breeding aviary. This, I think, would enhance more possible pairs in the future to actually breed. If one observes wild falcons, a new falcon or tiercel can be seen at any eyrie every 1-3 years. This keeps blood lines diverse etc and improves future stock.

For those falconer/breeders who only have access to limited blood lines, it would be very helpful for breeders to possibly arrange an active breeders data bank service, especially where Vaner species are concerned.

I welcome any queries or indeed, would be interested in hearing from breeders who would be interested in such an idea.

Mail can be sent c/o Falconers Magazine.

Yours sincerely
W Hawkins-Pinchers

YOUR RIGHT TO C.I.T.E.S.

Dear Dave & Lyn

You seem to get so many letters in your columns about Bird registration and the Licensing of Falconers. So perhaps you will let me have my ten penny's worth.

For the last two years I have worked in Germany giving demonstrations in one of Germany's leading Theme Parks.

Every time I take my Birds to Germany I have to register them. It is a way that has proved successful there, so there should be no reason for it, or part of it, to be adopted here.

1. All Eagles, Hawks, Falcons, Owls and Vultures must be rung and in possession of a CITES permit. Included on the permit are ring numbers, micro chip numbers etc. This permit then stays with the bird whenever it goes away from its home address or changes owners or keepers.

It is the right of all owners to have CITES for their birds so long as they fulfil the criteria laid down when applying for the CITES permit.

2. I have to take a copy of the CITES to my local council and register my birds at the address I am living at. If I move areas I must re-register the birds with the new council. I have to keep a register of my birds showing date of first possession, previous keeper and the date that the bird left my possession and the name of the new keeper.

The DOE keeps a register of all CITES that they issue. It would be quite easy to attach a form to the CITES giving details of previous owners, or at least the last owner.

It is a thankless task for all the people who have set up bird registration schemes. What happens to the register when they call time on their schemes? May I suggest that the method as mentioned above is worth considering. At least you would have an official permit which would accompany your bird throughout its life.

Whilst on this subject, whatever happened to the name and address plate, plus the mention on it of a reward? All birds flown by me have one attached to the Jess.

Through previous letters in your column, your readers will know the German method of licensing Falconers, a long and very expensive exercise.

As usual it is a case of shutting the stable door after the horse has bolted. I think we are too far down the road to change things drastically. All we can do is to re-educate those amongst us who need it. I can see no help coming from this government unless all branches of field sports become involved in a licensing scheme.

I think it is down to the likes of the WHC the BFC and respected clubs to encourage membership to their organisations. Getting the Good, the Bad and the Ugly together will at least give the Good the chance to attempt to re-educate the latter two. One of your previous letter writers comments on whether instructors should or should not need to be qualified. What you should remember is that you may be the most proficient driver in the world but it does not make you competent to teach. The same can be said in falconry. Just because you have the knowledge does not mean you have the ability to be a teacher.

All this is, I hope, food for thought.

Best wishes

Chris Tuffrey

PS Who OK'd the advert of page 13 of the winter issue? All I can say after seeing that is Falconry O The Anti's nearly game set and match.

Where has the respect for the quarry gone?

PPS For those who don't know, the CITES permit is issued free of charge. If everyone applied for one, perhaps the DOE would see all the revenue they were losing and they may re-introduce the registration scheme.

12 DAY WONDER

Dear Editor

I am writing in reply to your article "Harris Hawk - Friend or Foe".

It appears that there are many falconers, particularly those who have flown Goshawks that criticise the Harris Hawk in various ways.

Comments that the Harris Hawk is simple to train and is unadventurous when pursuing its quarry is heard regularly.

A friend of mine (who incidentally flies Longwings) likens the Harris to an African Grey Parrot as they are so obedient and easy to train.

I have often wondered how these falconers who fly Goshawks feel when they are patiently (or impatiently) waiting for their bird to return from its tree-top perch where it has retired for a considerable sulk after missing its intended target. Or indeed how these same falconers react when, after many hours of careful manning, the accipiter is still

frantically baiting on their fist. These problems are not associated with the Harris Hawk.

I must admit to never owning a Goshawk, but over the last decade I have flown and hunted with several bird species including the Red-Tailed Hawk, Sparrowhawk and Male Harris Hawk.

At the moment I am flying a female Harris Hawk named Sioux. She is one of this years fledglings, purchased from Mr Terry Fitzgerald. Within 12 days I had trained her, flown her free and she had her 1st catch - a wood pigeon.

She is now flown regularly at 2lb 2oz and has had 21 head, including rabbit, weasel, moorhen and crow. She is very enthusiastic in both the chasing and the catching.

So, to all those falconers who have only flown Goshawks, please don't undervalue the Harris Hawk until you have had the enjoyable experience of flying and hunting one yourself.

John R Jones

PS Perhaps I'm biased towards Harris Hawks.

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

Dear Lyn and Dave,

Having just read the latest publication of the Anti-Blood Sports Wildlife Guardian Number 30, I felt I must write to you and express my own feeling on Blood Sports, as an ordinary run of the mill bloke and Falconer.

I have participated in, and supported, Hawking and Falconry for over 10 years. Defending it too, when required, against the Anti's.

The fact is, Falconry is a blood sport, linked with others such as Stag and Fox Hunting etc. and we have been encouraged to stand together to defend our right to hunt wild creatures. If however, the facts collected in these sorry pages of the Wildlife Guardian are correct, then I for one don't want to be associated with these so called sporting Gentlemen mentioned therein.

I've grown to respect and admire the quarry as much as I love the hawks. It's a privilege to watch then both in the field. The sad point being the kill, if there is one. Yet this is inevitable. Something wild critters have to face hour by hour, day by day.

What isn't right is the sadistic abuse of this privilege. Torture isn't a sport and there's no need for rudeness and violence to others who may disagree with us.

I would leave you with the following thoughts for the future:

Every life is bought on the death of others

This is the natural way of things

If we can't accept this basic fact

Then we delude ourselves

but man must show compassion

It's what puts him above his fellow creatures

To deny this, is to be no better than the dumb beasts

Themselves who know no better.

Respect to all living things should be our code

From the least to the greatest of them

They all have a place with us, here on earth.

Where man the hunter enters the field

He should do so with great reverence and respect

For he dons the mantle of a God himself

Having the power of life and death

Over his fellow creatures.

Ron Billingsley

FALCONRY ORIGINALS

HAUGHTON MILL COTTAGES
HAUGHTON
Nr RETFORD
NOTTS DN22 8DY
01623 836071



FALCONRY ORIGINALS, RENOWNED
THE WORLD OVER FOR THE FINEST
QUALITY FALCONRY FURNITURE
AND ACCESSORIES AVAILABLE

Telephone IAN on:
01623 836071 for your
free catalogue, or write
to the above address.

*Falconry Originals
still making the best
falconry equipment.
The widest range, the finest quality.
Often copied, never equalled.
Spoil yourself - buy the Original*

WINGS BREEDING CENTRE

for

Roll X & Turn X Incubators
Sales, Service & A Full Range of Spare
Parts Available.
British Made Telemetry Systems &
Transmitters ALWAYS IN STOCK.
Breeders Of Top Quality
Hybrid Falcons & Hawks
Phone 0992 442669

HAWKSWOOP LIMITED

DAY OLD COCKERELS

FRESH OR FROZEN INDIVIDUALLY

**PRICE FRESH £15.00 per 1000
COLLECTED**

For further enquiries please freephone:
0800 833038

PHILIP SNOW BA Hons.

is a professional wildlife illustrator, whose work is regularly published worldwide in books, magazines, prints and cards etc., by such as, BBC WILDLIFE, COLLINS, RSPB, AMERICAN EXPRESS, BIRDWATCHING, BRITISH BIRDS, CHESHIRE LIFE, INTERCONTINENTAL of N. York, Texas's OCEAN WORLD and Turkey's TURQUOISE magazine etc.

He has exhibited in many of London's top venues, i.e. THE SOUTH BANK, THE BARBICAN, ASS. OF ILLUSTRATORS, SOCIETY OF WILDLIFE ARTISTS, THE TRYON GALLERY, THE DESIGN CENTRE, OLYMPIA, and in the R.A. exhibition of BRITISH ART. in Saudi Arabia. He specialises in raptors in landscape; particularly in flight and welcomes commissions.

The painting of raptors in this issue is for sale and closely based on his own field sketches and photo's and he has studied birds in many countries. For details of limited prints or commissions please contact: P SNOW.

2 Beach Cottages, Malltraeth, Gwynedd, LL62 5AT.
TEL: 0407 840368.



*Peregrine Falcon in flight Anglesey '93,
Water colour & gouache*

NORTH OF ENGLAND FALCONRY SCHOOL

1995 BREEDING COURSES

We intend to hold a one day course on the 'Domestic Breeding of Raptors'.

The course is intended to help the beginner & more experienced, although designed for diurnal raptors, owl keepers should find it very helpful.

The course will cover the following:
Aviary design, Obtaining breeding stock, Breeding behaviour of certain species, Nutrition, Artificial Insemination (forced & voluntary), Imprints, Incubation & Rearing.

The day will run from 9.30 - 4.30.

Dates for the courses are as follows:

April 1st

April 8th

May 6th

May 20th

June 3rd

June 17th

The course will cost £65 per person, (a deposit of £15 is Required). For an application form please write to:

**THE NORTH OF ENGLAND FALCONRY SCHOOL.
DELAPORT, LONG ROAD
BRAMPTON EN LE MORTHEN
ROTHERHAMS YORKS. S66 9BJ
Tel: 0709 548125**

RAPTOR RESCUE

'BOUNTY' OF BUZZARDS

Many visitors to the West Country - or to Wales - may marvel when they witness the effortless wheeling of a pair of Buzzards high in the sky. However, even these elegant birds do have their problems at times. In early summer within a space of 10 days we received no less than 6 of these.

One of the problems that beset buzzards is that at times they are the subject of being mobbed by one or more crows. Usually this passes off with no damage to either bird, though we are now accustomed to receiving a buzzard with 'crow damage'. This takes the form of sometimes severe lacerations to the head - and the possible removal of one or both eyes. Buzzard (number 1) was one of these casualties and was picked up by a farmer in his field. Luckily the eyes were intact, and we removed the eggs of the blow-fly from the scalp damage and applied antiseptic to these wounds. The bird itself was very weak and emaciated, so we gave it several doses of 'liquid lectade' to counter the effects of dehydration and the hawk was fed small portions of dead day old chick. It made a wonderful recovery, and when released he felt like a plump turkey with all the food that he had eaten. So much so that when taken to our 'release field' he staggered his way into the sky like a very heavily loaded bomber.

Those involved in RAPTOR RESCUE will understand when I say that this (and other) releases have NO witnesses. There is NO 'media' coverage of any description. There is NO record of the amount of time and effort made to ensure that a raptor is made fit and well, to once again soar into the sky and continue with its life. On the credit side there IS a tremendous amount of personal satisfaction to be gained, so that the time and effort (and sometimes the expense) seems very worthwhile. Buzzard (number 2) was an interesting case. Again picked up by a farmer in his field. When I arrived to collect it there was no evidence of any physical damage, except that one side of the stomach had swollen up into a hard balloon the size of a tennis ball. As with all birds received, arrangements were made with my local veterinary surgeon to deliver the bird in the morning! The veterinary seemed to think that perhaps there had been a build up of gasses in the gut. After being fed well for 10 days, the bird was taken off to our release area where she took flight and landed in an oak tree some 100 yards away. A quick rouse of the feathers - and she

was off - heading for the area in which she had been picked up.

Buzzard (number 3) was again found by a farmer.

A very old bird, hungry and weak. We noticed that two talons were partially missing - though these old wounds had healed up. He was kept for 2 weeks and given a variety of foods. Again I think that he too must have been overfed by the time of release, as he too lumbered into the sky like an overladen bomber! The weather was still fine, and I should imagine that he had consumed enough food to last a week before he would feel hungry. In response to a telephone call I went out and found buzzard (number 4) that was running along the ground. A cursory examination revealed no obvious damage, so as the veterinary practice was still open we went along for the hawk to have a check over. My "bird" vet was on holiday - so the buzzard was examined by another who also found nothing wrong. So we went home and this one was fed in the usual manner.

When we subsequently took the hawk out into our 'release' field it was only then - to my chagrin - that we found that the bird could not fly! Back to the vet again - this time for an X-Ray. This revealed that the bird had been shot, struck by one pellet only, that had broken the ulna in the right wing. As it happened the break was mending well on its own accord, and rather than attempt to remove this piece of shot it was decided to leave it where it was. Further surgery would have caused a lot of damage that may not have repaired so well. I was assured that leaving the tiny pellet of lead where it was would not cause the bird any future harm.

Returning the bird later for a further X-ray revealed that the bone had knitted well, and the piece of shot was encased in the callus. We get to buzzard (number 5). This unfortunate bird was witnessed to collide with an overhead power cable so that it came tumbling down. An X-ray of the damage revealed that the radius was completely smashed and beyond repair, and that there was a break in the ulna. This break was pinned, and a later X-ray showed that this break had healed. As for flight, the vet was of the opinion that whilst the hawk WOULD be able to fly, the ability to do so would be completely articulated.

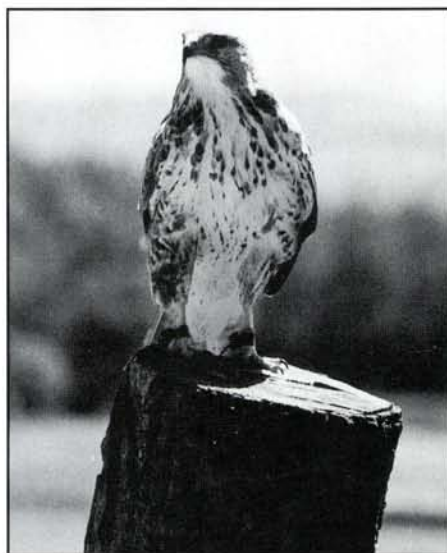
Well, what was to be done? On the face of it she should be euthanased - but I found that I had not the heart to do it. She had a lovely nature and was a fine specimen of a female. She looked so regal that 'buzzard number 5' became 'Beauty' as she was a beautiful bird.

The quest now was to find a nice caring home for her. This is where RAPTOR RESCUE came to the rescue (if you pardon the pun). A Committee Member had a large aviary that contained a solitary male buzzard - wonderful! So 'Beauty' is now in care, has a mate and in due course we hope for a 'bevy of bouncing baby buzzards'!

Now we come to the "sad bit" in the form of buzzard (number 6). Once again in response to a telephone call this one was picked up by the side of a road. Rather emaciated and dehydrated, we had her checked over by a vet who found no damage at all, so she was taken into care. Given liquid lectade and fed on small pieces of day old chick. She responded well, and after 5 days she was feeding herself. Then, at noon, there she was - dead! It was so unusual that I asked the vet to do a Postmortem. She had been infested with ascaridia worms. The internal parasites had formed into a small ball and completely blocked a portion of the ileum (small intestine). The diagnosis was that even if the hawk had been wormed she would have still died, as the worms would have died where they were and still caused a blockage. We are all aware that all birds have both internal and external parasites in various forms, and usually parasite and host retain some sort of biological balance. In fact it is not in the interests of the parasite to kill the host, but obviously it does happen occasionally.

As the saying goes 'you cannot win them all'. But with 6 buzzards taken in; four released fit and well, one going to a 'happy home' and with just one death I suppose that it's not all bad.

Ray Turner LRK,



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. FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE WRITE TO:
MICK ROBINS, 122 WARE ROAD, HERTFORD HERTS. SG13 7HR

ruin - THE MUSKET

Ruin was the first Musket I had ever trained. It wasn't something that had ever appealed to me before. Two things had always put me off in the past. Firstly, the females superior versatility and secondly the obvious difficulties of handling and controlling a bird that is not only highly strung, but that weighs next to nothing into the bargain.

I didn't go out and buy him, rather, he came to me.

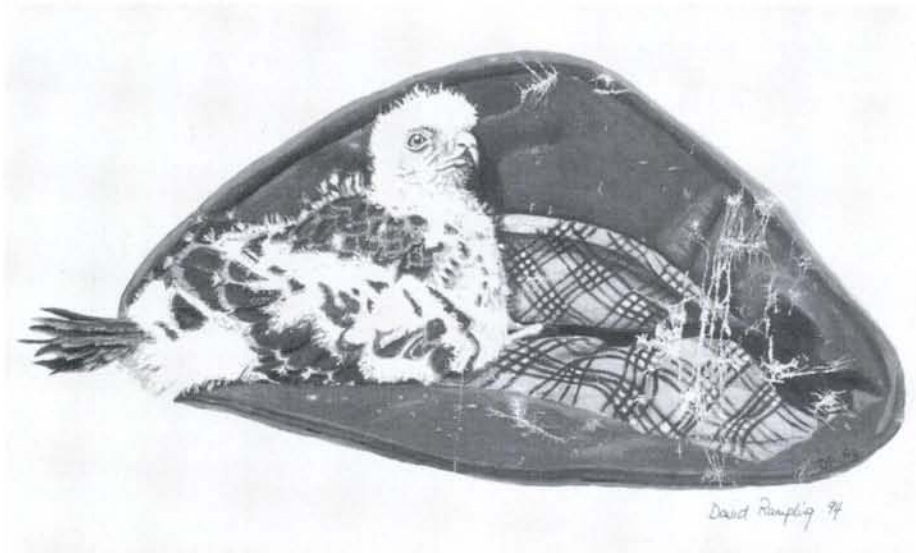
I was working for the summer at a Falconry Centre in the North of Scotland. The work was hard, the hours long, and contrary to popular opinion, much of the daily routine was tedious. But, on the whole, I enjoyed it. Giving displays and talking falconry to 'Joe Public' felt like the job I was born to do, and handling such a wide variety of birds, from Merlin to White Tailed Sea Eagle was invaluable experience. But working with birds, sometimes twelve hours a day, meant very often the last thing I wanted to do when I got home in the evening was fly a hawk of my own.

So I was hawkless for the summer, and I intended to keep it that way. I would buy a Sparrowhawk in the autumn when I finished the season and then return home to my girlfriend in Devon.

During the summer many injured birds came my way at the centre. They were brought in from all over Scotland. Kestrels, Buzzards, Peregrines, some rarities like Goshawks, an Osprey and even a Honey Buzzard. And plenty of Sparrowhawks, which being a passion of mine, gave me sleepless nights as I worried about whether they would make it through the night. With the help of a good vet many were released, anything permanently disabled was passed on to people with more time and space than we had there.

One day I had a phone call from a Forestry Commission worker near Inverness. He had been felling an area of trees, and a Sparrowhawk's nest had gone through the harvesting machinery. The new 'Harvesters' do the job of several men. It grips and cuts the tree trunk, and then runs the severed trunk along blades which cut off all the branches, leaving clean, stackable timber. It is not always obvious to the man sitting in the 'Harvesters' cab that the tree contains a Spars nest and some are destroyed accidentally.

In our area one of the forestry workers is a keen falconer. If a nest tree is felled, and the youngsters are alive, the chicks are taken to him, and he does his best to foster them into another nest he knows about. But this was the last day of July and all the



nests he knew of had fledged already.

When this particular tree was felled, and the man in the cab saw the nest pass through the blades, he shut down the machinery as fast as he could and leapt from the cab to check for survivors. There had been five youngsters, three females and two muskets. Tiny things, some eight days old. All the females were dead, dishevelled corpses. But both muskets, being smaller had rolled out, clear of the blades and were alive.

I got a phone call in the morning to tell me they were on their way. I defrosted some quail in anticipation of their arrival.

They were little balls of white fluff. Their eyes were grey and their legs looked like shiny soft plastic. I found a box for them and lined it with towelling. They came everywhere with me, at the centre during the day, and back to the caravan with me in the evenings.

Both birds had a healthy appetite from the start. One chick was slightly older than the other, and this elder chick had a slightly twisted foot, probably from when the tree was felled. This foot improved as time wore on, and only meant he was a little slower moving around in the box.

Feathers sprouted, and I had to move them to a bigger box, so they could stretch their wings. They both grew fast on a rich diet and were soon able to flap out of the box. Chasing two Spars around the caravan isn't my idea of fun and the splashes on the wall were becoming intolerable! So I passed the eldest chick onto a friend to finish off, while I concentrated on 'Ruin', the smaller of the two.

Ruin was quite tame now, his food bowl was always full. I hoped to release him eventually, so I didn't want a screaming,

mantling lunatic. I hoped he was imprinted on his brother enough to know he was a Sparrowhawk, and I never fed him by hand, so as not to confuse him mentally. I knew his tameness would wear off if I allowed it to, but it was an advantage at this stage and helped him to fit in and not suffer undue stress.

Once fully fledged he was a little beauty - neat, tidy, almost miniature. He would watch a fly buzzing around the living room, his fascination was intense and his head would follow every move it made. When a sparrow flew past the window, he would become suddenly alert, and his little talons would flash as he tried to catch my dog's tail when she wagged it.

He was quite quick on his feet and he would chase his lure around with wings held high above his head. Once he had caught it, he would pump his feet like a veteran. He didn't scream and only mantled half-heartedly. He would lay down on his chest and preen or sleep between bouts of excited playtime.

His home base now was an old green hat of mine. He preferred the hat to his nest box and 'Ruin' would snuggle into it and sleep. He would lay down in it even when he got older and it made carrying him around easier.

I left Scotland and headed south for Devon in my car and Ruin lay happily in his hat on the passenger seat. Now I would have much more time to spend with him.

When in Devon I live in a Mobile Home on the outskirts of a small seaside town. We are parked right on the edge of the cliffs with the sea below. In the garden is a large summer-house, converted with vertical slats into a hawk-house. I turned Ruin loose in there. He had never been tied up

DAVID RAMPLING

in his life and I saw no reason to start now. Out to sea, on the horizon, is Lundy Island, where I once worked as a shepherd for a year, and where Great Falconers from the past once obtained Peregrines from the highly prized strain that nested there. But the best thing about Devon was that the weather felt almost tropical after Scotland. Ruin and I spent the days in the wooded hill behind us. He much preferred the wood itself and rarely ventured into open ground except to follow me to a new set of trees or to chase some bird that looked particularly vulnerable.

At first I flew him far too fat and didn't have 100% control. He would play around for a while, usually chasing Magpies, but he never pressed home his attack and I don't think the Magpies took him at all seriously. Then perhaps he would do a little soaring above the woods if it was a nice day and he was feeling confident. Then, after perhaps an hour of playtime he would return to me and get down to the serious business of catching sparrows. All this was at about 6 oz and I weighed him twice daily to be on the safe side in his early days. The worry about his weight was a little stressful, so I tended to overfeed, rather than underfeed him.

As time wore on he became less tolerant about strangers, to the point where he would not return to me while a stranger was in sight, ignoring his lure until it was just me and Amy!

Even loose in his summer-house he became spooky if someone he didn't recognise entered the garden. So I figured he was about ready for release.

Next morning, I cut off his bell and took him up to the woods. He played for a while, chasing Magpies, showing his incredible agility. I walked on and he followed through the trees. He shot off ahead,

across an open field and I knew he had seen something. He pumped and glided in towards a groups of Starlings bathing in a puddle. They saw him coming and one raised the alarm. They rose in a tight group twisting and spinning, trying to confuse the approaching hawk. Ruin was amongst them, his feet flashed around, and he had one.

I walked over and picked him and the Starling up. He fed until his crop looked like it would burst.

I cast him off then, into a tree. Usually I would have gone straight home with him on my fist, but this was a change to our normal routine, and he followed a little way as I walked on. I didn't call him and walked home on my own.

Next morning the wind was gale force. I took some food to the woods for Ruin, but there was no sign of him and by the evening I had started to worry. Next morning, the strong winds were accompanied by driving rain. I was soaked to the skin after an hour, and my lips ached from whistling. There was no sign of him all day. I feared the worst, two days out, and the weather would have made making a kill very difficult. I wasn't sure how long a Muskets body reserves would last.

Dawn next morning, the sun shone and the wind died. I walked and whistled. I hoped he hadn't been blown far. He knew the area very well. I knew he would stay close if he could, but I checked downwind for several miles, just to be sure. There was still no sign, so I gave up and walked home.

About 200 yards from home a Blackbird shot across the path in front of me and threw itself into a blackberry bush. A Spar hot on its tail piled in behind it. It looked too big to be Ruin.

I stood and watched. If it was a wild bird I



Ruin the Musket on the scales

didn't want to scare it from its prize. But the Spar had missed. It jumped out, onto the top of the bush.

I couldn't tell, I whistled and held up my hand. He came like a bullet. I walked home with him, and fed him up on the way. He hadn't lost any weight at all. He must have killed at some stage. Next morning, I left his shed door open and he stayed in the garden until lunch time when a stranger ambled past with her dog, and Ruin headed for the woods.

He fed from his lure sporadically after that. Some days he would be near the garden, waiting for me. Other times, he ignored the lure altogether, or just took a mouthful, then went off to soar along the wood edge and torment Magpies.

He is wild now, and no longer allows me anywhere near. All I see now, if I see anything at all, is a blur moving away fast. It might be Ruin, or it might be just another young Musket.

Today was a cold, crisp but sunny day - my favourite kind. It has been three months now since I last positively identified Ruin. I was sat in the garden in the sun manning a little female Sparrowhawk that was bought to me with a wing injury. She is now recovered enough to train and assess her ability to survive in the wild. She was feeding well on the fist when she looked up towards the hill at something which had attracted her attention. It was a Magpie flying along the woodland edge and hot on its tail was a Musket. The Musket flew rings around the Magpie. The Magpie landed on a fence post not in the least bit disturbed by its pursuer, and the Musket landed on the next post. He roused and returned to the woods. I hope he likes Devon as much as I do.



The author with a Golden Eagle

TETHERED BIRDS

NEIL FORBES MRCVS

Tethered birds are an emotive subject in the eyes of many members of the public. The onus is on the falconer to ensure that tethering is only used in a responsible and kind manner, such that no injuries or other welfare implications can occur. As listed in the BFSS 'Code of Welfare and Husbandry of Birds of Prey and Owls' (copies available from Mrs S Dewar, Hawk Board Secretary, 0734696501), birds should not be tethered unless they are



Flying birds can often be successfully trained to be flown straight from an aviary.

being flown daily. Small owls (ie all except possibly Eagle Owls), should never be tethered. Even flying birds can often be successfully trained to be flown straight from an aviary, thereby avoiding the need for tethering altogether.

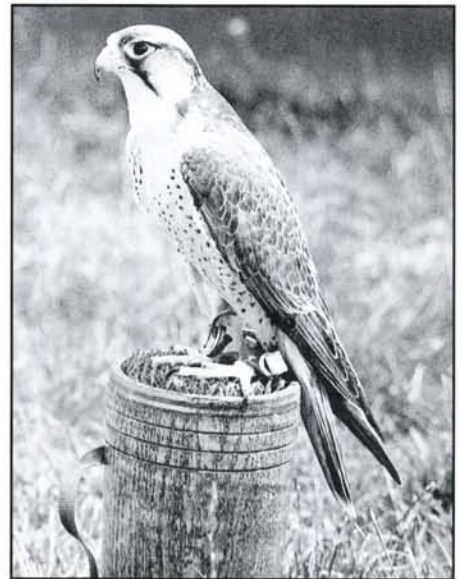
When birds are tethered, they **must** be protected from any possible dangers, and provided with all necessary requirements.

In the case of young birds, when tethered and just starting training, the perch must be placed in a quiet undisturbed position where the bird can be continually observed.

Tethering a bird inevitably prevents it from escaping from predators. Action must be taken to avoid such situations. Human, bird, dog or other predators must be prevented access. In particular, birds should never be tethered in sight of flying birds. The latter many well consider them an easy meal. With any species early in training, particularly excitable species, jesses should be as strong, soft and broad as possible. Leash length must be kept as short as safely possible, with a 'bungee' ring (eg vacuum cleaner fan belt), between the leash and the base of the perch. The latter factors are all important to minimise the chance of trauma to the legs if the bird were to bate.

Any tethered bird, at any time of year, must be protected from any adverse weather conditions. Cold winds, rain, hail, snow, frost and sun should all be considered. Full provision must be made at all times, so that a bird may never suffer from any such adversity. Just because you are in the vicinity and may be able to put the bird in if it rains, is no reason for leaving it unsheltered. In particular, when birds are on display to the public, every possible cause for criticism must be covered before it arises, not only for the sake of the bird, but also for the future of falconry.

Birds on display (static or mobile) in the



It is usually necessary to tether most birds at some time or other

summer months should always have cover. Although it is well recognised that birds of prey, in normal climatic conditions, who are fit and well do not normally drink water, they must have water available to them on a daily basis, and all the time when tethered in the sun. The requirements for water is particularly important in hot weather, if the bird is not eating, is on medication or is unwell. Great care must be taken that tethered birds are well apart and cannot possibly be reached by any other tethered bird. Care should be taken as to who any bird is tethered next to. No bird should be tethered in sight of a bird which it may be frightened of, or intimidated by.

Other unusual factors that should be considered as a risk are fire, flood, fumes (eg carbon-monoxide or lead), chemicals (eg agricultural or domestic pesticides), fungal (aspergillosis risk). Birds should not be tethered near a compost heap, mushroom manure, or down wind of any barn, store or field of drying hay.

Remember, tethering should be minimised. Whilst tethering you must accept responsibility of **every aspect** of the bird's welfare.

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A WIFE OF A FALCONER, LRK AND POLICEMAN.

Lynn Beecroft

I will just tell you a little bit about myself; my name is Lynn, I have two children, a dog, a cat, a parrot and a husband who is a Falconer, LRK and a Police Officer.

I thought you might be interested to hear about a typical day in my life, because I am married to a man who's life is birds of prey. The day begins:

Great it's Saturday, Paul has a day off. We are going to look at carpets today. We get up, put the kettle on for coffee and discuss what we will do but, the phone rings, it's for Paul. (30

mins later) I put the kettle on for another cup of coffee, we get the car out ready to go. (Too late), phone rings (15 Mins later) he says; do you mind going out a bit later? As he is waiting for an update phone call,(someone has had their bird stolen), while we are waiting perhaps we could put the kettle on for a cup of coffee. One hour later the phone rings, but not the call he has been waiting for, so, still we wait, phone rings, it's the police this time, someone needs Paul to ring them, so he is on the phone again. 45 mins later the phone

rings, guess what? it's for me, it's my Mum, but I have to say "Sorry Mum, do you mind if I ring you back, Paul is waiting for an important call", she says O K but I don't think she's very happy, I will have to make it up with her later on. Paul suggests that while we are waiting I could put the kettle on! Phone rings, at last it's 'the phone call', maybe now we can go shopping, it's well after lunch. Hooray, we are in the car on our way to town but guess what? The mobile phone rings, it's another problem. We look at carpets very quickly

because we have the rats to feed and he also wants to fly his Redtail before it gets dark. Two phone calls later we arrive home and I start the dinner. Phone rings, it's a rescue, he says "Lynn, would you mind stopping dinner and, as you used to live in London, would you mind coming to rescue a Sparrowhawk?" So, off we go. We arrive home four hours later, cold and Sparrowhawk-less, never mind, maybe we will have better luck tomorrow. I revive the dinner and Paul listens to the answer-phone, (more messages), we have dinner and collapse into bed. It's 11.30pm. We are just dropping off to sleep and the phone rings, I answer it, "I am sorry to trouble you at this time of night but, is Paul there.....?"

Falconry

**Exciting All
Absorbing Holiday
With A Difference**

*Scotlands renowned
centre offers holidays
in which you will be
flying falcons and
hawks, in scenic and beautiful Border
countryside*

From Novice to Advanced courses including
falconry from horseback.

Fully residential status. We can cater for all
age groups.

Send now for full colour brochure or telephone
L. & D.M. Durman - Walters,
**The Scottish Academy of Falconry & Related
Studies, Hyndlee, Bonchester Bridge,
Hawick TD9 9TB**
Telephone 0450 860666

THE SCOTTISH ACADEMY OF
FALCONRY



& RELATED STUDIES

RAPTOR REGISTRATION

A COMBINATION OF REGISTRATION AND
IDENTICIPPING OFFERS MAXIMUM
SECURITY PROTECTION

REGISTRATION (FOR LENGTH OF OWNERSHIP)
FROM £6

INDENTICHIP IMPLANTATION FROM £15
LOST BIRD LIAISON SERVICE

FOR BIRDS BRED THIS SEASON:
NUMBERED, CLOSED RINGS - ANY QUANTITY
RING + BREEDERS REGISTRATION DOCUMENT £3
RING + BREEDERS REGISTRATION FREE WITH
INDENTICHIP IMPLANTATION.

— ALSO —

FALCONRY FURNITURE & EQUIPMENT, BOOKS,
VIDEOS, HAWK.OWL FOOD, TUITION
HAWKING DAYS
— CONTACT —

PETER MULHOLLAND
BECKSIDE COTTAGE, MOORTOWN, Nr CAISTOR
LINCOLN LN7 6JA ENGLAND
TEL: 01652 678492
CALLERS WELCOME - PLEASE PHONE FIRST



BRITISH HAWKING ASSOCIATION

Est. 1967

PIONEERS OF A REALISTIC 5 YR
HAWKING APPRENTICESHIP SCHEME

**ASSOCIATION MOTTO:
EQUALITY OUR
STRENGTH**

- 1) Our objective is to eliminate unethical attitudes and practices that exist in the hawking fraternity today.
- 2) Embrace unity for all.
- 3) Secure you and your childrens future in hawking.

If you are an aspiring falconer tell us about it, you will get the recognition you deserve with the 'British Hawking Association'.

If you are a dedicated falconer, a novice falconer or simply a falconer who wants to aspire to a higher 'pitch', social status wealth or poverty, it's just commitment and dedication that secures your membership, provided that you have not committed any offences under the 'Wildlife and Countryside Act'. Whether you fly a Kestrel or a Golden Eagle we at the B.H.A. can assure you of a warm welcome and the considerate understanding you equally deserve at all levels of the sport.

If these few principles apply to you, please send a stamped addressed envelope to: B.H.A. Membership Secretary, Kennel Farm Cottage, Old Kennel Lane, Annesley Park, Annesley Nottingham. NG15 OAU

**THE B.H.A IS AN EQUAL
OPPORTUNITIES ORGANISATION**

SOUTH WALES FROZEN FOOD SUPPLIES

Raptor & Reptile Food

Alicia Thompson



Penybont Farm
171 Waterloo Rd
Penygroes, Dyfed
SA14 7PU

Tel: 0269 844610
Fax: 0269 831593
Mobile: 0831 221855

All Food Individually Frozen

JULIAN STEVENS COUNTRY PURSUITS

11 ST BOTOLPHS GREEN
ELTON
PETERBOROUGH
CAMBS PE8 6SG



STOCKISTS OF SOME OF
THE HIGHEST QUALITY

FALCONRY FURNITURE CURRENTLY AVAILABLE

LEATHERWORK BY OUR OWN SKILLED CRAFTSMEN
AND STENCRAFT. BESPOKE SERVICE AVAILABLE.

FOR ORDERS AND ADVICE PLEASE CALL

0832 280061 or 0860 381684

Easy payment terms available on application
ACCESS VISA WELCOME



CLASSIFIEDS

It is an offence to sell or offer to buy or sell most birds (& animals, dead or alive) without a licence or exception from the Department of the Environment, or (for dead birds only) registration under section 6 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981. All advertisements should be accompanied by a declaration form, obtainable, with an explanatory note, from the Advertising Manager.

FOOD SUPPLIES

FRED & PAM TAMS

Suppliers of Fresh or Individual Frozen Chicks, Rats, Mice, Rabbits, Guinea Pigs, Rat Pups, Mice Pinkies & Quail.
Phone: (0782) 550403
Barn Farm, Cheadle Rd, Wetley Rocks, Stoke on Trent

THE PET SHOP

adj. to BASILDON ZOO
Day old chicks £4 per 100
Mice £4 per 25 Froz.
Rats from 30p each.
Vange, Basildon, Essex,
SS16 4QA Tel: 0268 553985

TOP QUALITY FROZEN FOODS

Rats, Mice,
Chicks Etc.
Tel: 0378 291518

DEAD OR ALIVE.

Japanese Quail.
Hatching Each Week.
Ring GPD Supplies
Eves: 0427 880035

C.T. SERVICES CHICKS. RATS. MICE.

Individually or pack frozen.
(Midlands Area)
01384-822674
Delivery arranged if required

VETERINARY SERVICES

NEIL FORBES
RCVS CONSULTANT
Wildlife & Zoo medicine (avian)
and Greg Simpson
CLOCK HOUSE
VETERINARY HOSPITAL
STROUD GLOS
TEL: 0453 752555
Full specialist facilities
available

INSURANCE

BIRD INSURANCE

(UK and Overseas)
For your FREE information pack
Call:
0981 240536 anytime
GOLDEN VALLEY
FINANCE & INSURANCE
Ewyas Harold, Herefordshire HR2 OES

BIRDS

PHILIP GOWDY: UN CETRERO PROFESSIONAL

(AMAESTRAMIENTO
EXHIBICION Y CETRERIA.)
CRIAMOS HALCONES
PEREGRINOS ESCOCES.
ABASTECEMOS: SACRE-LAN-
NARIO-HARRIS,
CERNICALO, ROJO RABO
RATONERO, FERRUGINO,
AQUILAS, BUHOS.
ENTRENADOR EN EL MUNDO
ENTERO.
FAX/TELEFONO: 0406 371495
PARA LISTA.

DOGS

"English" Pointer Pups.
b. June '94. K.C.Reg.
Best working bloodlines.
Ready to start training.
Untouched but
pointing naturally.
Guy Wallace.
0874-754311

Guy Wallace has a limited
number of vacancies for
pointing breeds of gundog
to be trained for next season
hawking. We also train
spaniels & retrievers.
0874 754311

SITUATIONS VACANT

We will have vacancies from May-October 1995
for **1-2 Skilled Falconers, 2 Working Pupils,**
1 Groom (to manage 6 hawking ponies), and
1 Cook/Housekeeper (Aug-Oct only).
We will be hawking and training 30 large falcons
and hawking crows. Based in Wales, Northumberland, Spain
and the Middle East.
Enquiries to Dr Nick Fox Tel/Fax: 0267 233864

TO ADVERTISE IN THE
CLASSIFIED SECTION OF
THE FALCONERS MAGAZINE
TELEPHONE
LYN WILSON ON: 0536 722794

OR WRITE TO:
THE FALCONERS &
RAPTOR CONSERVATION MAGAZINE,
20 BRIDLE ROAD BURTON LATIMER,
KETTERING, NORTHANTS NN15 5QP.

FALCONRY FURNITURE

RAY PRIOR
FALCONRY EQUIPMENT
A full range of top quality Falconry
equipment at affordable prices.
Send S.A.E. for 94/95 price list.
4 Hackney Bottom,
Hampstead Norreys,
Newbury, Berks
RG16 OTU Tel: 0635 200545

TAXIDERMISTRY

D.of.E. Registered Taxidermist
requires all legitimate Birds of
Prey
Best prices paid.
tel:0263 822481/0860 219157
Fax: 0263 821587
For Further Details

THE FALCONER

QUALITY EQUIPMENT BY ROY HART

SEND FOR YOUR FREE CATALOGUE

Finest handcrafted equipment,
using only the best quality
material and made exclusively
in our own workshops.

WALTON WAY
WALTON RD
WELLESBOURNE
WARKS.



Simply the best in the field!

NEW VIDEO

FALCONS OF ARABIA

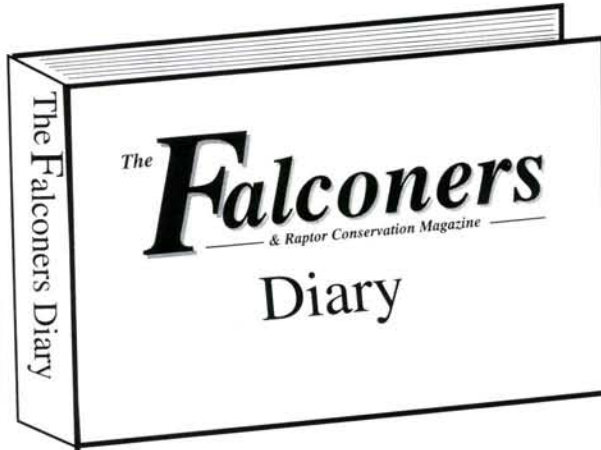
This new video shows Arab Falconers
trapping, training & hunting their
falcons in the harsh, yet beautiful
sands of the Arabian Desert.
See Sakers and Peregrines flown at
the Bustard
(houbara) the
natural quarry of
the Arab falconers
and follow
the typical camp
life these people
lead while pursuing
their sport.



ONLY £25 95 + £1 p&p.

To order Send Cheque/P.O. to:
Trent Video
68 Wood Walk, Wombwell,
Barnsley, S Yorks
S73 0NF Tel 0226 757485

BROUGHT TO YOU EXCLUSIVELY BY THE FALCONERS MAGAZINE



Record your birds name, food intake, weight, and quarry caught, with space below for comments such as training progress, the weather, number and style of flights, or perhaps you went out with some friends and want to record their success as well.

There is information on the most commonly flown falconry birds, accompanied by photographs. With references to quarry species and preferred flying methods

DATE	SPECIES	NAME	WEIGHT	FOOD GIVEN	QUARRY TAKEN
18.11.94	Harris hawk	Arthur	1lb 5oz	2 chicks	1 rabbit & 1 pheasant
Left the house at 7pm. Cold, frosty morning, a little misty at first but the sun came through later. Had four good slips and two were successful. Took like tomorrow's lunch is sorted out. Meeting John tomorrow to fly his Redtail, plenty of quarry this morning, fingers crossed for tomorrow.					
19.11.94	Harris hawk	Arthur	1lb 5oz	2 chicks	
Left the house at 7pm. Cold, frosty morning, a little misty at first but the sun came through later. Had four good slips and two were successful. Took like tomorrow's lunch is sorted out. Meeting John tomorrow to fly his Redtail, plenty of this morning, fingers crossed for tomorrow.					
20.11.94	Harris Hawk	Arthur	1lb 5oz	3 chicks	
Left the house at 7pm. Cold, frosty morning, a little misty at first but the sun came through later. Had four good slips and two were successful. Took like tomorrow's lunch is sorted out. Meeting John tomorrow to fly his Redtail, plenty of this morning, fingers crossed for tomorrow.					

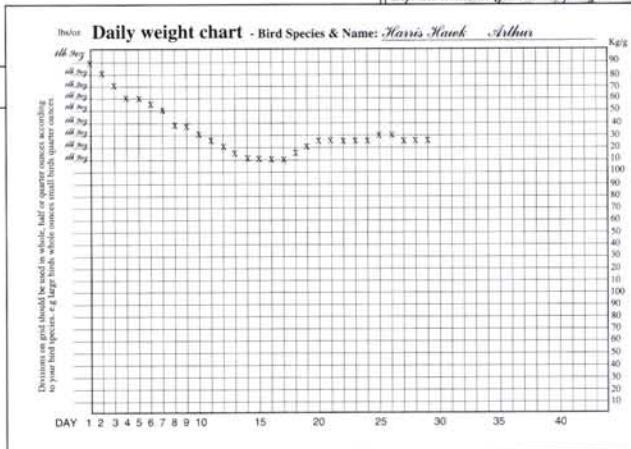
HARRIS HAWK (*Parabuteo unicinctus*)

This is the most popular of all falconry birds. First introduced into the country about twenty years ago, it has been recognised as the most versatile, easily trained and sociable of birds.

Found commonly in South America and Mexico, they are extremely tolerant of each other, and will hunt regularly in pairs.

Their main quarry species in this country are rabbit, pheasant, magpie and partridge, although females will also take hare. They have become commonly known as the "weekend hawk", as once trained they seem to require very little muzzing from one weekend to the next, although if left for long periods of time they can easily become bored and feather plucking is becoming a common problem in Harris hawks when put up for the moult.

As they are from warm countries we tend to find that they do not tolerate our cold winters readily and some provision needs to be made for them when there is a lot of frost about. It would be a mistake to think that because Harris hawks are so sociable that they do not have that same hunting instinct that is so obvious in, for example on the accipiters. Far from it, if left unserved with quarry they will take it upon themselves to try and catch the nearest available, suitably sized creature, be it a rabbit or someone's Jack Russell. If flown properly and kept fit these birds are the very capable and proficient hunters, and, should you decide to buy one there is no reason why you should not have many years of fun and companionship.

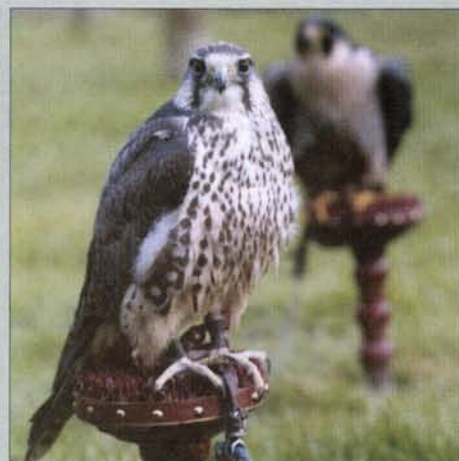


We have included a grid for you to chart your birds weight loss/gain, over a period of up to 45 days, this is a quick and easy way to monitor it in respect to response and easily referred to next season.

As every Falconer knows, it is important to keep a record of your birds progress, charting the relevant details to help you recognise any mistakes or realise when you are getting the best from your bird. As there is nothing specifically available for falconers to do this we have designed and produce a diary/journal for just this purpose. Case bound in a deep red, with pages laid out for recording things such as weight, food intake and quarry caught, and with brief outlines of the most commonly flown falconry birds. There are no dates so you can start keeping the book whenever you are ready, using it for more than one bird if you wish. In this way you can compare your birds performance from one year to the next, always having the information to hand. (Allow 21 days for delivery)

To Order your diary send a cheque or postal order for £8.50 (plus £1.50p&p) to:
THE FALCONERS MAGAZINE,
 20 BRIDLE ROAD, BURTON LATIMER,
 KETTERING. NORTHANTS NN15 5QP.

THE FALCONRY EXPERIENCE



The Falconry Experience is one of the most innovative and exciting new concepts in commercial Falconry.

We are a team of professionals with many years of practical experience, who are committed to providing services of the highest possible standard and quality whilst being totally dedicated to preserving the traditions of our noble art of Falconry.

OUR SERVICES INCLUDE
Hunting Days ♦ Falconry Courses ♦ Corporate Entertainment ♦ Education Facilities ♦ Country Shows ♦ Trained Eagles, Hawks, Falcons and Owls for advertising and commercial promotions ♦

Stockists of "Falconry Originals", for the very best in Falconry Furniture.

Write or phone now for a colour brochure and full information pack



THE FALCONRY EXPERIENCE

The Falconry Experience, Fowlswick Farm,
Allington, Nr Chippenham, Wilts. SN14 6LT
Tel: 0249 783077 Fax: 0249 783078