

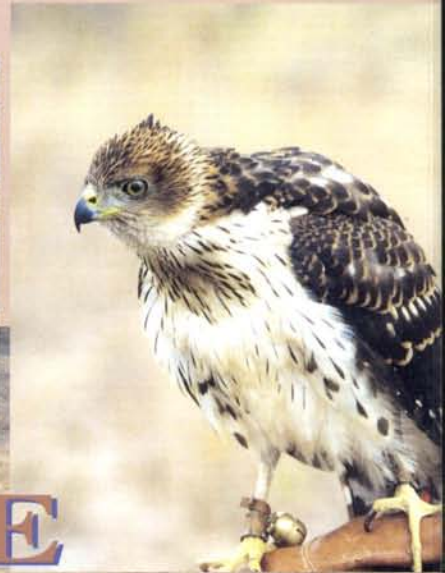
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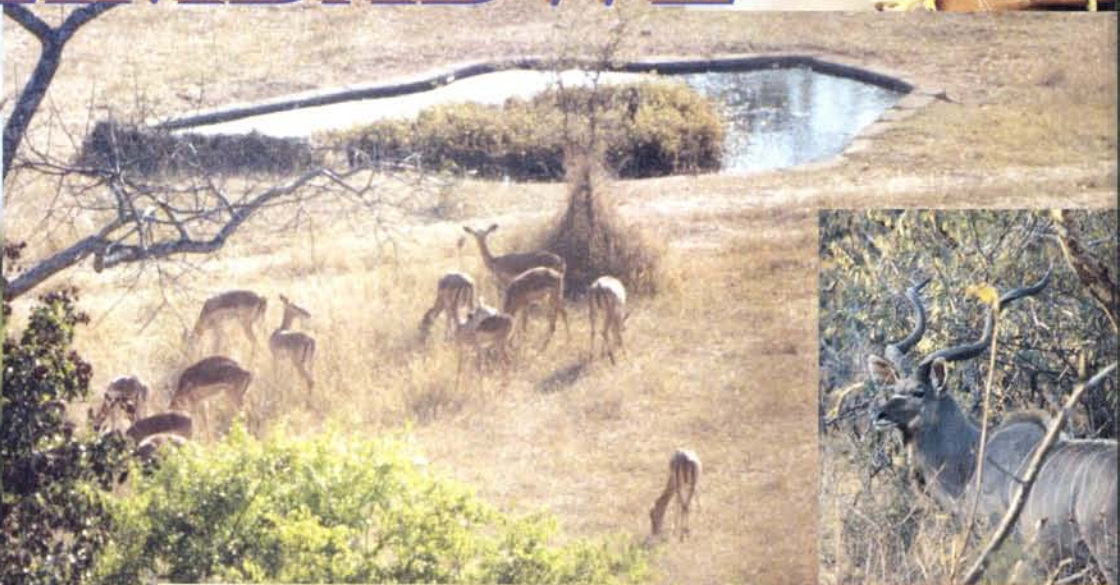
Falconers

& Raptor Conservation Magazine

in



ZIMBABWE



ISSN 0967-2206

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COMMENT

Hello All,

Sorry this mag is so late. Firstly we spent the last two weeks of July in Zimbabwe, (I should have been doing the magazine) then several problems beyond our control. Anyway, here it is. I hope it has been worth the wait.

Changes are ahead for the mag. Due to rising distribution costs we are going to become subscription only, although this will not affect copies going to clubs or centres. We have subscription details just to the right of this box and also on page 38.

A large percentage of the articles in this issue are informational rather than anecdotal. Although we have some nice stories, an hilarious poem, another superb painting by Philip Snow and some great pics of Zimbabwe.

Our Congratulations must go to Tony Scott of the Northumbria Bird of Prey Centre who has bred the UK's first Jackal Buzzards. Well Done!

OK. That's it. Take care all and "Keep Falconry Safe".

David & Lyn

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DESIGN: D PERKINS

ADVERTISING: LYN WILSON

PUBLISHED QUARTERLY BY:

THE FALCONERS & RAPTOR CONSERVATION MAGAZINE

20 Bridle Road, Burton Latimer, Kettering, Northants. NN15 5QP

Telephone: (01536) 722794 **Fax:** (01536) 722794

E-mail: kbu77@dial.pipex.com

Subscriptions: UK & Eire £16.50, Europe £20.00, Airmail £28.00

Cheque/Postal Order payable to: The Falconers Magazine.

For more details phone 01536 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.

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COVER: Various. Photos: D. Wilson.

RAPTOR LIFELINE & IBR REPORT.

LOST

Barn Owl	6205BC96U
Barn Owl	4664BCU
Buzzard	13658
Buzzard	9826W
Buzzard	6448W
Buzzard	7571W
Boobook	Nil
Goshawk	UK76033
Gyr x Lanner	2892V
Harris Hawk	97GCW
Harris Hawk	1044W
Harris Hawk	3631W
Harris Hawk	1PHILL97W
Harris Hawk	KJH95W
Kestrel	534? (DOE)
Kestrel	11390S
Kestrel	12294S
Kestrel	2932RR
Kestrel	9262
Kestrel	UK77525
Kestrel	RWR97S
Lanner	2RPJ97W
Lanner	483RBA97W
Lanner	10749W
Peregrine	16220W
Peregrine	9342V
Pere x Prairie	15209W & 4847V
Pere x Saker	17135W
Pere x Saker	15259W & 9024V
Shaheen	6444V
Sparrowhawk	3415P
Sparrowhawk	3194R
Sparrowhawk	9 97R

FOUND

Barn Owl	291?U
Barn Owl	5900GB??U
Barn Owl	175?BC97U
Barn Owl	135?BC94U
Barn Owl	74?IOA96
Buzzard	?? 80W
Buzzard	UK806??
Buzzard	56??W
Buzzard	UK825??
Buzzard	114??W
Buzzard	5??W
Buzzard	970??
Harris Hawk	??TJWV
Kestrel	104??S
Kestrel	29??RR96S
Kestrel	10??R
Kestrel	K78??X
Kestrel	105??S
Kestrel	50??S
Kestrel	UK826??
Kestrel	39??S
Kestrel	23??S
Kestrel	8??RR96S
Kestrel	11??S
Kestrel	108??S
Lanner	29??W92
Lanner	?RAH96?
Prairie	?NAT?
Sparrowhawk	97??S

STOLEN

1. Harris Hawk 11986W
2. Harris Hawk 293WMW & IBR1333W
3. Harris Hawk 3DB97W

Telephone Numbers:
Raptorlife Lifeline 0118 901 6990
IBR 0870 6088500 or 01926 850000.

Falconry UK at CLA Game Fair

The 40th anniversary of the CLA Game Fair was held at Stratfield Saye from the 24th to the 26th of July. The Falconry area was presented by Falconry UK which was some of the largest hawk-clubbing in the UK. The Central Falconry and Raptor Club, The Hawking Club, The South East Falconry Group and The Welsh Hawking Club along with the Campaign for Falconry, Falconry Furniture, The Hawk Board, The Hawk and Owl Trust, The IBR, and artist John Naylor took part. There were some 30 Birds of Prey on the weathering which was the largest seen at the Game Fair. These included Peregrine, Barbary, Saker, Lanner, Lugger, several hybrids including Gyr hybrids, Goshawk, Ferruginous, Common and Redtailed Buzzard with Golden, Black, Tawny and Bataleur Eagles.

Falconry UK provided a series of short talks throughout the day ranging from a parade of hawks with a brief description of each species and its purpose in Falconry, which incidentally gave a great opportunity for close up photographs, through to hawk breeding advice, how dogs, ferrets and hawks work together (sometimes!). The practical aspects of flying a shortwing as opposed to a longwing and on to the flying of eagles. The Hawk Board and the Campaign for Falconry were invited to put their case for support and an

unusual angle not only on Birds of Prey but all wildlife within nature was put by falconer Kim Elk who is an adopted native American who appeared in full ceremonial dress complete with eagle feathered headdress. Tributes were paid by the commentators to Jemima Parry-Jones who had organised the Falconry arena at the CLA Game Fair for many years but who has now retired from the CLA Game Fair display scene. In the main arena the flying displays were as exciting and enthralling as ever with the Buzzards and Harris's Hawks being complemented by the high flying falcons and new for this year in the arena was the spectacle of Falcons trained to rise to a lure suspended beneath a balloon sometimes as high as 1000' above the arena. The applause after each display was long and loud and showed the crowds were as thrilled as ever with the Birds of Prey flying displays.



HAWK CONSERVANCY WINS MAJOR TOURISM AWARD

Southern Tourist Board has named the Hawk Conservancy its Visitor Attraction of the Year.

The Conservancy has been nominated the STB's 1998 top attraction for venues with up to 50,000 visitors a year, beating off competition from other attractions across Hampshire, the Isle of Wight, Dorset, South Wiltshire, Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Berkshire.

Judges will now be visiting the Conservancy to assess it for a national award, but Hawk Conservancy director Ashley Smith is already ecstatic over the STB win.

"We have been operating for more than 30 years but have never entered the award scheme before," he said.

"I'm particularly pleased because we are a small team and the award is based upon an overall assessment of visitor satisfaction. You have to give judges a good day out to win and they look at every aspect of your operation during a secret visit. If you show poor performance on any aspect of your work you don't get through.

This award recognises the hard work put in by our staff and regular team of volunteer helpers who are always happy to much in at any time to do whatever is required of

them, and it is especially rewarding to win at the first attempt."



Under the eagle eye of Danebury a Bald Eagle, star of the Valley of Eagles demonstration, Ashley Smith (kneeling) and Hilary Smith of the Hawk Conservancy, receive their award from Michael Green chairman of the STB.

Photo courtesy of the Hampshire Chronicle

INNOVATIVE POLEBOX SCHEME LOOKS SET FOR EXPANSION - CROWN ESTATE SUPPORTS VALUABLE WORK

Conservation charity The Hawk & Owl Trust's innovative use of poleboxes to encourage Barn Owls to nest in new areas is proving so successful on Crown Estate land that there are now plans to expand one of the pilot schemes.

Work on Crown Estates farmland reclaimed from the sea near King's Lynn has shown that, by creating grassy field margins and installing nestboxes mounted on poles, Barn Owl numbers can be increased dramatically.

"The partnership between the Trust and the Crown Estate has demonstrated that Barn Owls can be attracted to colonise areas where they had never nested before," said Colin Shawyer, The Hawk & Owl Trust's Director of Conservation & Research.

Now there are plans to extend even closer to the Wash the line of poleboxes on the King's Lynn Estate. This will lengthen the conservation corridor to encourage Barn Owls to spread along it and breed in other new areas.

Christopher Bouchier, Crown Estate Agricultural Estates Manager, said: "We are delighted that the owl box project has proved so successful and look forward to the further development of this valuable work."

The Trust has optimised the

design of these novel poleboxes through years of research on Crown Estate land and elsewhere. The original idea came from the oil palm plantations of Malaysia where Dr Graham Lenton, a member of the Trust, developed a polebox as part of some very successful research.

The boxes on the King's Lynn estate have produced 43 owlets and 47 young Kestrels in the seven years since they were put up. Colin's annual check of the poleboxes this year showed three of the five poleboxes were being used by Barn Owls for nesting. (Poleboxes elsewhere in the country have shown similar success rates this breeding season.)

The design of the poleboxes ensures protection against the wet weather, keeping the young warm and dry inside. Boxes are much less likely to become waterlogged than natural sites.

Similar Hawk & Owl Trust schemes with the Crown Estate - involving both poleboxes and more traditional forms of boxes - at Wingland in Norfolk, Ewerby and Billingborough in Lincolnshire, Bingham in Nottinghamshire and Sledmere, Sunk Island, Swine, Derwent and Boroughbridge in Yorkshire, are part of a continuous habitat corridor the Hawk & Owl Trust is cre-

ating throughout eastern England.

The Crown Estate schemes dovetail with others. These involve the Environment Agency, Consortium of International Drainage Boards, water authorities, county councils and individual farmers. All these schemes contribute to the Farmland, Riverside and Forestry Link, a Trust initiative to create conservation corridors, countrywide to aid the recovery of the Barn Owl.

Poleboxes are large and very heavy. The Trust employs a specialist contractor to sink the wooden poles 5ft into the ground after the rough grassland habitat has been created. The boxes are

subsequently monitored every year (under special licence) by Colin and other trained members of the Trust's conservation team.

The Hawk & Owl Trust has monitored Barn Owl boxes of different kinds for almost 20 years. Findings have shown a success rate of about 75 per cent for pole-mounted boxes compared with about 40 per cent for the more traditional tree box and about 20 per cent for boxes in barns.

"We believe that one of the reasons that they are so successful is that we can position them within the prey-rich habitat that we have created," Colin explained.



July 1998. This year's low number of voles and high rainfall is probably why these owlets in a Hawk & Owl Trust polebox on Crown Estate farmland near King's Lynn have been late hatching.

MAN FOUND GUILTY OF ILLEGAL POSSESSION

In a first ever Case of its kind, which resulted in a record overall fine, a 25 year old man has been convicted in London of offenses in respect of a Wild Goshawk following charges brought under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981.

Scott BALDWIN from Chingford was convicted at Waltham Forest Magistrates Court on 1st April 1998 for the following offences:-

1. Possession of a Wild Bird namely a Goshawk
2. Possession of a Schedule 4 bird that was not Ringed and Registered in accordance with the regulations.
3. Making a False Statement to obtain Registration.

For these offences he was fined a total of £1000.00.

The Court heard evidence that during the 1996 breeding season a number of wild Goshawk nests were visited and blood samples were taken from chicks within these nests and the samples were

then forwarded to Nottingham University to be kept on the DNA Database. In one particular nest that was also subject of routine monitoring from time to time it was later found that the two chicks were missing having 'disappeared' at just over 3 weeks of age.

In September 1996, BALDWIN notified the DETR that he had found a Female Goshawk at Rainham Marshes. He stated that the bird was injured, had Falconry equipment attached and that it was a Full Imprint.

Following an investigation by the Metropolitan Police, photographic evidence was recovered from BALDWIN'S house showing the bird in question. The photographs showed various stages of training from the Creance to being flown free and onto kills of rabbits etc. Evidence was also heard that the photographs had been developed prior to the date he claimed to have actually found it. This evidence proved that he had in fact had the bird longer than he had originally stated.

Evidence was also heard on the

likelihood of a bird being a Full Imprint is such a bird had come from a nest in the wild and was known to be in that nest when aged over 3 weeks.

The court heard further, that the bird had not been found by Police on the day he was visited and that BALDWIN claimed at the time that it had escaped.

In November 1996, staff a Huxleys Experience a Falconry Centre in Sussex were called to rescue an injured bird. It turned out to be the goshawk in question and further evidence then came to light that the bird had been with another Falconer who had lost it whilst it was being flown. When recovered it was found to have a badly broken leg and was suffering from starvation and dehydration.

After under going two operations on the leg, which was proving quite successful, the bird succumbed to Aspergillosis and died. This was a tragic end for what was a magnificent wild Goshawk.

A blood sample was however taken from the bird and Nottingham University were able

to confirm that the bird was indeed one of the chicks that had gone 'missing' from a particular nest.

Apart from the £1000.00 fine imposed by the Court, the Magistrates ordered BALDWIN to pay costs amounting to £3,500.00 making this a total of £4,500.00.

After the Case was heard, Sgt Ian KNOX, a Wildlife Officer with the Metropolitan Police and the Officer in charge of the investigation said "I am very pleased with this result. Wildlife Crime is a serious issue and today's Case proves that there are severe penalties for anyone contemplating an offence".



CAMPAIGN FOR FALCONRY (CFF)

This years Falconers Fair saw the launch of the Campaign for Falconry (CFF). The Campaign was launched with a speech by Jemima Parry-Jones. For those of you who were not there the speech is reprinted below.

This is followed by a brief statement by Marie-Louise Lachallas. Then somenews from Iain Timmins, the Hawk Board co-ordinator

My name is Jemima Parry-Jones and I am the director of The National Birds of Prey Centre, the Taxon Advisory Group Chair for birds of prey in zoos in Britain and Europe, and the Vice Chair of the Hawk Board. I have bred to date 52 species of birds of prey and apart from all the demonstration birds that I fly on a daily basis, I hunt with a female Sparrowhawk who goes by the name of Tanglefoot and whom I have been flying for the last four seasons. I have to say that I am not going to brag about the head of quarry that we have managed between us as it is not particularly impressive, suffice to say that we have a lot of fun together and I would be devastated if things changed in this country in such a way that I could no longer legally take her out and hunt with her.

After the last twelve months, any falconer, or indeed keeper of any diurnal or nocturnal birds of prey would be very stupid if they did not realise that the threats to any field sport, country life in general and falconry in particular is far more heavily under threat than ever before. Some of those threats will come from the Labour Government whom we are likely to have in for the rest of this term and the next one - that will be a total of ten years - ample time for those anti falconry and the keeping of birds of prey to slowly nibble away at our sport.

You will notice I did not say our rights, for those of you who still think you have some God given right to have birds and to fly them - think again. We have no rights other than, at the moment the keeping and flying of birds of prey is still legal. But you must also have noticed that we are one of the most legislated sports and the layers of legal requirements keep on piling on.

However, all is not doom and gloom I promise - how could it be with people as determined as we are not to be beaten. The work that the Hawk Board, whether you like it or not, does is fight for your legal right to keep and fly birds of prey. We fight against legislation in our own government, and against qwangos and committees in Europe and in endless other fields where often attach is not really meant for us.

This is why we are launching the Campaign for Falconry. People like me on the Hawk Board and Jim Chick and Nick Fox and many others cannot go on under the sort of basis we have until now.

The CFF would like to thank everyone for their welcome and support at the Falconry Fair. It was a great pleasure to meet everyone who visited our stand.

For those who were unable to attend I should like to briefly explain our aims.

The CFF is a body set up to fund vital work needed in falconry. We hope to help fund the Hawk Board and use the Countryside Alliance structure in the defence of the sport and raptor keeping. We do not have any dividing lines, anybody keeping a bird of prey diurnal or nocturnal is important to us. I think that says it all.

I and my colleagues are hoping to visit all the Clubs to discuss the CFF however, this should not stop any individuals contacting us with any queries or fund raising ideas.

One of the most frequent questions I am asked is "what do the Hawk Board do?" even though we are fully informed through this magazine by Jemima Parry-Jones and by our Club representatives, the question is still asked. They do a great deal - I for one always thought the work they did would not directly affect me - wrong - if it wasn't for them, my perfectly charming Harris Hawk would have had to hang up his flying jesses for good. There are numerous other occasions when they have saved our bacon - they are doing so at the moment.

We are here to work for you and with you and if the Falconers magazine is kind enough to let me, I will continue to report to you in these pages.

In the meantime I would like to hand you over to Iain Timmins the Hawk Board Co-Ordinator to give you a comprehensive update on the current very pressing issue.

Iain

Thanks to the Countryside Alliance - formerly the BFSS we have a paid officer who is co-ordinating all we do in the UK and worldwide. He is in place, funded for one year and doing a great job. But at the end of the first year we need to be able to fund him. We (and by we - I mean YOU) need to go to other countries for conventions that might make decisions that will affect us. We may need to run advertising to promote our sport, there are many things we need to be able to have the facility to do and the only thing we lack is funds.

In this country we lead the world in captive breeding of birds of prey, we are active in the conservation and rehabilitation field, we have a reasonably good relationship with our governments bodies, we are not afraid to stand up against people who bring our sport into disrepute and we have a world class reputation. We should be proud of ourselves in all we have achieved, but the time has come when we need to pay to keep our sport - it is up to you.

I would like to launch the Campaign for Falconry with a donation, I have here about 35 copies of my new book - they are the first and only copies in the world right now! I will sign, date and sell them all here, they will be £17.99 once they are on the normal market later this week, I hope you will all feel you can pay a little more for this special groups of books and I will donate the first ten sales to the Campaign to start it off.



Taking the plight of UK Falconers to the European Commission.

The single most urgent threat to our sport comes in the continued refusal of the DETR to issue quarry licences in respect of the Skylark - traditionally hunted by the Merlin. Everyone knows that the Skylark population is in decline and that that decline is due to environmental pressures outside of falconry. The numbers taken under licence are of no biological significance. The DETR is now concerned that by issuing ANY quarry licences they may be in breach of the EC Bird Directive. This is quite remarkable as the DETR (formerly the DOE) have issued quarry licences without interruption for 14 years.

Every year they have submitted an annual return to the EC, as required under the Bird Directive. The EC for their part must "at all times ensure that the consequences of these derogations are not incompatible with this Directive". To date they have not commented on any derogation submitted by the DETR. To deal with this matter the Hawk Board has been in constant dialogue with the DETR. We have prepared and submitted a detailed position statement to the European Commission. We have, and will continue to lobby members of the Commission on behalf of falconers to try and ensure we get the right result. At the time of writing, mid July, our papers are with the legal advisers within the EC who have been asked to prepare an urgent response.

By the time you read this we should have our response from Brussels if it is in our favour it will still require a Ministerial decision to reinstate one of our oldest and traditional sports which is of no threat to any bird population.

CLUB DIRECTORY

CLUB DIRECTORY

AVON & SOMERSET RAPTOR GROUP

A well established club with a pool of experience in our membership whether hunting, breeding or an interest in raptors all are welcome, families, juniors and seniors alike. Regular speakers, work groups and excursions are just a part of our programme. Informal friendly meetings are held on the first Tuesday of each month at The Old Down Inn, Emborough.

For further information please contact myself, Rob Cooke on 01749 870004

BRITISH FALCONERS CLUB

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THE BRITISH HAWKING ASSOCIATION

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Regular field meetings, novices welcome, (apprenticeship available) and many other Regular Social Meetings are held.

Changing attitudes to improve standards

George Roach 01623 751339
Garry Balchin 01159 300135

THE CHESHIRE HAWKING CLUB

Meetings:- Held 2nd Tuesday of every month at 8pm. Venue:- Railway Hotel, Mill Lane, Heatley, Nr Lymm, Ches.

We have speakers and Falconry Furniture Manufacturers in regular attendance.

Experienced and novice falconers welcome.

Contact: Phil on - 01204 523622 or 0374 691498 (mobile) or:
Rob on - 01706 845731 or 0378 609467 (mobile).

THE HAWKING CLUB

meets each month at the following locations
South Wales Hensol Golf Academy.

Llantrisant. 8pm 2nd Monday

Plymouth. The Woodpecker, South Brent,

8pm 3rd Monday

Northampton. The Red Lion, Kislingbury.

8pm 4th Monday.

For further information on this recently formed and fast growing hawking club with members throughout the UK

and overseas call our

Chairman Craig Thomas on 01327 261485
or our

Secretary Adrian Williams on 01443 206333

HOME COUNTIES HAWKING CLUB

Affiliated to the British Field Sports Society

Hawley on the SurreyHants borders is where the Club meets on the third Wednesday of the month.

Good husbandry and practices in raptor keeping and flying are promoted by way of education and assistance.

Our programme includes guest speakers, demonstrations, outings and members' issues, and the membership encompasses all levels of experience and knowledge, from novices to seasoned falconers

Ring: John & Laila on 01276 503891
or Alan on 01784 250557 after 6pm

NORTHERN ENGLAND FALCONRY CLUB

**CLUB MEETINGS ARE
HELD AT**

**"The Falconers Rest"
Public House.**

**Thorpe Lane, Middleton, Leeds.
Or Contact: Mrs Alice Douglas,
Secretary. 0113 2777347**

NEW FOREST FALCONRY CLUB

Est: 1990, affiliated to the BFSS & NAFA. Membership currently covers the southern counties.

We have access to 98,000 acres of land and organise regular meeting throughout the hunting season. We meet on the first Wednesday of each month in the relaxed atmosphere of a New Forest pub, the forum of the meetings is to get together with like-minded people to discuss and practice methods of falconry & hawking.

**Please feel free to contact:
Rick on 01202 471388**

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: Keith Channing
2 Amesbury Road, Cholderton,
Salisbury Wilts SP4 OEP

Tel: 01980 629221

e-mail: rba@redtail.demon.co.uk

Web Site: <http://www.redtail.demon.co.uk/rba/>

The South East Falconry Group

aims to support falconry and falconers, drawing its membership from around southern and eastern England. The SEFG provides a forum for falconers to meet, discuss and practice falconry.

Members benefit from access to a wealth of experience, good facilities and a range of field-meeting opportunities.

**Contact Dean White for further
information: 01489 896504
e-mail: WhiteGos@compuserve.com**

THE SCOTTISH HAWKING CLUB

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

MEETINGS of The Welsh Hawking Club

are held monthly, 8pm at:

USK - The Newbridge Inn, Tredunnock
2nd Mon.

CHESTER - The Railway Inn, Helsby, 1st Weds.

PLYMOUTH - The Leys Arms, Kenn 3rd Mon.

ESSEX - The Whalebone Inn, Fingeringhoe
Colchester, 1st Tues.

BATH - The Bull Inn, Hinton, 1st Weds.

The Welsh Hawking Club is Internationally recognised with members throughout the UK.

For further information ring Hon. Secretary:

Mike Clowes on 01529 240443 or

Email: clowes.whc@lineone.net

London Hawking & Owl Club News

A brief summary of some of our club events over the last season.

In late November three of our members went up to Parliament to take part in the lobby against Fosters anti hunting bill, our three members were part of the 24 hour vigil before the lobby took place. Our members arrived about 7am, the weather was on the wet side for a couple of hours, which changed for the better with bright sunshine. By 9.30 am the lobby had swelled to approx 200 people, the lobby of course attracted a large press and media attendance as well as half a dozen or so anti hunting brigade members. On the whole the vigil was enjoyed by all with with and humorous banter by passers by on their way to work. Sadly the odd person now and again called us anything from 'cretins' to 'child molesters', but these people were quickly moved on by police. In all a good time was had by all who took part.

Last season most members had a good flying season with a couple of juvenile birds doing very well indeed. Birds currently being flown by our members include Barn Owls, Kestrels, Merlins, Bengals Eagle Owls and Harris Hawks. The Bengal and Harris Hawks had a good time as the cemetery where we fly our birds had a large population of rats of which several were taken each time the Bengal and Harris Hawks were flown.

In February we had a guest speaker at the club, a Mr John Hall who gave a slide show and a very good talk on flying Eagles, particularly the Golden Eagle, one of which he brought with him. After the talk, which was very detailed on the eagles' sight, soaring and hunting capabilities, Mr Hall then flew his Golden Eagle in a large clearing in the cemetery. Although the eagle could not climb very high its wingspan and its gliding was very impressive indeed. The members who attended on this day were very impressed with Mr Hall and are looking forward to his next visit.

In March the biggest event of the year in which 9 members of the club participated was of course the Countryside March. I do not think anyone was quite prepared for what took place, the number of people who took part in the march was staggering. Our members took approx two and a half hours to walk the route and enjoyed themselves the whole way. We found that it was very well organised and that it was without any trouble at all. Other than the odd anti or two shouting abuse, most of which was not heard over the chanting and singing of the marchers. All in all a very enjoyable day.

We also attended the bird show on Goresbrook Green, Barking. This was held in a large indoor sports centre and was very well attended with many bird exhibitors selling and showing birds, from small finches to very large parrots. There were also stalls selling books and aviary equipment as well as complete aviaries. We displayed a Barn Owl, Bengal Eagle Owl as

well as several Barn Owl chicks and a juvenile Bengal Eagle Owl. In spite of being out of sight of the main hall, so our birds would not frighten the others, we were very busy all day long. This event was very well attended by the public, with huge interest in all the birds on display. We have been invited back next year and look forward to this.

Also in March we had our last hands n day, as by now most of our birds had started to moult or in some cases wanted to breed. We had to content ourselves with a lengthy walk around our cemetery with only two birds making a half-hearted attempt at prey.

In the beginning of April the club had an outing to the Huxley Experience. This was a very enjoyable day as it is a small, family run centre. It is very well laid out with spacious enclosures for the birds on show, some of which were characters indeed. Namely Huxley himself, a European Eagle Owl, who greeted anyone who walked by with a very loud booming mating call. All the birds in this centre were in very good condition, and all with ample room to fly around freely. Only the weather let us down with rain. Most members took a hand at flying a bird as the weather kept a lot of people away. Indeed we had two flying displays all to ourselves. A very nice day out.

In the middle of April our guest speaker was Jenny Wray of IBR fame, who gave us a talk on how she set up her lost and found and registry system. This was a huge task and now involves police stations and R.S.P.C.A centres, nationwide. This was a very in depth talk and all members learnt something new. We all found this talk comforting as if and when we lose a bird and do not retrieve it ourselves there is this 24 hour service available to help us.

In May several members met at Symons Yat in the Wye Valley to observe wild Peregrine Falcons at their eyrie. This was an early start for most members, we left at 5.30 am and arrived at Symons Yat at 9am. This was a lovely hot, sunny day with a slight mist haze in the valley which prevented actual sight of young in the nest.

However, it did not stop us observing the adults when they left the nest to hunt. There were several other people present this day and all were helpful pointing out birds in flight, climbing, soaring, and stooping at prey, mainly flocks of pigeons as they flew over the valley.

We were also able to view common Buzzards as they climbed on thermals over the valley, we actually in total 9 as well as several pairs of ravens and their young who had only recently fledged.

We left Symons Yat at 11am and went on to the National Birds of Prey Centre in Newent, all out

members enjoy visits here as the Centre is excellent. We all had ample time to walk around and view the various types of birds on display, many of which were nesting and some had young which was a delight to see. We also saw three flying displays which included Eagles, several Falcons, Hawks, and various Owls, one of which was very endearing, namely a Burrowing Owl, who flew and ran around the legs of the spectators. One of the female members of our club who has a great love of owls of any kind almost had to be restrained from putting the wee thing into her handbag. Jemima herself flew a couple of falcons which were excellent, their speed in flight and stooping to the lure was breathtaking. Jemima also flew a rare albino Kestrel which performed very well indeed, finishing its performance with the classic Kestrel hover above Jemima's head. Our day ended here with the secretary bird giving her usual performance of killing rubber snakes, this bird is a delight to watch. Most members then made their way home. In all a very long, but extremely enjoyable day.

At the end of May friends of Tower Hamlets Cemetery held their annual open day at the cemetery and our club displayed a few birds; Woodie the Barn Owl, a hobby and Laddie a Bengal Eagle Owl. The open day was well attended by the public with plenty to interest them, our birds, farm animals, mounted police, face painting, bouncy castle as well as nature walks, mini beast hunting and a pet contest. Our stall was very busy with people enquiring about the birds. Some having photos taken with Woody who enjoys this greatly as he adores all the attention given to him. Laddie caused quite a stir as he does not like dogs and would give a full threat display of fluffed up feathers, fully extended wings, swaying from side to side and clacking his beak loudly. Despite this we all had a brilliant day.

In June we will be visiting the Hawk Conservancy.

In July we will be having Mr Keith Offord will give his Raptorophilia talk and slide show.

This has been a brief report on just some of our club events by A Spencer.



Above: Five of our members with their birds. Tony with male Harris Hawk, Sara with Female Harris Hawk, Tony with male Bengal, Peter with Merlin and Ben with female Kestrel

Yorkshire Falconry Club News

Yorkshire Falconry Club have had a very busy few months. There have been lots of new initiatives within the club all of which it is hoped will benefit members. Membership has recently topped 105 and so we are hoping that when the Hawk Board elections are held in August that there will be a place on the committee for us. The increase in membership has not only been in numbers but in the area which falconers are now willing to travel to attend our meetings and we feel we now need to be able to voice the concerns of the many falconers we now represent.

The club felt that this year would be an ideal time to be represented at the Falconers Fair it proved to be a very successful venture

. It gave us the opportunity to let a wider audience know we existed and our club's philosophy. We also finally managed to put faces, to voices that had contacted us over the last three years, and make lots of new contacts many of which are being contacted by e-mail as we compile the next years list of speakers. For all those clubs who made the effort to come and introduce themselves to us thank you. For those who didn't, it was a missed opportunity to make stronger links within falconry and with the various initiatives such as the Campaign for Falconry surely it is in everybody's interested to increase solidarity within the sport. There was some sadness to our visit as four days before the fair Peter Mullholland, who was both a member and a friend to the club died, he will be sadly missed by us all.

The club is holding an invitational field meet in October in North Yorkshire. We

have invited 6 falconers each from 9 clubs to a weekends hunting. The tenth group will be made up of 6 invited guest who otherwise wouldn't get an opportunity to attend. The club is arranging all the stewards ferreters etc, all our guest are expected to do is hunt and enjoy themselves. It is hoped that this will become an annual event.

Yorkshire Falconry are on the web. After much muttering and grinding of teeth the site was launched on the web. Some of the site is still under construction but you can get a flavour of the club and see where we are and the type of land available to our members. So if you like to find us the web address is <http://www.longwing.demon.co.uk>.

If you would like to contact the club either e-mail us on yorkshirefalconry@longwing.demon.co.uk or write to Kim Myers 8, Belford Drive, Bramley, South Yorkshire S66 3YW.

Scottish Hawking Club Report July '98

Well the season is upon us once again, that last feather has been coaxed to come down that little bit quicker. This coming season is looking quite good for field meetings, our 4 day meeting and AGM will be held in Dumfriesshire this October, and we seem to have our monthly meetings quite well organised. The rabbit population seems to have exploded in the southern part of Scotland, hopefully the rest of the country will have experienced the same, this should mean some good sport for all. We are continually looking for new venues, with ground game for small groups. Please contact the club if you have any ideas.

If anyone is applying to the Scottish office for licenses to take larks, or any other quarry species could they please do so as soon as possible, please let the club know what the outcome of your application is. Scotland was fortunate last year that lark licences were granted, without problem, unlike England. We must keep up continuity and not allow us to lose out by default.

This September will see Neil Forbes up for another of his first aid courses, if it is anything like the last one we were fully booked, so contact the club soon if you wish to attend. This is a very good course and it is to be recommended to all falconers new or experienced, the course notes supplied are invaluable should you find you have a problem with your bird.

Scone Palace was a success again this year, with the weather forecast not looking to good we had a suprisingly dry fair, it only rained mid day on Saturday. There were probably about 50 birds on display this year, at all of the stands, with the high-light being a white Gyrkin, he was a spectacular bird and he knew it. There were also 3 furniture manufacturers attending the fair as well, so this is definitely becoming the falconers fair of the north.

The club wishes all falconers a good coming season.

Welsh Hawking Club Report

A very busy period for "The Welsh" over the last few months with the club taking on many new members.

We have now finalised two new regions in Essex and Bath, this has come from the demand by fellow falconers in and around these areas. Jemima Parry-Jones will officially open the Bath group on the 2nd September. Both the regional groups are set for success.

During the Spring and Summer members have been bust protecting Falconry by attending the huge demonstrations in London on 1st March and promoting Falconry at many venues, for example "showtime" has included the Falconry Fair last Whitsun and contributing with the flying at the CLA Game Fair and shortly the Midland Game Fair in September, also members have been running many local flying and static displays at shows throughout the UK.

On the social scene we held a successful weekend comp and BBQ with fun and games for all the family, a talons-on-teach-in

with Vet Neil Forbes (twice), Gun Dogs for Falconry with Guy Wallace (thrice!) regular meetings and on the hunting side overseas hawking trips planned and to date 20 field meets organised at game in the UK.

Our annual magazine "The Austringer" celebrated its 30th edition in splendid colour and members have also received regular hot-news in our newsletter. The Club has had a most successful breeding year, being able to offer Harris and Goshawks to its members.

We are members of the Countryside Alliance, BASC and now the CLA with affiliation and membership links to the Cape Falconry Club in South Africa and the Californian Club (USA).

Shortly we shall be surfing the net on WWW.eclipse.co.uk/admiral/ and we welcome new members to join our vibrant club (details on page 7).

Good Hawking.

RAPTOR BREEDERS ASSOCIATION AGM

A reminder to all members that the AGM will be held at Blunsdon House Hotel, Swindon on Saturday October 3rd at 7pm (for 7.30) and not at 2pm as stated in last newsletter. Full details will be announced in the next newsletter due in the next 2 weeks. Please make every effort to attend. The main speaker will be Sean Wall from the Institute of Terrestrial Ecology who will speak about his work with Robert Kenward on radio tracking raptors. We will also have Jim Chick from the Hawkboard to answer your questions and hope to have a representative from the Campaign for Falconry.

There is important business to discuss and elections to hold for officers of the Association. We are looking for new blood in whatever capacity. Bring along guests and enjoy the chance to hear good speakers and talk about the breeding season and the future as you would like to see it for the RBA.

I look forward to seeing you on Oct 3rd. Robin Pote, Chairman.

THE HAWKING CLUB NEWS REPORT

The Hawking Club is now almost six months into existence and we are very pleased at the continued increase in membership. We have plans for field meetings in several areas in the coming season. We intend to hold a club get together in the midlands shortly to which all members will be invited. The club recently attended the 40th anniversary of the CLA Game Fair held at Stratfield Saye where our members were involved with the Falconry UK area. Invitations to several international field meets have recently arrived and some members are contemplating attending these meets. Evening meetings are continuing at Northampton, South Wales and Plymouth. Subscription costs £20. If you have any queries please contact our Chairman, Craig Thomas on 01327 261485.

A bucket, some rope and a Kite.



**RAPTOR
RESCUE**

Registered Charity No. 283733

Mick Cunningham

The items listed above might sound like the ingredients for a Krypton Factor test, but in fact they are vital equipment for the modern rehabilitator, as Mick Cunningham explains...

The release of a once sick or injured bird of prey can be a very rewarding experience; even more so when the species of bird concerned is one which is not encountered on a regular basis.

In March of this year, we took into care a male Red Kite.

A cursory examination revealed it to be quite thin and a little dehydrated. He looked physically healthy, apart from damage to one eye. He was admitted late at night, so after administering 20ml of glucose via a syringe and crop tube, the bird was placed into an intensive care unit (heated and secluded) where he was left until the following morning, when hopefully, his condition would have stabilised.

DAY 1 - The next day the bird was given a thorough examination and had a tail sleeve fitted to protect his especially long and vulnerable tail feathers from damage whilst in care. The eye injury which had been noticed the night before, turned out to be an old wound which had healed up. There was no evidence of any physical injuries, although being a Kite he was "playing dead" throughout the entire examination, so any neurological problems could not be ruled out until later on in the treatment. He was discharging an unusual amount of oral fluids, which suggested he was experiencing some pain or discomfort.

His first feed consisted of 50% glucose and 50% liquid food (Liquivite), delivered as previously described via syringe and crop tube. By the end of the day the bowels were back in working order and some elasticity had returned to the skin.

DAY 2 - The Kite was taken to the veterinary surgeon, where x-rays, a throat swab, mute and blood samples were all taken for analysis.

Later, the three x-rays confirmed the good news that there was no skeletal damage, however, the mute and swab tests indicated massive amounts of capillaria in the bird's system; this may explain the the fluid discharge. Blood test results revealed the presence of 0.65 micromols of lead per litre and this figure was probably even higher when the bird was first admitted into care.

The old head injury had, in fact, severely restricted the kite's vision, but later tests proved that there was some sight in the eye.

DAY 3 - The bird was force fed, using chopped up food that had been dipped into a glucose/saline solution. Apart from supplying extra fluids, this also helped the kite to swallow by acting as a lubricant. By the end of the day he had started to feed himself with

the chopped up food.

DAY 4 - The heat pad in the hospital unit was turned off and the bird received its first dose of general wormer (Panacur @ 1ml per Kg). At this point he was fitted with a D.o.E. cable tie. Continuing to feed himself with the chopped up food.

DAY 5 - The Kite was transferred to a small mews - 3m x 3m - and full carcase food was left with him. The bird was constantly lying down when being observed, but is eating the food provided.

DAY 6 - Bird moved again into a 3,000 cu. ft secluded aviary, complete with observation camera. After about 10 minutes, he stood up and roused. Then proceeded to make circuits around the aviary - on foot!! Looking quite ridiculous, especially with the tail sleeve still fitted, which served to exaggerate his ungainly movements, he walked several circuits of the aviary after which he could be seen gasping and trying in vain to fly up to the perches 9 feet above. I left him resting and on my return I was pleased to find that he had managed to gain one of the perches.

In an attempt to build up his condition over the next few days, I wanted to encourage the bird to fly around the aviary. However all my attempts met with failure. He simply flew onto the floor and then froze, refusing to move even when touched. From camera observations, it was obvious that fitness, or rather a lack of it, was preventing this bird from being suitable for release. How was this bird going to get some exercise? The answer turned out to be a bucket, some rope and a few pulleys!

The bucket was placed at one end of the aviary and a rope attached to the handle. This rope was then threaded through the roof of the aviary and run back to the observation/camera monitor site. A second rope was fixed to the only other perch in the aviary (which was a swinging perch) and threaded back in the same manner to the observation site.

A simple twitch of the bucket rope sent the Kite winging across the aviary to the swinging perch, whereupon another quick tug on a rope would disturb the bird again, sending it flying back to the other, "bucket" perch - get the idea? This somewhat crude, Heath-Robinson method worked rather well!

The first sessions showed the bird to be exhausted after only 2 or 3 flights across the aviary, but following 14 days of continuous and increasing daily sessions, he was completing 30-35 flights, 6 times a day and showing little sign of exertion. I am not suggesting that he was fully fit, but a physical examination showed unmistakable firming of the flesh around the keel and a definite build up of muscle around the humerus/breast area.

As a final test, jesses were attached and a 250 metre, self-running creance was utilised. This incorporated a bungee arrangement in

the line to minimise the effect of being pulled up (which we hoped to avoid in any case).

The Kite was placed in the centre of a large field, away from any trees or cover. Within a few minutes he was up and I knew after only 20 metres or so that he was suitable for release. The ever increasing length of creance must have been getting progressively heavier, but despite efforts to slow down the creance spool, the Kite continued pumping and took out the entire 250 metre line. This did not stop him, as he then proceeded to fly round in a very large circle (yes, a full 250 metre radius) and the process became more like flying a "kite" in the wind, except that we had considerable difficulty in actually getting him back down to earth!

Once safely back in the aviary, I contacted Tony Cross from the Welsh Kite Trust to arrange a release. Tony had actually fitted a B.T.O. ring to this genuine Welsh Kite as a chick in the nest, some two years earlier. Grateful thanks to Tony for making the long round trip to pick up this bird.

Tony later informed me that the release itself was very encouraging; the bird flying a good straight distance, staying on the wing all the time, eventually circling and climbing until out of sight. It was actually released at a Kite feeding station in Wales which it used to frequent as a juvenile. So, he should be familiar with the area and, more importantly, should the bird experience problems finding food, he knows some will be available at the feeding station. This is an ideal situation which really means that the bird has been put out to semi-hack.

A couple of primary feathers were unfortunately tipped whilst the bird was in care, but Tony can use this as an aid to field identification, until the bird moults them out.



TONY SCOTT BREEDS COUNTRYS' FIRST JACKAL BUZZARDS



April the female had started to add lining to the nest and within a few days had laid two eggs. I was sure they were infertile and after eight days removed them. The next day I was surprised to see the male attempting copulation and in the following days succeeded several times a day. Three weeks after the first clutch was removed the female laid a further three eggs. These were left with the parents who both shared incubation, for three weeks before being replaced with hens eggs and artificially incubated. Thirty six days into incubation all three eggs pipped and hatched two to three days later. At this stage the hens eggs were removed and a ten day old kestrel was placed with the parents for rear-

ing. The young Jackal Buzzard chicks at first were doing well, raised on a diet of quail, rabbit and chick but at ten days old, just before they were due to be put back with their parents they developed a crop infection, this resulted in them having to undergo several days' veterinary treatment including crop washing and antibiotic injections before they were cured. During this time the parents were successfully rearing the kestrel but had also started to copulate again on a regular basis. As these were the first Jackal Buzzards to be bred in the UK I decided mainly due to the re-copulation, not to replace the kestrel with all three chicks but to play it safe and creche rear them and at the time of writing all the chicks are fit and well at three and a half weeks old, the kestrel is still being reared by the parents who continue to copulate.

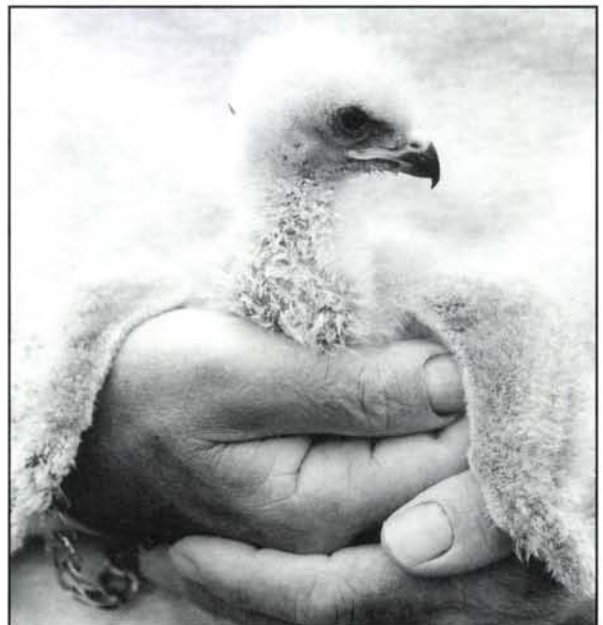
Left: Adult Jackal Buzzard.

Below: Baby Jackal Buzzard.

It was around September 1997 that I was offered a pair of Jackal Buzzards to add to the centres' collection and as I was informed that they were the only pair in the UK I decided to acquire them. I had never heard of them prior to this let alone seen one so I was pleasantly surprised when they arrived to see that they were a colourful bird, something like a large Harris with reasonable sized feet. The birds were placed in an open fronted aviary 18 by 12 by 8 with half

the roof covered and a large nest box in one corner. They soon settled in, the male being a little more nervous than the female but they both accepted visitors without a problem.

Nothing much happened until late February '98 when the male started nest building in the designated box, the female taking no part in this. By the start of April I had seen no interaction between the pair and I had just about given up any hope of obtaining a positive result. However by mid



SECOND "EAST" ANGLIA FALCONRY FAIR

The British Birds of Prey & Conservation Centre at Stonham Barns will host its second "East Anglian Falconry Fair" in Stonham Aspal, Suffolk on Sunday September 20th 1998. Following the success of last years event, the organisers have invited a comprehensive range of exhibitors to take part. In addition to stands selling furniture there will be hood, stick and bell-making. Suppliers of telemetry, incubators, microchipping and insurance services and health products and supplements. The Welsh Hawking Club, Countryside Alliance and Campaign for Falconry.

There will also be ferrets, Gun dogs, flying displays, and entertainment for the rest of the family.

Further details from Andy Hulme on: 01449 711425.

NEW RANGE OF SWIVELS

One of the problems many years ago when people designed specialist swivels for birds of prey was that they didn't cater for very small or very large birds. Swivels for these had to be specially made or improvised using other types of swivels.

It is nice to see that many falconry furniture suppliers are now doing a full range.

Jim Moss from Crown

Falconry has, with the aid of many falconers, designed a range of swivels from a very small one, which is an excellent little swivel for Merlins, Sparrowhawks, Kestrels, right up to a very large eagle swivel. As you can see by the photograph these are polished stainless steel. They have been tested for strength and durability.



RAPTORS of Britain and Europe

* *The Merlin*

is one of our smallest & most dashing raptors, famous for its ringing flights after larks, but will chase any bird up to Curlew size. Breeds on high ground, preferably heather, & winters on lowland farm, estuary or marsh, often with N. Harriers. There are roughly 875 pairs in Britain, joined in winter by others from the sub polar regions.

♀/imm.



adult ♀
Anglesey



adult ♂



IV

JORNADAS INTERNACIONALES DE CETRERÍA DEL NORTE DE ESPAÑA LEÓN 98



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**ENROL NOW AND YOU MAY GET THE AMAZING PRIZES YOU HAVE EVER
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Hawk Talk

John Matcham

For the first time in eight years I managed a trip to the Falconers Fair and I'm pleased to say it has grown not only nationally, but also internationally. Even though it is still held on one of the busiest weekends of the year for professional falconers. I know of many who would like to go for a day but just can not get away from their own demonstrations. Fortunately I decided to stop public demonstrations this year while we move. The new ad in the next issue will have the new numbers etc.

To add a twist to my day out, our illustrious editors ganged up on me and requested an article on 'Entering Hawks'. Make of that what you will. In the meantime I'll attempt to write about a very contentious subject, Training for Hunting. I don't personally believe that there is a set of hard and fast rules for this and believe a good understanding of the birds and their quarry to be the key. Bible bashers better brace yourselves.

Unless you have been raised in the country, by country people, covered in everything imaginable, crawled into holes just to see who's in, been lucky enough to spend nearly all of your time with animals and game keepers and you're used to leaving all of your clothes at the back door. Don't take a bird hunting. All of the lessons learnt doing the above will enable you to understand the countryside with all, its fauna and flora. A good apprenticeship will do the same, for most city folk, but not all. I did mention the word contentious didn't I.

I can only speak for and on behalf of the birds in this case and tell a few of the tales that have come from my days out hunting and watching the interaction between my students and hawks.

'From a birds point of view the human isn't much of a Raptor. Unable to fly, It's noisy, cumbersome and at times things would go much better if they were just not around at all. Why they can't just let us out of our aviaries to get on with the job, we will never understand. Take stalking Rabbits for example, they don't seem to get it at all. Humans need to approach from down wind, that's fine as long as you aren't flying in to it, doubling the work to catch a creature that can run like stink. As for releasing me on an uphill slope and looking bemused when I land in a tree to rest, that really takes the biscuit'.

'A Rabbit has large ears for listening with, although they'd never have guessed it, whiskers for feeling vibrations, it's handy being able to fly you don't have to touch the ground, and great noses for smelling with. Humans invariable pong

of something unnatural, that's usually enough to give the game away. For some strange reason Rabbits seem to fear Humans'.

'To add insult to injury, humans have lousy eyesight, poor hearing and can't climb trees, of course they wouldn't have to if they could fly. So to compensate, they attach a bell to my tail, which is sometimes useful for calling room service, and bells to my legs. This means that Mr Rabbit gets fair warning of my arrival, having been alerted from two miles away by clodding great feet and the great smell of Brut .

We were born with the knowledge, 'all that is fury or feathery qualifies for lunch'. Believe it or not, although I may not be super efficient at first, in time I will get the hang of it, or as mother nature planned, die. If only humans realised that their job is to give me longer to learn'.

The fact that man attempts to play a part in what is a normal natural event, complicates things. Like the time I took Melanie, my much better half, on her first hunting trip. We were driving up a hill on the Batsford estate, on my old patch as we called it, and spotted two cock pheasants feeding just under a hedge. The hill descended below them across a large open field for about five hundred yards to a row of Oaks and Elms about a mile long, beyond the trees the valley dropped

They didn't realise that a man pretending to be a dog was about to ambush them.

to the farm half a mile away down the hill. Even if we miss we should see a good first flight and possibly a second into the valley. Melanie stood behind the Landrover with Lady a female Harris Hawk with simple instructions, 'When you see Pheasants let go'. We had left the dogs behind as Lady always found it hard to train two dogs as well as two humans at the same time, so I got down on my hands and knees and crawled around the ploughed field above the pheasants. They didn't realise that a man pretending to be a dog was about to ambush them. With a loud roar I leapt up from the ground and the chase was on. Except it wasn't. Lady's bells were ringing but no sign of Lady. I ran round the back of the Landrover to see Melanie still holding on tight to the jesses of a very disgusted Lady. Melanie was very upset and felt terrible about the whole thing, apologising to me profusely when an apology to Lady may have been more appropriate. I

suggested that we let Lady follow on for a while and we walked on up the hill.

On the brow of the hill was a dead elm that had been cut off flat, about twelve feet up. Lady landed and a pheasant beneath our feet caught her eye. Before she could crash into the undergrowth, the pheasant took flight with Lady on its tail, but she was inexperienced and with a couple of jinks, he headed for deep cover in the dense forest to our right. Lady followed half heartedly almost to the edge of the forest, when a Hare stood up in front of her on the ground. He obviously had not been paying attention, concentrating on the Pheasant and not the cause of the commotion. Lady pitched in, hitting a direct blow to the head. I was just a little worried at this point; a beating from a large Hare is not good for a Hawks' confidence. Lady instead of raking and pitching up for a second stab landed expecting the Hare to lie down obligingly and be eaten. Instead it got up and ran round and around to confuse her, then headed off across the field. Apparently not one to give up Lady followed, again outclassed she soon lost ground. Just as the game was up another Hare took off to her left and down the hill. This one she would catch, and I was sure bind to it, when up popped another. Distracted she changed her course for the third Hare and as two more entered the game she finally gave up, she rested for a moment before returning to the old elm above us.

Lady had not yet been entered yet this is one of my favourite hunting chases of all time. We were just spectators hidden away behind a hedge.

The following week while out with paying customers and after a hopeless day with little quarry seen, I took one last chance on a Rabbit being in a small bush in the middle of nowhere. This bush had produced Rabbits in the past when things looked grim. It was late and I would be breaking the rule, 'never hunt within an hour of darkness'. I felt that too much human interference was the problem, so I did not warn the customer, who by now was lagging a bit. I sent the dog in and out popped a Rabbit, almost by accident Lady was released. Forty yards later having crossed a hedge and an old Cotswold wall the Rabbit let out a squeal and at last she was entered.

Two years ago I invited Bill, Adams' predecessor, to help me show a group of new students what I hoped to teach them in the following weeks. We took them for a walk across the fields behind the school, they hoped to carry hawks with them, instead they were asked to walk with Bill while I walked ahead. At an

unplanned point I came to a sudden halt, calling them on with a hand signal I said, 'Well Bill what do you see'. Bill replied, 'There's a Sparrow hawk hunting that hedge down there, a Buzzard circling our heads and a Kestrel staying out of trouble in the tree to our left and four Partridge on the ground about half a mile in front of us'. The students replied, 'Where?'. Hunting in these conditions would be pointless. The partridge feel safe, as the Sparrow hawk appears to be more interested in smaller quarry at this moment in time. The Kestrel is not really a physical threat but will certainly alert the neighbours of an intruding Hawk. The Buzzard would get very angry after all it is his territory and he has the advantage of height.

The same two students returned the following week to the same patch of land, only this time conditions were better, just a light breeze and the sighting of a few Rabbits. A large oak halfway along the hedge is always a good starting point, a gate is an excellent place a hundred yards or so further down for spectators. The students were instructed to stand quietly at the gate and observe. With Bill on one side of the hedge and I on the other we started from the tree and worked the hedge towards the gate. Gasket a small male Harris was sitting in the tree and already anticipating the chase, he'd seen us at work on this hedge before. I decided that this was a good time to relieve myself and taking a moment to step in to the ditch I did, thankfully Gasket is not interested in such small pickings. When suddenly Bill asks where did I think Gasket thought he was going? Looking up I see two students making large up and down movements with their arms, beck-

I felt sorry for him, he had been tethered for nearly a year and almost never flown,

oning us in their direction. Gasket got the message and was well on his way to investigate. Landing on the gate he looked around for a Rabbit but could not see one, he squawked loudly in anger, as the two Rabbits Bill and I had been stalking for him, ran the other way. We have a special name for that gate now.

My old male Harris Hawk Horace, decided while out hunting one day, that he would use the sense of touch to get his lunch. A lady visitor who had been holding him for me, while I went to advise another student on a pick up, suddenly let out a scream for help. Horace who is known to our students as 'Horace the Horrible', had felt something warm and furry in front of him and struck out with both feet firmly. 'Don't worry', I said, 'I'll just warm up my hands and we'll have him off in a jiffy'. Even blind fold this Hawk knew where he could find lunch.

Gasket came to me as an extra thrown in cheap, when I purchased an Eagle a few years ago. I felt sorry for him, he had been tethered for nearly a year and almost

never flown, the, 'so called professional', who had kept him said he was useless and would not hunt. This year Adam accidentally flushed a Roe Dear, weighing in at a top weight of one pound eight ounces in his boots, Gasket thought it was fair game, gave chase and meant it. He has turned out to be the best Hawk I have ever flown, he has taken a liking to chasing Larks that he'll never catch and almost anything that moves. Stopping him is proving to be difficult.

All of the above is probably unhelpful for those who struggle with entering a hawk. In that somewhat vague statement lies the answer to entering. If you are struggling you will not succeed. Forcing a situation rather than creating an environment for something to happen naturally, is not the same.

Each hawk will enter when it is ready and it can only be ready if you are. By getting it in the right place at the right time and in conditions that are perfect or as near as damn it, and this takes experience. 'I don't know how but I just know when their ready, call it a gut feeling if you like', these are words I have heard from many experienced falconers, yet none seem able to describe how they know. It just seems to happen and you only know on the morning of the final chase. I believe that it is at this point experience tells them that they have achieved an understanding of the requirements of this particular bird and now with a little help it will succeed.

How then can we expect a bird on L plates to learn about humans when we ourselves are novices and when each bird is slightly different from the next. The rules may be the same but every time they evolve to suit the needs of the present. Together and with time and patients, even the most haphazard bird and clumsy falconer will catch something in the end. I or rather my first hawk caught a daddy longlegs and we progressed from there as my birds wrote the rules.

A falconer sold Horace to me when I returned from Switzerland in 1990. I had spent ten years studying the Kites, Buzzards and Eagles among other things while I was living on the High Plateau. I soon wanted to go back, having been in England only a few weeks. Life in the mountains suited me better than the populated lowlands, too long in the wilderness perhaps. 'I've lost my hunting grounds he said', and so Horace was mine. Horace like me finds humans difficult to understand at times, just as I am sure are we to my fellow humans. It became obvious soon after, that this revered hunting bird had never been entered at all and he was then already five years old. I only confirmed this quite recently when a breeder visited us and recognised. A simple check of ring numbers and I had his full history. He had been troublesome from the start. Sitting in trees and scream-

ing at his falconer demanding food, his unsociable behaviour meant he could also not be flown in display. Perhaps because I was not aware of any of these so called faults, I didn't have any problems entering him. We just sort of went out there and got on with it. He has flown hundreds of displays and hunted every year, he still however hates people. I guess that he and Gasket help to disprove the old urgency in entering Hawks.

Books, in particular old books, talk of bagged quarry and a host of other man made and amusing techniques. All written by people who had wonderful imaginations in an era that did not permit a man to announce in public that he talks to his birds and worse that they should understand and reciprocate. Women could of course say what they liked but risked being burnt at the stake until recently. I do not agree with bagged or trapped or tethered quarry, it just means the individual has given up on the Hawks natural ability to hunt. In turn we should perhaps equally consider that if a particular young bird is reluctant to enter, then perhaps it was not meant to be. For my part in the case of Hawks a dummy made of a true skin has always sufficed. Each bird in turn has shown me the way in which it wishes to see the dummy presented, with

For my part in the case of Hawks a dummy made of a true skin has always sufficed.

that knowledge and the knowledge gained as a very muddy little boy, we go hunting.

I too could have written of techniques and gadgets, but they are all just tricks to allow me to stay one step ahead on the Hawks learning curve, so that I may create the next illusion before we move on to the real thing.



Mac's Story

Ray Hooper



Mac, a dog to whom only having three legs poses no problem.

"You can't teach an old dog new tricks", the conversation went with my wife, after returning home from a blank days hawking.

I had been wandering around on my hunting ground, bashing bushes, tapping trees, wading through waist high stinging nettles. Not seeing any game at all, there was nothing about apart from a fox who decided to follow me at a distance. My Harris Hawk "Charlie" must have thought it great fun watching me crashing about knowing he would be rewarded even though he didn't chase anything.

"I need a dog", I explained to my wife Mandy. "Why not try Maggot I'm sure he can find the odd rabbit" she remarked. Well Maggot was a dog Mandy obtained 12 years previously from a last chance dog rescue, which meant that if he wasn't rehomed within a few weeks he would have been destroyed. His real name was Max but because of his condition we named him Maggot. He wasn't a very energetic dog, in fact the only time he would break into a trot was when he discovered a herd of cows chasing him but that's another story. So, after gaining a vote of confidence from my nearest and dearest I had to set about obtaining a hawking dog to add to our ever growing list of pets.

I telephoned Wendy Knight, a friend of ours who owns Abbeyoaks Kennels a Gt Bentley. Wendy had a Cocker Spaniel puppy which I had taken a shine to. As I have never trained a dog before Wendy persuaded me it was a good idea to take on a puppy. I was a bit disappointed and thought I would be trudging through the bushes for ever more.

However my prayers were answered when the telephone rang, it was Wendy with some good news. "How about trying Mac?" she said. Mac, "Sealpin Mace" (his proper name), is a handsome Springer Spaniel, one of Wendy's Field Trial s Champions. He was eight years old and recently retired from field trials, a real softy who Wendy thought would enjoy life as a

hawk cum house dog. I was overwhelmed by this offer and shot over to the kennels to pick him up, along with a dog whistle which Wendy proudly presented me with. I decided there was not time to lose and headed for the woods to put Mac through his paces, in my haste I never asked Wendy the commands I should use. When we arrived at the woods I got Mac out of the van and ordered him to walk to heel, he stuck to me like a bad sell and I was very impressed. I then wanted him to find something, anything to remind me what game looked like. I blew the whistle softly and pointed in the direction I wanted him to go, he seemed to know I didn't have a clue so he just went into auto pilot.

I could not believe my eyes, rabbits and pheasants coming out of bushes that I thought incapable of giving cover to anything. Back home I introduced him to the hawks, they were not impressed to start with, but became more tolerant of him as time went by. Things were looking up as in the field Mac provided quarry for Charlie to Harris Hawk to chase, he would swoop down at rabbits but stop short because of Mac. Until one day he fastened himself

briefly to Mac's back. From then on they treated each other with respect and made a compromise that Charlie would not attack the dog and Mac would not retrieve the hawk.

Shortly after accepting one another Mac developed a swelling between the toes. Wendy informed me it usually meant a blackthorn or something had found its way in. I soaked his foot in warm, salty water as Wendy had told me to do but the lump seemed to get bigger.

A visit to the vet followed who initially gave the same verdict, he then decided to lance the offending lump. Antibiotics and steroids were given to reduce the lump size. Next an x-ray and a biopsy were taken. The biopsy really seemed to stir things up and it seemed to grow in front of our eyes. Cancer was ruled out and we were left with two options to consider, euthanasia or amputation or his right hind leg. Wendy spoke to various vets and friends in the Field Trial world and recommended giving him the chance by removing his leg. This was a very hard decision to make but Mac was part of the family and we could not bring ourselves to have him destroyed. It wasn't pleasant leaving this very fit dog, that did not even seem lame, to have his leg amputated, but we knew that every other option had been looked into and this was his only chance. He was kept in over night and the vet telephoned the next day to say he was reluctant to stand. We went to see him, he was very pleased to see us a stood up without difficulty so he came home. Within days he was running around the garden as if he had only had three legs for months.

His stitches were taken out and slowly we got him back to hawking which he excels at. Having three legs is a minor detail to Mac, who for the past four years has enjoyed every minute while out hawking, he is a remarkable dog.



Ray Hooper with Mac and his Harris' Hawk Charlie

A GUIDE TO THE LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS INVOLVED IN KEEPING BIRDS OF PREY

by Linda Appleby

Whilst there is no legal requirement for someone who intends to own a bird of prey to prove that they have requisite experience, knowledge or aptitude, for example, by successful completion of an accredited course and the emphasis of the UK legal framework is upon registration of individual birds and licensing for specific purposes, it would be irresponsible to acquire and keep a bird of prey without having completed an appropriate course or, alternatively recourse to the watchful eye and ready ear of an experienced willing mentor, and without an appreciation of the legal considerations. Both to safeguard the welfare of the bird, and, not least, because breach of the relevant regulations, however inadvertent, could result in the imposition of fines and/or other sanctions, including a prohibition on keeping certain birds for a period of time after successful prosecution.

The purpose of this article is to give a brief over-view of the legal issues currently involved in keeping birds of prey. Further information can be obtained from the Birds Registration Branch of the Department of the Environment ('DETR') (for details, see box below) and anyone who intends to acquire a bird of prey, or who owns one and has not already recently done so, should contact the DETR, preferably by phone, and request that they send an information pack. Even those who have kept birds of prey over a long period of time should consider this, as recent years have seen significant alterations to the regulatory framework, with the implementation of the CITES legislation and amendment of the old registration regime. The DETR pack will include extracts from the relevant legislation, appropriate application forms and will summarise the key legal aspects of keeping birds of prey, covering such matters as possession; display; registration; sick or injured wild registrable birds; sale; and, falconry. These matters are considered below.

Birds Registration Branch, DETR, Room 822, Tollgate House, Houlton Street, Bristol BS2 9DJ Tel 0117 987 88293 Fax 0117 987 8206

The primary sources of regulation are the provisions of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (the 'WCA 1981') and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species ('CITES') which is given legal force throughout the European Union by European Council Regulation 338/97 and European Commission Regulation 939/97. Legislation regarding cruelty to animals is included in the Protection of Animals Act 1911, which is administered by the Home Office.

The key elements of the law are as follows:

Possession

It is an offence for a person to have in

their possession or under their control any live or dead wild bird (not including gamebirds, such as pheasant, partridge or grouse) unless the person can show that the bird has been taken legally from the wild, for example, if it was taken prior to 1982 (when the WCA 1981 came into force) or under licence issued by the DETR or English Nature, or has been taken from the wild for treatment and subsequent release (which is further regulated as detailed below); or is captive-bred, that is to say, bred from parents lawfully in captivity when the egg was laid; or has been legally imported; or has been legally sold to him.

The only species which may be legally taken from the wild without a licence are those listed in Part 1 of Schedule 2 to the WCA 1981, but then only outside the close season for those species. No birds of prey are listed in Part 1 of Schedule 2. The WCA 1981 does not cover gamebirds, but a certificate to kill or take game is required by the Game Acts, which are administered by the Home Office.

Housing

The size of cage in which any bird (except poultry) may be kept is regulated and must be of sufficient height, length and width to allow the bird to stretch its wings freely. Smaller cages are, however, acceptable if used in transit or for the purposes of exhibition, provided that, in each case, the bird is not in such a cage for longer than 72 hours, or if the bird is undergoing treatment or examination by a vet or is being trained for exhibition, provided in these circumstances that it is in such a cage for no longer than 1 hour in any 24 hours. Legal regulations aside, anyone keeping a bird of prey should, of course, house it in an appropriate pen or aviary, which, in terms of size, it is commonly recommended, should be no less than twice as wide and three times as long as the bird's wingspan.

Display

If the bird is listed on Appendix A of EC Regulation 338/97 ('Appendix A') (for details of Appendix A birds, see box below) a certificate under Article 10 (an 'Article 10 Certificate') must be obtained if the bird is to be displayed to the public for commercial purposes. An Article 10 Certificate is also required for sale and breeding.

Appendix A of EC Regulation 338/97

Californian Condor, Andean Condor, Osprey, Levant Sparrowhawk, Goshawk, Eurasian Sparrowhawk, Cinereous Vulture, Adalbert's Eagle, Golden Eagle, Greater-spotted Eagle, Imperial Eagle, Lesser-spotted Eagle, Common Buzzard, Rough-legged Buzzard, Long-legged Buzzard, Cuban hook-billed Kite, Short-toed Snake Eagle, Western Marsh Harrier, Northern Harrier, Pallid Harrier, Montagu's Harrier, Black-winged Kite, Madagascar Serpent Eagle, Lammergeier, Eurasian Griffon, Sea

Eagles**.

Harpy Eagle, Bonelli's Eagle, Booted Eagle, Grey-backed Hawk, Black Kite, Red Kite, Egyptian Vulture, European Honey Buzzard, Great Phillipine Eagle, Seychelles Kestrel, Lanner Falcon, Saker Falcon, Merlin, Eleonora's Falcon, Lager Falcon, Lesser Kestrel, Newton's Kestrel, Barbary Falcon, Peregrine Falcon, Mauritius Kestrel, Gyr Falcon, Eurasian Hobby, Common Kestrel, Red-footed Falcon, Barn Owl, Soumagne's Owl, Boreal Owl, Short-eared Owl, Long-eared Owl, Forest Owlet, Little Owl, Eurasian Eagle Owl, Eurasian Pygmy Owl, Lesser Eagle Owl, Norfolk Boobook, Christmas Hawk Owl, Snowy Owl, Sokoke Scops Owl, Eurasian Scops Owl, Tawny Owl, Great Grey Owl, Ural Owl, Northern Hawk Owl

Any bird, one of whose parents or other lineal ancestor is specified above

Species underlined are also listed on Schedule 4 to the WCA 1981

**White-tailed Eagle, Madagascar Fish-Eagle, Pallas' Sea-Eagle

and Steller's Sea-Eagle appear on Schedule 4

Registration

If the bird is listed on Schedule 4 to the WCA 1981 ('Schedule 4') (for details of Schedule 4 birds, see box below) it must be fitted with an official DOE ring and registered with the DETR. Some birds appear on both Appendix A and Schedule 4 and require both an Article 10 Certificate and registration. Registration must be in the name of the keeper, who is the person that has the bird under his possession or control (even if he does not own it). The DETR has issued guidance as to the procedures to be followed for initial ringing and registration of captive-bred chicks. This falls outside the scope of this article, but copies are available from the DETR.

The DETR issues three main types of ring, as follows:

(1) close ring, which is a continuous band of bronze-coloured metal stamped with a white 4 or 5 digit number followed by the letters 'DOE' and then a further letter indicating ring size, for example, 9876 DOE X;

(2) cable-tie, which is a black, flat plastic band, covered by a clear plastic sleeve, which is fixed together using a small cube-shaped locking box. The band is stamped 'UK' followed by a 5 digit number, for example, UK 54321; and

(3) split ring, which is an aluminium band which has been bent to form a ring, marked with the letters 'DOE' above a 4 digit number which is preceded either by a single letter 'A' to 'F' or the letters 'BB' or 'CC', for example, DOE CC 4567.

These are the only types of official DOE rings. But they are used for identification only and the ring does not guarantee that

the bird was legally acquired or legally registered. If the bird cannot wear a ring, then a licence to keep it must be obtained.

It is illegal to keep an unregistered Schedule 4 bird and conviction for non-registration may result in a £5,000 fine and a prohibition on keeping Schedule 4 birds for 5 years. It is, therefore, important to note that registration ceases if:

(1) the address where the bird is kept changes. The DETR must be notified within 21 days and details of the new address and the date from which the bird is to be kept there given;

(2) the bird is sold. Sale includes disposal by way of hire, barter, exchange and other similar expressions. The DETR must be informed as soon as possible and the new keeper should immediately apply for registration in his name;

(3) the DOE ring ceases to be legible or is removed. Once this occurs, registration ceases and the bird is being kept illegally. The DETR advises keepers to contact them before this happens. If that is not possible, for example, because the ring is removed in an emergency or by the bird itself, then the DETR should be informed as soon as possible. The ring will have to be returned to the DETR together with an explanation of what has occurred and a new one will be issued. In some circumstances, it is necessary for an inspector to witness removal and re-ringing;

(4) the bird is exported. The registration document should be returned to the DETR together with an indication of the export date;

(5) the bird escapes. The registration document and an explanation of the circumstances should be sent to the DETR. If the bird is then recovered, it will need to be re-registered; and

(6) the bird dies or is released. The DOE ring and registration document are to be sent to the DETR with a note of explanation.

Schedule 4 to the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981

Cirl Bunting, Lapland Bunting, Snow Bunting, Honey Buzzard,

Adalbert's Eagle, Golden Eagle, Great Phillipine Eagle, Imperial Eagle,

New Guinea Eagle, White-tailed Eagle, Chough, Crossbills, Barbary Falcon,

Gyr Falcon, Peregrine Falcon, Fieldfare, Firecrest, Madagascar Fish-Eagle,

Plumbeous Forest-Falcon, Goshawk, Hen Harrier, Marsh Harrier,

Montagu's Harrier, Galapagos Hawk, Grey-backed Hawk, Hawaiian Hawk,

Ridgway's Hawk, White-necked Hawk, Wallace's Hawk-Eagle, Hobby,

Black Honey Buzzard, Lesser Kestrel, Mauritius Kestrel, Red Kite,

Merlin, Golden Oriole, Osprey, Black Redstart, Redwing, Pallas' Sea-Eagle, Steller's Sea-Eagle, Serin, Andaman

Serpent-Eagle, Madagascar Serpent-Eagle, Mountain Serpent-Eagle, Shorelark, Red-backed Shrike,

New Britain Sparrowhawk, Gundlach's Sparrowhawk, Imitator Sparrowhawk, Small Sparrowhawk, Bearded Tit, Crested

Tit, Cetti's Warbler,

Dartford Warbler, Marsh Warbler, Savi's

Warbler, Woodlark, Wryneck

Any bird, one of whose parents or other lineal ancestor is specified above

Species underlined are also listed on Appendix A

Owls

Other than if the owl is listed on Appendix A, there is no need to register owls and generally, no licence or exemption is needed to keep them. The Eurasian Eagle Owl, Tawny Owl, Snowy Owl and Barn Owl, among others, are, however, listed. If the owl is a wild disabled bird, sale certificates are not required, but if it is to be displayed for commercial purposes then a display certificate is required and the bird must also be micro-chipped. A veterinary certificate must be submitted with the application for the display certificate. It should be noted that display certificates are generally refused, if the applicant has himself imprinted the wild owl that he wishes to display.

Sick or Injured Wild Registrable Birds

The WCA 1981 makes it an offence for anyone to take any bird from the wild, unless they have a proper licence to do so. However, it is not an offence, if the bird is sick or disabled and the taker can show that the sickness or disability did not result as a consequence of his own unlawful act and that the bird was taken solely for the purpose of tending it and releasing it when no longer disabled. If the bird is on Schedule 4, it must be registered immediately, unless the taker is a vet and the bird is receiving treatment, or the taker intends to pass the bird to a vet immediately for treatment and release, or the taker is properly licensed to treat and release the bird, for example, certain sections of the RSPCA. If an injured registrable bird is found, the DETR should be contacted straight away, as they will be able to advise as to an experienced keeper locally where the bird may be taken. Taking birds to an experienced keeper will minimise the risk of their becoming imprinted and, as a consequence, unreleasable. A licence is required to release any bird on Schedule 9 to the WCA 1981. Notably, the Barn Owl is listed in Schedule 9 and a licence should be obtained by anyone intending to release a Barn Owl into the wild.

Sale

If the bird is listed on Appendix A, the seller must have an Article 10 Certificate. If purchased, the buyer will need to complete a form FED 1012 application for an Article 10 Certificate to cover his own sale, display or breeding and send it to the DETR. It is an offence to sell an Appendix A bird without an Article 10 Certificate and conviction may lead to the imposition of a fine of up to £5,000 (on summary conviction in the Magistrates' Court) or to imprisonment for a maximum term of 5 years and/or an unlimited fine (on indictment in the Crown Court).

For all other native species, sale is regulated by the WCA 1981, under which it is an offence to sell any live wild bird, other than one listed in Part 1 of Schedule 3 to the WCA 1981, which in any event must be captive-bred and wearing a DOE ring, unless the sale is covered by a certificate

issued by the DETR. The only bird of prey listed in Part 1 of Schedule 3 is the Barn Owl, for which an Article 10 Certificate will in any event be required. So anyone selling a bird of prey indigenous to the UK should be in possession of a valid registration document if it is on Schedule 4, or an Article 10 Certificate if it is on Appendix A. Birds on both Schedule 4 and Appendix A should be covered by a valid registration document and an Article 10 Certificate.

Offences

under the WCA 1981 render the offender liable to a fine of up to £5,000 (in the event of a 'special penalty offence') and of up to £2,500 (for other offences). It is imperative to check the origins of any bird before acquisition, as the WCA 1981 puts the burden of proof on the keeper to show that the bird was acquired legally. A keeper could, therefore, be found guilty of possessing an illegally taken bird, even if he did not remove the bird from the wild or otherwise contravene the provisions of the WCA 1981.

If the bird is on Schedule 4, the potential buyer should check that the seller has a registration document showing the bird to be registered in his name and that the details match the bird, and ensure that he can read the DOE ring and that it bears the same number as is on the registration document. If the bird is purchased, the buyer should take possession of the registration document, complete the back and send it with the appropriate fee to the DETR.

It is uncommon for a Schedule 4 bird which is captive-bred not to be wearing a DOE ring, unless it is licensed to be kept un-ringed. Anyone intending to take possession of such a bird should inquire carefully about its registration. If the Schedule 4 bird acquired is a wild disabled bird that has not been ringed and registered, the DETR should be informed immediately. Once the bird is able to fend for itself, its injuries having healed, it must be returned to the wild (the care and release of sick or injured wild registrable birds is dealt with further above).

Sale of wild disabled birds on Appendix A is generally not permitted, although exceptions may be made, where the specimens are required for breeding, research or educational purposes considered to be of benefit to the conservation of the species concerned.

Falconry

Falconry is, of itself, a legal activity, but the falconer should bear a number of aspects of the law in mind.

If the bird being flown is a Schedule 4 bird, it must be properly ringed and registered and if the bird is to be moved from the address on its registration document for a temporary period longer than a day, the DETR should be notified. If that period is to be longer than 21 days, a new registration document will be issued. Regardless of whether the bird being flown is registrable or not, a quarry licence must be obtained, if it is intended to kill birds, unless the quarry is listed in Part 1 of Schedule 2 to the WCA 1981. Species included in Part 1 of Schedule 2, for example, Coot, Mallard, Moorhen, Teal, Widgeon and Woodcock,

may be killed outside the close season. Finally, before entering onto any land to fly, the permission of the landowner should be obtained, both as a matter of courtesy and to avoid potentially committing a trespass.

Legal Interpretation

It is important to note that, when assessing how the legislation applies in any particular instance, Appendix A and Schedule 4 both apply to hybrids of the birds listed and the common names used (and set out

above) are given for guidance only. Any questions relating to the status of a species are resolved by reference to the scientific name. So, if there is any doubt or ambiguity, it should be raised with the DETR.

Furthermore, this article is intended to be a guide to the basic legal requirements in keeping birds of prey only, it does not deal with all relevant legal issues, no mention is made for instance of the rules relating to importation, and some of those which are

covered are not dealt with in any great depth. It is not, and should not be relied upon as, a comprehensive analysis of the law. Individual circumstances vary greatly and in some respects the legislation is very complex (and if not complex certainly voluminous!) and, therefore, in the event of any specific query, contact should be made with the DETR and their advice sought.

Linda Appleby LLB MJur is a practising solicitor.

I WAS GONNA BUY A PARROT

I was gonna buy a parrot
and teach it 'ow to talk
But flickin' fru me free ads
I found a baby 'Arris 'Awk

I bought the 'awk, it was well cheap,
it cost two 'undred smackers
I tried to teach it 'ow to talk
but it grabbed me by the knackers

Well I searched around the library
and I found a book on trainin'
I'd read right fru the index
when I found me interest wanin'.

I went back to me 'awk 'ouse,
picked up Satan for some mannin'
me welder's glove weren't thick enough
so me 'and took quite a tannin'.

I dropped some weight off Satan
but I found 'im nearly dead.
So I put the weight back on again
and 'e nailed me in the 'ead

I fink I got 'im going now
'cos he killed a day old chick,
Satan's a proper 'unter now
and he's looking pretty slick

When I've stuck back all the fevvers
wot 'e broke when 'e was batin'
I'll 'unt 'im fru the season
then put 'im up for matin'.

Still, I got 'im going proper now
on one of them stringy creance fings
'Es flyin' to me fifteen feet
with the fevvers back in 'is wings

We're rarin' to go off 'unting
on some land owned by some toff.
But first I'll walk 'im froo the town
to show my Satan off.

We got where we was goin'
and Satan did 'is stuff
he killed a worm, I didn't squirm
but then 'e'd 'ad enough

I'm 'aving the worm taxidermied
and mounted in a case,
I kissed my Satan on the 'ead
and the bugger 'ad me face.

The scars are lookin' better now
since I picked off all the scabs,
and when they're lookin' at their best
I'll show 'em to all the lads.

We're after bigger quarry now
and we 'ope to nail a vole,
but Satan legged it out of sight
when one popped out an 'ole.

I ain't seen my Satan since that day
I'm left with an 'awk 'ouse and some scars
I've bought meself a gorilla now,
and I show 'im off in bars

One day I'll 'ave anuvver 'awk
and prob'ly train that too,
and when I peel this gorilla off me face
'e's goin' straight down the zoo!

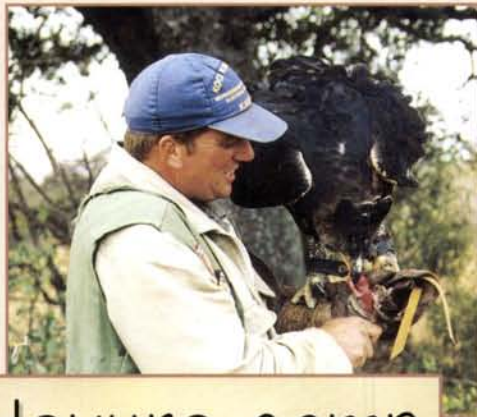


Brian J Smith

African Sky Hunters lions den



Above is the view from the camp at Lions Den. Top right is our tent. We were woken every morning by a pair of African Fish Eagles calling to one another. Below that on the left is the loo and on the right is the shower. (Both open air and overlooking the lake.) The pic on the left is Isis, Geoff Bodington's seven year old Peregrine Falcon and on the right is Neil Godwin with his passage eyass Lanner. Below this to the right is the truck out at night, when Neil Godwin took his African Hawk Eagle lamping and caught a Scrub Hare. This was all at Lions Den. The accommodation here was comfortable and the food as at all the camps was great.



Left is Andre Groenwald with Lundi his female Crowned Eagle. Below this is Caspar, Pierre Heymans musket Black Sparrowhawk. Right is an Impala filmed in the lamp, far right Lundi on a spring hare, (these flights were amazing), and a small lizard.



devure camp



Bottom right are workers sorting maize, and far right a little girl sitting on a cement mixer. Also here (at Devure) we saw Aardwolf, Kudu, Daiker & other mammals. Tawny, Steppes, Marshall, Brown Snake, Black Breasted Snake, Bataleur and Black Eagles. Also Lizard & Steppes Buzzards.



bubiana game conservancy



Here at Bubiana we saw some big game. Rhinoceros, Giraffe, Buffalo, Kudu, Water buck & Reed Buck. Also Warthogs & Baboon. Many species of other birds including Louries, Rollers, Egyptian and Spurwing Geese, Drongoes, Pied, Malachite, Brown hooded & Giant Kingfisher. Crocodile and a sub-adult African fish Eagle, which looked down on us disdainfully as we floated by on our boat. The horses you can see made their own way home after we rode them to the dam for a champagne breakfast. The baboon troupe on the right numbered about 40 animals, and the big males put on an impressive threat display.

ONE DAY.....

Four years ago we were given an invitation to go out to Zimbabwe. Having four children under the age of 10 (not to mention no money), made it impossible for us to go, although we always promised ourselves that one day....

Well, on 17th July this year that 'one day' arrived.

It is difficult to decide what to write about, due to such a busy 13 days.

Highlights? Too many! New country, animals, birds, sounds, smells. Different culture.

One of the many bright spots of the holiday came in the form of an offer by Ade Langley, one of our hosts and by this time a good friend, on our last full day, to fly his Female Black Sparrowhawk, Zinzi.

I had seen her fly every day so I knew what to expect, nevertheless it is daunting to fly someone else's pride and joy. Ade stood back from it all and just said "There she is, get on with it". David was to fly Geoff Bodingtons' female Black Spar, Maya.

We split up, David going off with Geoff and me with Ade. Our intention was to find some Francolin, but due to the weather they were in short supply so we decided to have a go at Guinea fowl which were all over the place.

After driving some distance we spotted a group sitting on the top of a termite mound. We walked across and the dogs put them up. Zinzi gave chase and the one she had chosen put in to cover. She marked it down and waited for us to re-flush (although it is not unusual for these birds to reflush themselves if at all possible.) We legged it

across the field and tried, with the aid of the dogs to find it but to no avail. George then came on point. Zinzi, back on the fist was held over the dog and George flushed the bird. Zinzi was off the fist in a flash and had it. Unfortunately Digit, Ade's other pointer wanted the guinea as well and did the unthinkable, piled in as well. The guinea got up again and flew about ten feet, then again. These things can disappear in the blink of an eye and we thought it had gone. Zinzi was sitting in the long grass, having followed the somewhat erratic progress of the guinea. I went over to pick her up and discovered, to my delight that she was sitting on the guinea fowl. It was duly dispatched and Zinzi was fetched up to the fist with a pick up piece. We walked on, intending to give Zinzi time to settle. Unfortunately (or fortunately, whichever way you look at it) George came on point again. We walked on slowly and after several minutes the dogs were sent in, up went another guinea and Zinzi gave chase, albeit a little halfheartedly. The guinea put in again and she was hopping around on the ground looking for it. I made in and picked her up. By now she was wound up, much as she didn't seem to want it before it only takes one miss and they are champing at the bit.

The dogs were sent in to look for it. 'POINT'. Bird held high. Dogs in, Zinzi away, and this time she meant it!

We watched her power away,

wings pumping hard and gaining fast on her intended quarry. She just dipped behind some trees out of my line of view and Ade shouted "Air Strike!"

We ran! Through thorn, Acacia, over rocks, through water and mud. Oblivious to all. Suddenly, there she was, mantled over her prize.

We made in and checked she was OK. Dispatched the guinea and left her to pluck for a few minutes while we sat and savoured the still evening and the sunset.

I fetched Zinzi up and we made our way back to the truck and drove on to meet Geoff and David at the crossroads.

When we arrived they had just got back and David and Maya had a Francolin.

The sun had set by now, Ade broke out the beer and we stood, hawks on our fists, under a black African sky full of diamond stars and a quarter moon.

What more could we ask for?

Our thanks must go to Pierre & Barbs, Bryce, Andre and especially Ade & Geoff, for making this a most special two weeks.



Zinzi on a guinea fowl

Radio Telemetry:

The Modern Falconer's Magic Tool -- Part II

By David L. Marshall

Note: Part I in this article dealt with how radio waves work and some of the situations that come up. This part looks at more practical issues.

What's Going On?

Ervin smiled as his Peregrine began to plummet toward the drake mallard he had just flushed off the pond. This was going to be good. A few seconds later he stared as it totally missed on the first stoop and before he had gained enough height for a second stoop the duck had put in into a canal. As Ervin sighed and got the lure ready, a stray pigeon happened by and the Peregrine, already in position, didn't think twice before checking on it. Maybe it wanted to redeem itself from the failed stoop. By the time Ervin trudged to the Toyota to get his receiver out they were miles away. The beeping signal from the receiver reassured him, but over the next half hour it got steadily weaker and then disappeared altogether.

Ervin spent five hours driving through corn fields trying to find the signal without success. On the way home he wondered how he was going to justify the cost of an airplane flight to his wife. After the new dog kennel, it would be a tough sell. In desperation he stopped every few miles to look for a signal, just in case the bird had come that way. But he knew it hadn't. He was wasting time. He should have bought a better receiver, not this piece of junk. But it had never let him down before. His telemetry gear had always worked like a charm. Then on his last attempt before driving over a pass into the next valley, he heard a beep, and another. His heart stopped. The signal was suddenly there, and it was strong! The Peregrine was not only there on the other end of the valley, but it had to be close.

It wasn't close. Ervin spent several more hours searching before he had the Peregrine on his fist. He found that the strong signal was actually forty miles from where he finally found the bird. So what was going on? How could he get no signal when he was close, and then a strong signal when he was far away? Probably the stupid receiver acting up, he thought. When he got home at 5 am, the door was locked.

Out of Sight

Ervin's problem was something a little bigger. VHF Radio waves don't go through things, and the biggest obstacle is the earth itself. The range of a telemetry system is limited first and foremost by the horizon. Unfortunately, as most of us probably believe, the earth is curved, creating a circular area around the transmitter where you can pick up the signal, the so-called line-of-sight radius. The actual radius depends on the elevation of both the transmitter and the receiver.

Figure 1 can give you an idea of the line-of-sight distance. To use it compute the distance for the height of the bird and your own height separately, then add them together. For example, if your bird was in a tree 25 feet high and your antenna was 8 feet high, the line-of-sight distance would be 11 miles (7 + 4 miles).

You can see that if your bird is on flat ground and you are standing on the ground, the range can be just a few miles. Irregularities like hills

Figure 1 - Line-of-Sight vs. Antenna Height.

reduce the line-of-sight to even less than what it would be if the earth were smooth, and this is exactly the situation Ervin encountered. Every kind of terrain produces "radio shadows". As you move around you can go in and out of shadows.

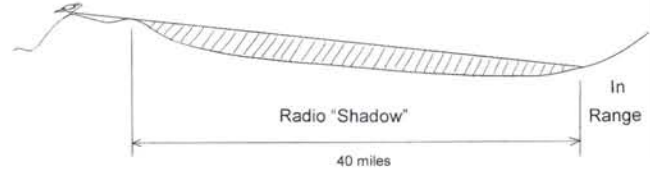


Figure 2 - Radio shadows may exist close to transmitter.

But it's not the end of the story. As Ervin drove out of the valley he gradually gained elevation. At some point he came back to within line-of-sight of the bird even though he was far away from it. So it is possible for your signal to get stronger as you go away from the bird. It all depends on the terrain.

The moral is this: most transmitters on the market are capable of going much further than you normally experience. The key to distance is altitude. If you are high enough, you can get long ranges from your transmitter. And if you're not getting a good signal, the first thing to do is get higher. Driving to the top of a hill or climbing a water tower can dramatically increase your transmitter's range, especially if your bird is on the ground.

Hint: When tracking a weak signal, hold your antenna as high as you can reach instead of keeping it at eye level. Standing on your car, a fence post, or a fellow falconer's shoulders, if he's a true friend, will also boost the signal.

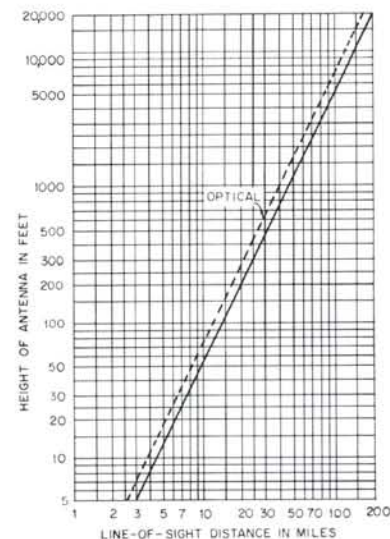


Figure 3 - When tracking a weak signal hold your antenna as high as you can reach.

Hugging the Earth

If your line-of-sight is determined strictly by the above chart, does that mean that transmitter power doesn't matter? After all, in most real situations you are limited by the line-of-sight. The answer would be yes, except for a thing we've ignored: diffraction. Diffraction and other effects allow the signal to bend or scatter around the obstacles, in this case the earth's horizon. These phenomena allows some of the signal to "hug the earth" and go further than the strict horizon, tapering off gradually as you go beyond it. It is strongest around sharp features like rugged mountains, but also occurs in hilly country and on perfectly flat ground.

In real-life falconry situations, most of the signals you pick up at any distance come through diffraction. This gives a definite advantage to better telemetry equipment (transmitters, receivers and antennas) since it can punch through the gray shadows behind obstacles. With such equipment you may get better ranges than



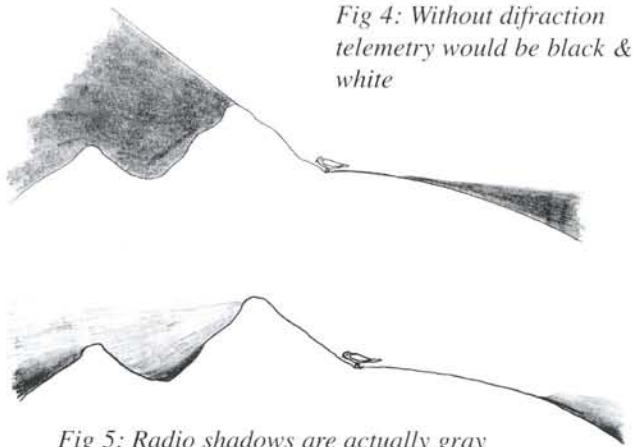


Fig 4: Without diffraction telemetry would be black & white

Fig 5: Radio shadows are actually gray areas where a strong signal can penetrate.

shown in Figure 1.

It is also important to remember that the frequency is very important. Higher frequency means less diffraction. Higher frequency transmitters may perform equally well at close range on flat ground, but will not do well at a distance or in hilly terrain. The signal simply won't make it through. This is unfortunate, because higher frequencies allow smaller antennas.

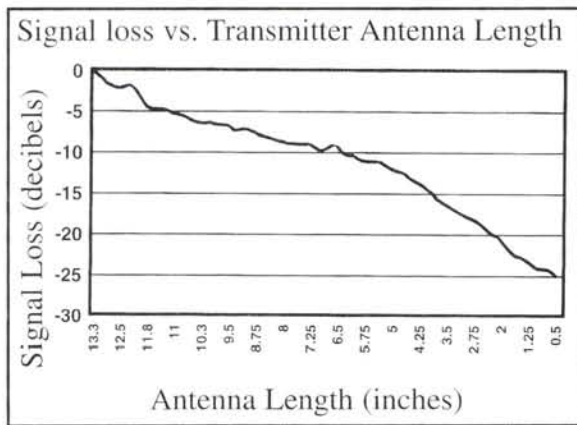


Fig 6: Higher frequencies don't get as much diffraction .

What's the bottom line in all this?

* Your transmitter's range is determined mostly by how high both you and your bird are.

* Better equipment, especially higher transmitter power, gives more range in most situations.

* A lower frequency transmitter will go further in most terrain.

Transmitters

Your transmitter is like a beacon. If you could see with radio frequency eyes you would see a bright pulse from the transmitter itself illuminating the countryside. Even if the transmitter was hidden from direct view you would still see its reflections lighting up the hills and trees. And if the transmitter was just over the horizon it would appear like a beautiful sunset, illuminating the sky through diffraction the way a real sunset does.

Transmitters come in a variety of sizes, weight, power and cost. There are trade-offs between these factors and only you can make the final judgment as to which are most important, but here are some things you might look for.

Reliability. As long as the beacon is transmitting it is very likely you'll find your bird, eventually. Therefore, reliability should be high on your list. One common cause of transmitter failure is the antenna becoming detached. Another is corrosion. So look for solid mechanical design, especially where the antenna is attached, and for good battery contacts and impermeability to water. And make sure the transmitter mounts securely to the bird.

Since any transmitter can fail the safest thing to do when flying a bird you'd rather not lose is to use two transmitters. If you hesitate to put two full-sized transmitters on your bird you could make one of them less powerful, lighter, or use a shorter antenna.

Battery Life. A smaller transmitter does not necessarily put out less power. But what is definitely true is that if your transmitter

does put out more power, it will not last as long with the same battery. This is a big trade-off. And while we're talking about battery life, it's also affected by the transmitter's pulse frequency and width. A wide pulse is easier to hear and more frequent pulses make it easier to find the signal, but they both drain the battery faster. If you really want to maximize battery life, for example when hacking a bird, use the minimum transmitter pulse width you can detect with your ear (about 30 mS) and have it pulse less frequently.

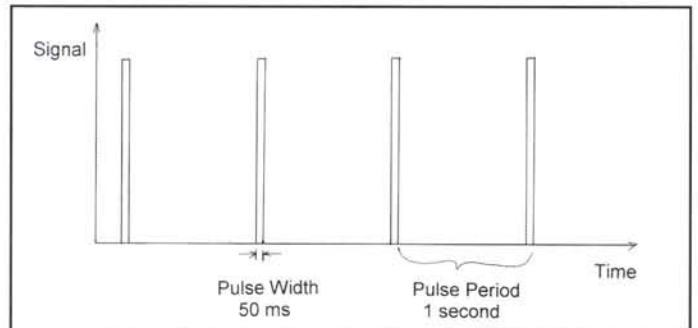


Fig 7: Wider or more frequent pulses drain a battery faster.

Transmitters that work on higher voltage batteries will produce more powerful signals, but of course will drain them faster. Also, two transmitters of the same power output do not necessarily conserve battery power equally. A certain amount of the energy is wasted in the transmitter.

Transmitter Power

Transmitter output power is important in determining range, but how much difference does it make? This is important because it effects your choice of battery size, transmitter cost, and whether you can afford to cut the length of the transmitter antenna (see Part I). In free space conditions, doubling your transmitter power gives about a 40% increase in range (in real world conditions this will vary.)

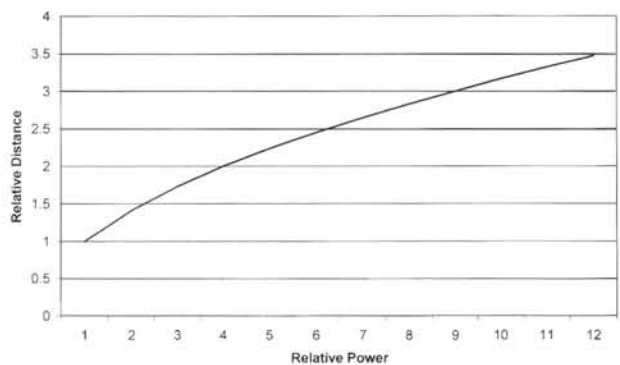


Fig 8: Transmitter Range vs. Power

Doubling your range results in a four-fold decrease in battery life for the same battery. When weight is a concern, with smaller birds, you'll have to choose which is more important: range, battery life or battery weight. For larger birds batteries weighing 2 to 4 grams can provide a compromise with both long battery life and high output power.

Transmitter Batteries

The battery is the heaviest part of your transmitter and is very important. The size of the battery will generally determine how long it will last.

Zinc-air batteries pack the most energy for their weight. But they are not very suitable for falconry use because the battery must be exposed to air to operate. The battery is subject to corrosion of the contacts or outright failure if it gets wet when you bird takes a bath and the air supply is blocked.

Lithium batteries have good energy density and may do better at cold temperatures. The output of these batteries gradually tapers off as they wear out, a warning to replace the battery as it gets weaker. They can be stored for up to five years with minimal

degradation.

Silver Oxide batteries are cheaper than the others. They quit working without warning at the end of their life and can gradually lose power if stored on the shelf for years.

This chart shows the performance of typical batteries as given by one of the manufacturers (they may vary for others). The total energy tells how long the battery will last relative to another while the energy density tells how long it will last for each gram it weighs.

Choose "high-drain" rather than "low-drain" batteries, which

Battery type	Voltage	Weight (Grams)	Total energy (mW-hr)	Energy Density (mW-hr/gram)	Temperature Range (°F)
Silver-Oxide-389	1.55	1.4	124	89	-4 to 130
Silver-Oxide-392	1.55	.7	70	100	-4 to 130
Silver-Oxide-393	1.55	1.1	116	106	-4 to 130
Lithium - 1025	3.00	.7	90	129	-4 to 130
Lithium - 1/3N	3.00	3.3	480	145	-4 to 140
Zinc-Air - PR41	1.40	.55	119	216	-

don't supply the peak power needed during transmitter pulses. As batteries get colder they deliver less power. If they stop when they get too cold, they may turn back on when warmed up.

Comparing Transmitters

You may have collected different transmitters over the years. With all the factors that effect transmitter performance the only real way to compare them is to field test them. So how do you do that, toss them on the ground and drive away? No. That won't give consistent results. There are always obstacles near the ground, and the ground itself can be a big factor. Remember that the ground reflects an image of the signal which interferes with the direct signal. I once put a transmitter on flat, salty ground and got no signal at all from it. The wet, salty ground was such a perfect reflector that the reflected wave exactly cancelled the signal from the antenna horizontally while producing a fine signal in the vertical plane.

If you want to compare two transmitters, hang them vertically equal distances from the ground (this avoids having the transmitter antenna's directional pattern affect the test and minimizes the effect of the ground) and at least a meter apart from each other. Don't put them near anything metal (a car, a wire fence or utility poles.) Then drive away and see how far you can go before each of their signals can no longer be heard, using the same receiver.

The type of terrain you use for this test should reflect the type of terrain that your hawk is most likely to be lost in, because after all that's the situation you care most about. But beware that any obstacles like buildings and hills may drastically effect the results, and two such tests performed at different locations can't be compared. Also, the result probably won't indicate the relative power of the transmitters, because both signals will likely be effected by the earth's curvature or other obstacles. One other thing to remember: a transmitter on your bird will perform better than it will in a test because the bird's body improves it's radiation efficiency by acting as part of the antenna.

Receivers

A receiver converts the radio signal into a sound. It is your "eyes" in looking for that lost transmitter, but in this case your eyes are only one-dimensional. It's like trying to find a flashing light source by looking through a cardboard tube. In every direction you only see the intensity of the light, not a scene. It would be easy at night when all you could see was your light, but noise and interference flood the scene with extraneous light as if you were search-



Fig 9: A receiver is able to block out noise and interference while picking up a weak signal. Receivers vary in features and performance

ing in the daytime. When you get far enough away you can't distinguish your flashing light even if you're looking right at it.

It's the job of your receiver to block all that extraneous stuff and find the pure signal. Telemetry receivers can pick up a signal far weaker than your eye can because the antennas catch radiation efficiently and they have circuitry that can sort the signal from the noise. And they vary widely in cost. Generally you pay more to get better sensitivity, more channels, and ease of use.

Getting Sensitive

The most important characteristic of a receiver is probably its sensitivity. It indicates how weak of a signal the receiver can pick up. While there is a theoretical limit on how sensitive receivers can be without using very expensive electronics, a poor design can definitely hurt sensitivity. Several different measures are used for sensitivity and it is important to make sure you use equivalent units when comparing two receivers.

Channel Surfing

The number of channels of your receiver determines how many different transmitters you can track simultaneously without interference between them. Some receivers let you choose a frequency directly, while others let you select a channel instead. A channel is a band of frequencies, typically 10 kHz wide (a kilohertz is a thousandth of a megahertz.). A channel spanning between 216.045 and 216.055 MHz can pick up any transmitter in that range. You can get receivers with any number of channels, but unless you have a lot of transmitters or plan to track other people's transmitters, extra channels may not do you much good. More channels does not equate to more sensitivity.

Other Features

You can get lighter weight, waterproofing, rechargeable batteries, lights for night use, easier frequency selection and other features. A few other useful features are:

Headphones

When tracking a weak signal you're better off using headphones than a speaker. They shield you from the noise of wind and cars and make it easier to hear the signal. For receivers mounted on the antenna they also allow you to hold the antenna up high (height is good.) If you use stereo headphones you'll only get the sound in one ear or will need a stereo to mono adapter plug. You probably want to take off the headphones when you approach your bird.

Attenuators

All an attenuator does is knock down the strength of the signal. If your receiver doesn't have one, it may be difficult to track a strong signal up close. This is because when the signal gets too strong, it saturates the receiver, making all signals sound equally loud. When your receiver is overloaded you lose all directionality. If your receiver doesn't have an attenuator switch, use its gain knob (the RF Gain if it has one, not the Audio Gain) to try to reduce the strength of the signal. If the receiver is not well shielded the receiver may saturate anyway from signals leaking directly into the receiver through cracks. The receiver has to get its signal from the antenna to provide a good bearing.

S-Meters

The signal strength meter on your receiver can be useful when you are close enough to the bird to use it. It can be more accurate in such cases than your ear (it would be a lot more useful if the signals didn't come in pulses.)

You can use your meter to estimate the distance to the transmitter, a nice thing to know. Just take a reading and then walk in the direction of the signal until the meter reads twice as much. You will have covered approximately half the distance to your target, so walk that far again to find your bird (if all other things are equal and the meter is linear.) This only works with direct line-of-sight signals of the same polarization. Most S-meters are not very linear, so adjust your gain to start with the meter at about a third of full scale where it is likely to be the most linear. You may want to test this in the field. Move toward a transmitter at various heights and ranges and see how your meter changes. The information will be invaluable when you're looking for your bird.

Tuning In and Turning On

It's important to tune your receiver properly after choosing the correct frequency or channel. As you tune the pitch of the transmitter changes from high to low. On some receivers the sound may be much louder at a certain pitch. That is the optimum pitch to use. Be sure to keep it tuned to that exact pitch.

Also, some receivers allow you to tune to an exact image of the signal (the opposite sideband) as you tune across the dial. In this case as you tune the signal goes first from high to low and then from low to high again. Depending on your receiver either the lower or upper sideband may be stronger, so be sure to compare them and always tune to the strongest one. It could make a big difference in your receiver's performance.

Also, if you tune in while the transmitter is sitting next to you on the car seat, the signal will be so powerful that your receiver may pick it up on incorrect channels. If you mistakenly tune in on the wrong channel the signal may sound fine in the car but will be quickly lost when the bird is in the air. Make sure you tune into the one and only exact frequency. It's a good idea to have all of your transmitter's frequencies or channels written down and kept with your receiver. Be aware that transmitter frequencies can drift with changes in temperature. It's a good idea to test them with a freezer so you know before hand how their frequency will change on cold or hot days.

Hunting Strategies.

So you've spent a mint to get good equipment and are ready to find any bird that's findable. Good equipment helps, but good technique is undoubtedly more important when your bird is really lost. Most of the time you'll find your bird with absolutely no problem, but there are those times when you'll want every advantage possible. You should definitely practice before using telemetry the first time. Hunting for a hidden transmitter without worrying about a lost bird can be fun as well as good training, especially if your competing against a fellow falconer.

Before starting

Always check your transmitter for a strong antenna connection and for any kind of corrosion on the battery contacts. Test your transmitter battery with a battery tester or use a new one. The battery is the most likely component in your system to fail. Also, test your receiver batteries (or have spares ready.) You never know if this will be the one time you need them for the next 48 hours. Turn on the transmitter and attach to the bird. Finally, after waiting for the transmitter to reach the outside air temperature, dial in the transmitter and tune for optimal sound.

The Initial Bearing

When you first lose the bird, use your receiver

immediately to acquire the signal. You may not have time to run back to the car; the receiver should be with you and ready. Try to determine the bird's direction through your last visual contact and by considering its past behaviour. You can try sweeping the sky with your antenna to see if the bird is above but out of sight. A strong signal indicates the bird is in the air. Repeating fluctuations in the signal strength indicate the bird is circling, while slight changes in frequency may indicate it is on a kill with the antenna sometimes touching the ground. If the bird is staying in the

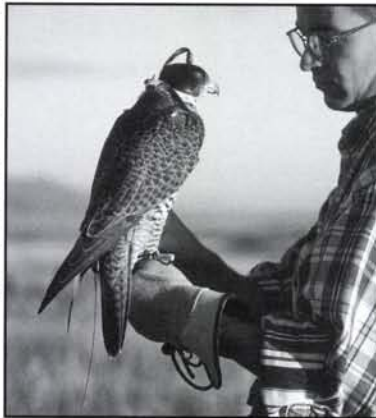


Figure10 - Attach the transmitter to your bird and wait for it to reach outside air temperature, then dial it in again to adjust for any temperature drift and tune for optimal sound.



Figure11 - When a hawk is lost, you may not have time to run back to the car. The receiver should be with you and ready.

area then keep monitoring it until it decides where it's going. When it's out of range of the lure or is leaving the area start following it. Whatever you do, don't lose the signal. While driving use an omnidirectional antenna on your car roof. Stop frequently to take new bearings, depending on how far away the bird is and on your confidence in your estimating its direction and speed of flight. Your goal is to keep within range of the bird and to hear the sudden weakening of the signal which indicates it has landed.

Each time you take a bearing always scan a full 360(radius first to find the peak response. Remember that most yagis have a significant response 180(from the peak and if you're not careful you could go in exactly the wrong direction. To get the most precise bearing, turn the gain down so you get no signal except on the peak. Swing the yagi all the way across the peak, then back and forth several times. It helps to remember that the main lobe of a yagi is broad and symmetrical. You'll get the best bearing by noting landmarks where the signal drops off on both sides of the peak and visually determine the centre point.

If the signal is weak, rotate the yagi around it's boom to find the best polarization, vertical or horizontal, and use that one. If both polarizations are about equal, the signal could be coming from a reflection from a hill or mountain or could be diffracting over a hill. If you suspect you have a reflection, try to figure out where the bird would be if it is (remember that radio waves reflect off a surface exactly the way light waves do in a mirror; the incoming angle equals the outgoing angle.) Check for a weaker signal coming from the true direction to the bird masked by some obstacle.

As you move the yagi across the horizon, is the peak response sharp or broad? A broad response may indicate a reflection or diffraction over an obstacle. As you drive away does the signal drop off rapidly? This may indicate the transmitter is low or is behind an obstruction rather than high. These situations indicate the bird has probably landed or is far away and flying low.

Note if there are any wires or fences in the vicinity, or other obvious objects the signal could be reflecting from. Also remember the signal intensity on your S-meter for comparison with the next reading you take.

Triangulation

After you take your first bearing the natural tendency is to go straight in that direction toward the bird. And if you have a pretty good idea where the bird is or if it's in the air, that's not a bad idea. However, you could end up taking a lot of extra measurements that way because you lack information about the bird's distance. If the signal is weak it doesn't always mean the bird is far away.

Another approach is triangulation. Instead of moving directly toward where you think the transmitter is, you move closer and sideways. By taking only two bearings you can theoretically pinpoint the exact location of the bird: at the intersection of the two lines. You probably can't follow the line to the bird directly anyway because of roads and obstacles or the need to stay on high ground, so take advantage of that fact.

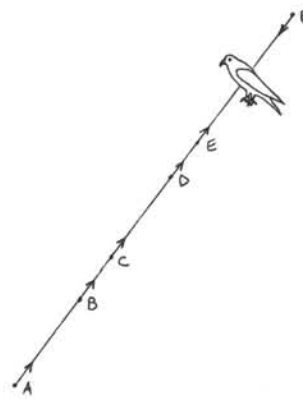


Figure12 - Without triangulation: Frequent bearings are required because you don't know the distance to the target.

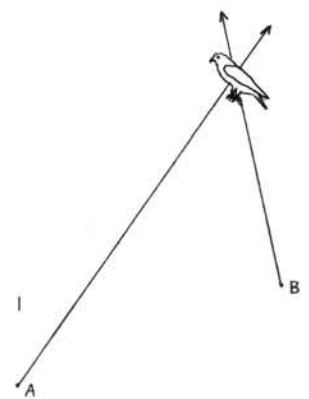


Figure13 - With triangulation: Two bearings can pinpoint the target.

For triangulation to work, you have to remember the line of the previous bearing. You can do that mentally by noting two landmarks on that line as you take the bearing. Note a landmark behind

the bird and another behind you. When you take the next bearing you'll know that the bird should be somewhere on the line connecting the two landmarks. Proceed toward the point of intersection, but again offset to a third point. You'll end up rapidly closing in on the bird in a spiral.

If you often fly your bird in the same area, think about getting a topographical map and using a compass to mark the bearings on the map. In spite of the extra time required, using a map and compass is the fastest way to find the transmitter under most conditions.



Figure 14 - If you lose the signal, go to high ground that looks down on where you can expect the bird to be

If you lose the signal:

Go to high ground that looks down on where you expect the bird to be. If that doesn't help try high ground on the other side of where you expect bird to be or that looks over the horizon in the direction the bird was headed. If you have no clue where the bird is, drive in widening concentric circles around where you last saw it, as closely as roads will permit.

Keep your receiver on with an omni-directional antenna. As a last resort, the ultimate way to get high is to hire an airplane and circle the area, knowing as you do so that you are helping the local economy of the area.

When you are on a hilltop, the best location for getting a weak signal is usually slightly in front of the peak, though you can get better a 360(radius from the top.

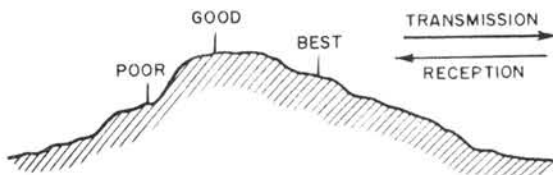


Figure 15 - The best location is just below the peak of a hill

Getting Hot

When you're close to the transmitter, it's tempting to rush to find the bird. However, you will do well to keep taking frequent bearings to avoid overshooting its location. You may have come to this spot based on a reflection while the main signal was obscured by an obstacle. Once you're past the obstacle the real signal may actually be behind you. So continue to take 360° readings.

Before setting out on foot, make sure the bird is on the ground and that you're within walking distance. You'll waste a lot of time

if you leave your car prematurely. Triangulation will give you a good clue how close you are, or you can use the S-Meter technique described above.

The biggest problem when you're close is that the signal can be too strong. Turn on your attenuator or reduce your receiver gain as you get close. If that doesn't reduce the signal enough, try tuning a off frequency so the tone gets very high in pitch. But don't remove your antenna as it's the only thing that provides the direction to your target. You want to hinder your receiver sensitivity while retaining the full functionality of your antenna. You can use your body to shield your receiver from the signal, but the directionality of this is not as sharp as an antenna.

After all that if the receiver is still saturated, you may be better off circling around the apparent location at a distance and taking multiple bearings. Then just walk to where they all intersect. Look out for reflections from fences and wires which will be much stronger when you're close to the transmitter. In such a case the signal will act as if it is coming from points all along the wire. If the transmitter antenna happens to be pointing at you you'll get the weakest signal while the strong broadside radiation may reflect off nearby objects giving much stronger signals in those directions.

If your bird is in a tree, interference from ground reflections can make things confusing, especially with wet ground. It is possible to get nothing directly from bird while getting stronger false signals from other directions. Around the bird some positions may get a weak signal while a few feet away others get a strong one. One way to minimize interference effects is to use vertical polarization since wave don't reflect from the ground vertically. And take frequent bearings, circling around where you think the bird should be.

The Future

Today's telemetry equipment is successful at finding a lost bird almost all the time. But can you picture your "receiver" being nothing more than a handheld screen with a map of the terrain around you showing an "X" where your hawk is sitting? That will probably happen someday with the use of satellites. You have probably heard of people using satellite systems today on falcons to follow their migration paths. As for using them on your falcons for hunting, don't hold your breath quite yet.

The first problem is weight. The transmitter has to be able to send a complicated, coded signal to an orbiting satellite. This takes a lot of electronics and a good-sized battery. The lightest such transmitters today weigh 22 grams. This weight should continue to drop in the future but will probably never approach that of the much lighter transmitters you're used to.

A more serious problem is having a satellite there when you need it. The satellites used are in low earth orbits, about 150 miles, in order to pick up weak signals from the earth. Low orbit satellites must circle the globe rapidly to stay up (stationary satellites are higher, putting them out of range of tiny transmitters.) Thus, you have to wait for a satellite to pass overhead, which in the case of the ARGOS satellites popular in wildlife tracking occurs only two or three times a day. That is as often as you could get information on your bird. And you need a phone line or special receiver to get the location that comes down from the satellite.

All this could change. Companies have been formed with the aim of launching the hundreds of low orbit satellites needed for continuous tracking, something that will revolutionize communications on earth-but don't plan on selling your current system quite yet.

Figures 1 and 15 reprinted with permission from The ARRL Antenna Book (1991), The American Radio Relay League, Newington, CT.

IMPROVEMENTS IN HAWK FOOD HOME DELIVERY

Honeybrook Farm Animal Foods, the Worcestershire based hawk food suppliers, have announced the development of a new packaging system which would appear to be of benefit to Falconers in isolated areas or those wanting small or urgent orders.

A spokesman for the company stated "As a quality food supplier, we have become increasingly concerned with the fact that mail order customers traditionally received inferior quality products when compared to orders delivered in our own

freezer transport."

Tests of their new packaging system, code named 'StaKold', confirms that day old chicks dispatched using the new system remain in a quality condition during the 24 hours required by overnight courier to deliver a package.

Surprisingly, Honeybrook Farm is not charging extra for dispatch using StaKold. The company explained that it is using StaKold to send their whole range of hawk food to customers located outside their normal delivery route. Once enough new customers are obtained in an area the company intends to then include them in their regular scheduled freezer transport delivery route.

Details can be obtained direct from Honeybrook Farm Animal Foods on Evesham (01386) 830089

YOU ARE WARNED - IGNORE THIS AT YOUR BIRD'S PERIL

NEIL A FORBES FRCVS

About this time of year each year, we and other vets nationally see a steady stream of devastated clients, presenting 1st year or occasionally older birds with broken legs. Such birds are usually Harris hawks, although other species are occasionally presented as well. These birds are usually newly jessed and tethered. New owners often ask why their bird should have suffered such injuries, suggesting perhaps that the bird had a genetic abnormality or was suffering from calcium deficiency. Sadly neither is the case, these fractures occur when the bird has bated away from the perch, placing unnatural and excessive forces on the top third of the tibiotarsus (the middle bone of the leg).

So what can you do to minimise the risk of this occurring :-

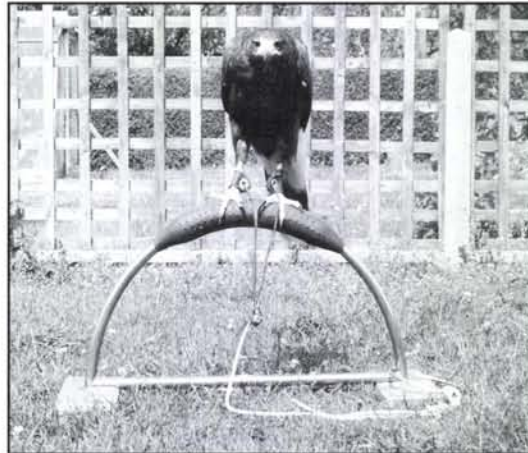
Train the bird and fly the bird from an aviary, with a Harris hawk in particular this is not difficult and is far better for the bird.

Tether the bird first to a perch in an enclosed area (it must have adequate room to fully stretch both its wings), so that it cannot bate far from the perch at all.

Ensure the bird is as steady as possible before you tether it.

Tether the bird in a quiet place where it is less likely to become startled and hence less likely to bate away.

However most importantly of all is to keep the leash



This is the **WRONG** way to tether your bird.

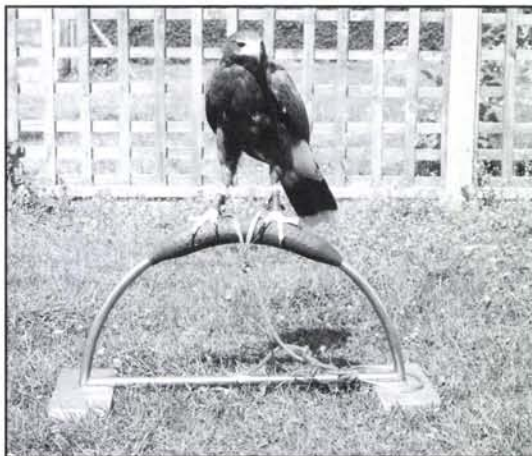
Note the very long leash.

length as short as possible. It is common sense that the faster the bird is travelling at the time when the jesses stop the bird, the greater the chance of those legs breaking. The longer the leash is, the further the bird flies before it is stopped, and hence the faster it is flying at the point of impact.

So there are two aspects to a leash being as short as possible, firstly the keeper should tie the leash as tight as possible, whilst still allowing the bird free movement on the bow. The leash should only be long enough to reach from the ring at the base of the bow to the apex of the bow.

Secondly and most importantly, one should consider 'what is the function of a bow perch?'. The answer should be to allow the bird to keep its tail and wings off the ground and hence to prevent damage to them. Sadly most keepers seem to believe that the larger and taller the

bow is, the better the bird is. In effect all that one achieves is a requirement to have a longer leash length, and hence increasing the risk of the bird breaking its leg or legs. There is no doubt in my mind that a 'small', 'training bow' should be used for all new birds when first tethered, and should be used again at any stage when the bird is being re-tethered following a period of being free flighted.



This is the **RIGHT** way.

Note the much shorter leash

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THE HUNGARIAN WIREHAISED VIZSLA

Roy Bebbington



Does the perfect H.P.R exist? The breed which never puts a foot wrong and delivers the goods 100 per cent of the time?

Be honest, probably not! Without doubt there exist outstanding individual dogs within all the various breeds of HPR and each breed has its devotees, who extol the virtues of their chosen breed.

Well if perfection does not exist then the Hungarian Wirehaired Vizsla is as close as they get.

Interested in a medium ranging HPR, methodical, keen to find game, soft on the approach to game, staunch on point, the type of breed with whom you barely have to blow your whistle and never a raised voice is heard? Then read on...

The Wire haired Vizsla is a recognised breed apart from its' smooth coated relative, which we all know is highly regarded both here, within the UK and throughout Europe. In the 1930's the breed originated in its native Hungary in an attempt to produce a Vizsla with a more protective coat for working both in water and rough conditions on land.

The German Wirehaired pointer was initially crossed with the Hungarian Vizsla, a small amount of Irish Setter blood was introduced and to procure stronger hunting instinct, both the Hertha and Pudel pointer were used.

In Hungary wildfowling on the great plains is a popular and lucrative pastime. Sports enthusiasts from throughout Europe travel to this region in order to shoot. This sport represents an important feature of the Hungarian economy and the dogs are expected to play their part in full. In effect the dogs are required to work much harder than might be expected of them here within the Hawking community.

The wire haired Vizsla is expected to cope with a wide range of temperature difference and, since a great deal of the shooting is for duck, this includes the extremity of icy water

temperatures. Their thick wire-haired coat enables this breed to have a definite advantage over its' smooth coated relation.

Whilst on the subject of coats it should be noted that it is possible to have a variation of coat types in puppies born to two parents of the correct type. Some will tend to be a little hairier, and a little maintenance may be required, whilst on the other hand some puppies are born resembling their smooth coated relations. A number of these may develop more coat as they mature.

In general the wirehaired Vizsla is a robust dog with a much stronger bone structure and slightly larger frame than the smooth haired Vizsla. It does however, share many of the smooths' attributes if intelligence, devotion, excellent temperament (in fact they thrive better within the family home environment) and excellent scenting ability. They love water and many of them display a strong retrieving instinct. In style, action and pointing they are definitely the equal to all the other better known HPR's.

For those who find the smooth-haired Vizsla too sensitive and the German Wire-haired too headstrong I have heard it said that the Wire-haired Vizsla fills the gap. I, personally disagree with this assumption. From my own experience my dogs seem every bit as sensitive as the smooth haired Vizsla. It is for this reason that I feel that this breed is not suited to everyone.

Just as it is important to ensure that you match up a hawk with a similar disposition to yourself, it is equally important to ensure that you do likewise when choosing a dog. If you act with your hands and not with your head then leave this breed well alone, initially the wire-haired Vizsla needs a little more wet-nursing than some of the other HPR breeds, and if patience is not your forte then better pass on to another

breed more suited to yourself. This breed stimulates the grey cells, as I said they are not for everyone, for praise, not punishment is the key to progress. During initial training it really should be a case of good times all the time. I feel the breeds' hunting instinct can become easily suppressed if much discipline is administered at too early an age.

The breed tends not to be as wide ranging as some other of the HPR breeds, which is usually not a problem for the average Austringer. They tend to be very methodical and if quarry is around they find it. Their coat has advantages for the Austringer who works a lot of cover or water.

I have purposely used the term Austringer as opposed to Falconer, as I personally feel that the breed is eminently more suited to an Austringers

needs.

So what does this breed offer the practising Austringer?

What you get is an extremely willing hunting companion, that quietly gets about its business in an efficient, dignified manner. If correctly nurtured the stresses so often associated with many of the more hard-headed breeds do not exist.

I openly admit to being biased towards the breed, but only because after more than 20 years of flying shortwing/broadwings over other peoples HPR's, it is only now that I have personally found what I consider to be the "Austringers Ideal".

Further details on the breed are available by telephoning: 01748 850918.



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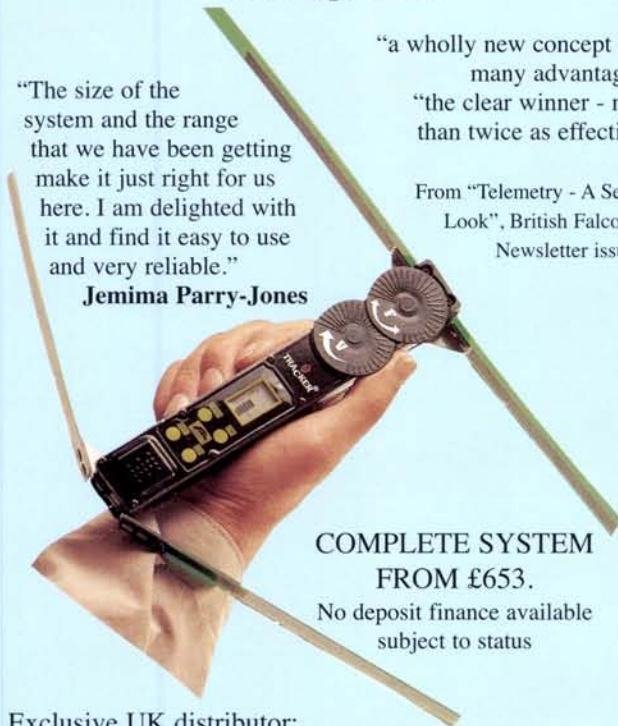
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From "Telemetry - A Second Look", British Falconers' Newsletter issue 16



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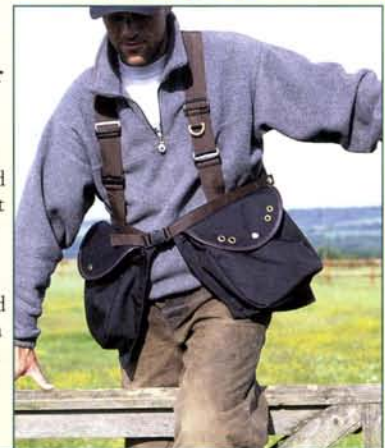


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THE RADIOCOMMUNICATIONS AGENCY

Following on from their visit to the Falconers Fair this year the Radiocommunications Agency have written an article for the magazine to try and explain fully to falconers and telemetry manufacturers how they stand regarding the law and telemetry.

With the growing use of radiotelemetry in falconry it is important to understand the regulatory background to radio use. The UK has one of the highest uses of the radio spectrum in the world and it is only possible for all users to exist without interfering with each other if they follow the rules.

Radio use is regulated in the UK through the Wireless Telegraphy Acts 1949 and 1967, the Telecommunications Act 1984 and their associated statutory instruments give the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry powers over the installation and use of radio. These functions are carried out by the Radiocommunications Agency, an Executive Agency of the Department of Trade and Industry. Within the Agency there are approximately 580 staff, both administrative and technical, with 145 of these staff working in the Agency's eight local offices, situated throughout the United Kingdom. The headquarters staff negotiate use of frequencies internationally and set the rules for licensing, or exemption from licence, for specific services. Local staff licence private business radio use in their area and are responsible for investigation misuse of and resolving interference to radio communications.

The Agency prosecutes offences and applies for forfeiture orders on behalf of the Secretary of State. The Agency's local office staff are authorised to investigate offences under the Wireless Telegraphy Acts and have powers to apply for search warrants and to seize and detain evidence.

Most commonly prosecutions are brought under section 1 of the 1949 Act which makes it an offence to install or use a radio transmitter except under and in accordance with a licence or the conditions under which some systems are licence exempt. On summary

conviction an offender is liable to a fine not exceeding the statutory maximum and/or six months' imprisonment. On indictment the maximum penalty is an unlimited fine plus two years' imprisonment. In addition, the courts may order forfeiture of the apparatus or any other thing, including vehicles, used in the commission of the offence.

Demand for radio communications is high and growing. The different users can only be accommodated by a combination of complex frequency planning and licensing with closely defined specifications on the quality and power of equipment to be used, radio frequencies to be assigned and, in some cases, the geographical area of operation. The sole purpose of licensing or the conditions of exemption is to give radio communications to those who need it while ensuring that they do not jam each other's messages. Radio users who choose to ignore the rules and operate outside this regulatory framework are almost certain to cause a nuisance to responsible users.

It is an offence to use equipment which is not manufactured to the appropriate performance specification and has not been type approved for the purpose. Equipment which has been type approved should be marked to indicate that it meets the relevant specification. Poorly designed apparatus, particularly when operated at high power, often generates harmonic interference on a number of frequencies at once, like a pianist playing chords except that in this case the additional resonances are not required! Furthermore, those who supply non-approved equipment create unfair competition for those companies who are complying with the law and who may have made a considerable investment in order to obtain type approval.

Where companies persist in supplying non-type approved radio equipment the Agency has successfully prosecuted for the

common law offence of incitement.

Equipment which has not been type approved for the purpose for which it is intended to be used as well as likely to cause interference, may well find itself susceptible to interference and not able to satisfactorily perform as advertised. This is especially so where the equipment is designed to operate on a frequency not assigned for that type of use.

Manufacturers and importers have further responsibilities under the EMC Regulations (SI No 2372 1992) which came into force on 28 October 1992 and became mandatory of 1 January 1996. These Regulations apply to virtually all electrical and electronic apparatus that is liable to cause electro magnetic interference or be affected by it. The Regulations set out an approval regime for certifying that apparatus conforms to the appropriate protection requirements. The Agency is the Notified Body for most radio transmitting equipment intended for land-based use. The main duty for enforcement of the EMC Regulations rests with Trading Standards Offices. The Agency's local staff also have enforcement powers but normally only become involved in a case where the radio equipment in question is actually causing or receiving interference. They will then take a view on whether EMC or Wireless Telegraphy legislation is more appropriate under which to take action from the standpoint of protecting the radio spectrum.

The old traditional sport of falconry is undoubtedly being made more interesting by the application of modern technology in the form of radio telemetry, but to get the best out of it, please make sure you stick by the rules!

Further information on radio matters can be obtained by contacting the Agency's 24 hour enquiry point/switchboard: 0171-211 0211

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Birds of Prey - Medicine and Management by Manfred Heidenreich.
Published by Blackwell Science.
Price £89.50
Reviewed by Nick Kester.

How much?! At least that was my first reaction on seeing this lavish book that I hope I will never need but certainly should own.

Falconers need good vet books, and of late they have been starved of them. John Cooper produced his seminal work nearly twenty years ago and although there have been others Heidenreich's work pulls together the latest knowledge and presents it in a wide ranging, easy to digest format that I (as a layman) always felt was a shortcoming in Coopers otherwise invaluable work.

Good falconry vets are few and far between, and the round trip to Neil Forbes' wonderful surgery in Stroud is often made too late. Local vets must be excused their lack of knowledge - ask your how many raptors he or she sees in a year. A good medical book serves two purposes. It forms the basis of a great deal of preventative medicine and it can be the only point of reference for you and your local vet in times of crisis. Although I have to say Forbes' telephone number is now programmed into my mobile phone.

I make no attempt to comment on the technical quality of the contents although those such as Nick Fox comments that it has

proved a useful addition to his bookshelf. Disappointingly, there is a great deal about longwings and hybrids and little on shortwings, especially those staples of the British scene - Harris Hawks. But the Author is a German working in the Middle East so the omissions are hardly surprising. What are invaluable, and probably contributed to the cost are the many colour illustrations. For those who remember the home doctor publications of the 50's, these are inclined to promote paranoia at every reading, but they are most useful when real problems occur. Heidenreich is loyal in his cross references and pays due credit to John Cooper in his introduction. If there is one thing that will date this book faster than advances in medical science it is the unnecessary inclusion of a chapter in CITES and EU legislation. However, it is a useful book that, one hopes, will gather dust on all our bookshelves.

A Dissimulation of Birds
Steve Palin
Minerva Press
£9.99



This is not a falconry book but I was charmed by both its the content and illustration, giving the collective terms for various groups of birds.

For instance did you know that the collective noun for quails is a Bevy. (What were

you going down the pub for?) For Larks it is an Exaltation, Woodcock a Fall, Owls a Parliament.

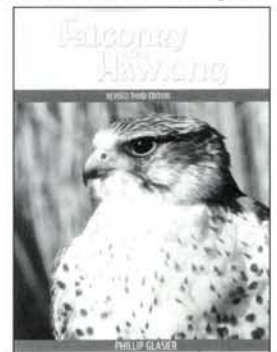
Each Noun is accompanied by an illustration and an explanation (as far as is possible) as to how these terms originated.

It is not a book which you would go in search of but once found it makes a lovely addition to any book collection.

Falconry & Hawking
by Philip Glasier
Batsford Press
£35.00

20 years, eleven reprints and now a third revised edition, this book has withstood the test of time and has been a source of information for hundreds of up and coming Falconers. There must be more hoods, bags and gloves made from these falconry patterns than any other.

This edition contains two new chapters which replace and expand the original text on health disease and captive breeding mean this book should be part of the furniture for both beginner and expert alike.



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OTT?

Dear Lyn and Dave,

I feel I must comment on Mark Parker's "What Next" reply regarding my article on progressive resistance training (weight training) for hawks.

Although I feel Mark went a little OTT with words like horror, steroids and sadness etc, he obviously like myself has the welfare of the birds at heart.

Firstly, I sent the article in for publication after being asked about the technique by other Falconers, including the proprietor of one of the Country largest Falconry Schools.

Mark described weight resistance training as 'just another attempt at a short cut to achieve the end result'. Well I don't know how much experience Mark had of actually hunting birds, but as anyone who has will tell you, there just are no short cuts to this end result. As I stated in my article, during the hunting season, unfortunately like lots of other falconers it is dark when I finish work, so instead of just picking up the hawk and feeding her daily ration on the fist - which would be a lot easier, I choose instead to work the hawk the best way I can which is the technique described. This enables me to successfully hunt the bird at the weekend, something which I forgot to mention in the original article is the fact that working a Goshawk in this way takes away much of the birds' pent up stress and frustration, leaving her much more settled. Think about it, doctors have been saying for years that the best way to ease stress is physical exercise, which releases natural relaxants into the blood stream, it certainly helps me to relax and this could explain the fact that although she is an active hunting Goshawk, she has never had so much as a broken feather tip (fingers crossed). On Marks statement that 'we are led to believe hunting success is paramount and not to judge people by number killed' I feel he may be mixing my article up with some other, my statement was that to achieve hunting success, fitness and con-

ditioning is paramount - a statement I stand by, this coupled with experience leads to excellent Falconry. The most experienced hunting hawk in the world, unfit and out of condition will catch nothing and soon become frustrated, this will lead to the birds' style, behaviour and responsiveness suffering, until some fitness is achieved.

On his worry regarding 'what happens to the weights when the bird lands on the bow' if he looks at the photo of the training rig he will notice the weights are attached well down the creance ad therefore hit the ground and are actually dragged the last few inches of the flight so no need for airbrakes!

Traditional falconry methods still do form the backbone of our sport, but falconry like other sports has moved forward, I'm sure in the early 70's with the advent of telemetry, traditional falconers would have been horrified at the thought of attaching a transmitter to birds legs, tails or necks, especially when you consider the old fashioned aerial length. Paul Beecrofts 'catapulted to fitness' was I thought an excellent article on how he achieves fitness, but again it is a method like the method I use, not often spoken about.

Providing people read the article properly and take on board Neil Forbes advice and endorsement, and use good old common sense, putting the birds health and condition first then I'm sure there will be no problems. In fact at the falconers fair, falconer and artist Robert Fuller informed me he had read the article and has been using the technique modified to suit himself with good results.

Finally if Mark would like to get in touch with me through the magazine I will gladly send him a video to the technique to ease his mind.

Yours sincerely
Colin Taylor.

PLEASE NOTE!

Falconry Originals are nothing to do with Ben Long. We will not be responsible for orders sent to his address, only for orders sent to 3, Haughton Mill Cottages, Haughton, Nr Retford. Notts. Any complaints should be addressed to the address and telephone number given for Ben Long in the Cage and Aviary.

Ian Pearson

THE LAST WORD

Dear Lyn & David,

I do appreciate your comment on the letters page of the last issue of your magazine regarding the ongoing pro and anti hunting debate but this time I feel I have to respond in my own defence and not just the defence of our sport.

I certainly do not wish the debate to degenerate into a personal slanging match. This is the last thing we need and a point our opponents would relish. The whole point I am trying to make is we all need to stand together, to coin a phrase "united we stand divided we fall".

I was concerned by the personal remarks made by Jenny Gray in reply to my letter in the Spring issue. Of all the people I have spoken to who read my letter, only one person totally missed the point. The whole point of quoting Ann Frank was to highlight the fact of pro hunting people (the Polish being the fox hunters, the Czechs being the Coursing fraternity etc) standing together. Never for one moment did I think to "equate the antis to the Nazis".

Do correct me if I am wrong but what I remember from my history lessons is that Hitler marched unopposed into Austria. Our prime minister at the time Mr Chamberlain came back from the 1938 Munich Conference saying "I have a piece of paper", appeasing Hitler by agreeing to let him have 11,500 square miles of Czechoslovakia, after taking all of it he moved on to Belgium, France, Russia and the rest is history. So I will end with yet another quote, "Give them and inch and they will take a mile", JC 1998.

Yours sincerely
J Callaghan.

SUPERB SHOW

Dear Lyn & David,

I would like to pass on my congratulations to the organisers of the Falconry & Raptor Fair at Offchurch. What a superb show.

This years was the first that I have been able to attend, and being a newcomer to the sport I was not sure what I would find. I normally reckon to get to shows early and leave by lunchtime, on this occasion I arrived just before 10am and did not leave until 4.30 and even then I had to drag myself

away.

Congratulations to Jemima on the launch of the Campaign for Falconry, one of my main reasons for attending the show was to witness the launch, and after the speeches I fill out a form and joined. I also spent a fortune at the trade stands, it's a good job it's pay day this week! Some of the gloves and hoods on display looked too good to use and were almost works of art!

Overall I think it was the general atmosphere which I enjoyed, all those people in one place enjoying a common passion. Once again, Well Done.

Yours sincerely
Neil MacKinnon.

CHECK FIRST

Dave & Lyn

Before I start I would like to say that I am not criticising the IBR Falconry Directory as they can not be held responsible for the people that advertise in it.

After flicking through the Directory my wife Lynn decided she would take me to a falconry centre for fathers day, so she phoned a centre that was not far from us (70 mile round trip), to get directions. As Lynn and my little girl like looking at fish and pond displays she thought she would kill two birds with one stone so to speak, so we went to Cheshire Waterlife, Aquatics and Falconry Centre, near Northwich, Cheshire.

At this point I feel it relevant for anyone with an IBR directory to read the advert on page 34 for Cheshire Waterlife.

On arriving at the place we walked around what in my opinion is an aquatic shop and not an aquatic centre, while walking round we noticed a door with a poster of a birds' head, a sign telling you to pay at the till to get through the door but nothing to say half was closed and there was no falconer that day.

As we paid, albeit only £3.50 for three adults and one child, I did not expect much but what I did expect was to be able to walk around the Hawk Walk and see some birds flown. There were no birds to be flown, the Hawk Walk was closed and we did look at about ten small aviaries with Owls, a Common Buzzard and a pair of Harris.

The advert states daily flying displays, falconry furniture and

someone always there to give friendly advice, so I went back to the aquatic shop to ask about flying displays. I was told the flying area was at another part of the site (I never did see a sign for it) and the lads were out doing a display elsewhere as these took priority over the centre displays. So I asked about the Hawk Walk, the reply from the woman was something to the effect of "not unless you want to lose a few fingers". I suppose this was due to the lads not being there to protect us. It

was then said that we could see the birds on the weathering ground, at which point I pointed out that the birds were not on the weathering ground but in their mew's, then came the reply, "anyway it is too hot".

As for the furniture Lynn was going to buy me (a rare event) I saw none. The lads must have taken it with them.

When we explained what we expected due to the advert the attitude from the woman was, tough you should have asked before you paid as it was not

her responsibility to let us know. As you cannot see until you have paid surely it is their responsibility to tell that you more than half the attraction is out of bounds and off site.

I know it was only a small fee but the point is if we had known we could have gone to a centre with a flying display team at home and I could have got the furniture I wanted, so really when Lynn rang and asked for directions and asked about the centre she should have been told. If I had wanted to look at

birds throwing out feathers I could have stayed at home and watched mine from the comfort of my patio instead of driving 70 miles.

So anyone thinking of going to a centre, I would advise you to ring and ask questions before you go, to make sure the bird team are playing at home that day, as the advert for this centre totally misled us by not stating the information was only relevant if not at an away venue.

K Williamson
Greater Manchester

A ROM DEAL

Dear Lyn & David,

Last year whilst on holiday in Cyprus I had an accident while Greek dancing, resulting in me snapping my Achilles tendon. This put me totally out of action for three months. Being unable to fly my birds I let them loose in the aviary, (two Harris Hawks, Ivory & Shadow). Meanwhile being totally bored I did quite a bit of surfing on the internet looking for anything on Birds of Prey and falconry. To my surprise there is quite a lot about birds of prey.

I kept an eye on what the

peregrine fund were doing with their release of Californian condors into the Grand Canyon, their page is updated regularly and I found it very interesting. One day I came across a software publisher called Discerning Nature, in America, which had just released a cd rom called Raptors, birds of prey, so I made enquiries by email. They promptly replied giving me details of how I could purchase the cd rom. Unfortunately at that time I could not really afford to purchase the cd, being out of work and all, so I emailed them back making some excuse and thanking them for their co-operation and told them I would purchase

it at a later date. I've been back at work for a few months now (the time of writing) so I decided to give them a ring, I looked them up on the internet and found their phone number but unfortunately could not get through. Their free phone number is not accessible from this country so I emailed them again asking them for their payphone number so I could place an order. To my great surprise I had an email from them the next day saying we are glad you are still interested in our cd and we have decided to send you a free copy, please email us your postal address."

As you might imagine I was delighted. I have now received

the CD after only a few days, put it straight on my computer and found it to be an excellent piece of work on birds of prey. Giving information on subjects such as hunting, anatomy, social life and some excellent video clips, much too much for me to mention here! So, anyone who is interested in the wider aspects of birds of prey, this is a brilliant cd. If you are into computers and birds of prey this is a must.

T E Waterfield.

Editors note: If anyone is interested in this CD Rom, please write or phone and we will put you in touch with Trevor for more details.

SOUR CROP: A PAIN IN THE NECK

WHAT IS SOUR CROP?

As the majority of you will be aware sour crop is the term used to describe a condition in which food in the birds crop becomes rancid. This will arise if food consumed by the hawk does not pass from the crop into the proventriculus (the part of the stomach responsible for gastric juice production).

The food is therefore held at body temperature which in the birds is 40-41 degrees celsius, much higher than our own, in the absence of any digestive action.

As a result various bacteria and/or yeasts originally present in small numbers multiply rapidly releasing toxins into the crop which are then absorbed into the circulation. These toxins act as follows:

(a) They slow down the passage of food through the gut thereby compounding the initial problem.

(b) They damage the lining of the gut allowing bacteria to invade the circulation and set up a potentially life threatening septicaemia or blood poisoning.

(c) They damage the lining of blood

RICHARD JONES

vessels causing leakage of body fluid rapid dehydration and clinical shock which is essentially a pronounced drop in circulating blood volume.

(d) Toxins enter the blood stream ie: 'Toxemia' and potentially damage all/any major organs.

If left untreated this course of events will rapidly lead to the death of the bird.

WHY DOES IT HAPPEN?

The most important thing to remember about sour crop is that it is always a secondary problem, ie; there must have been a disturbance in the normal gut function. These reasons are numerous but I will try and split them up into two categories.

(1) Management Factors.

By far the most common reasons for developing a sour crop is simply over-feeding, usually in conjunction with low condition.

The typical scenario is a young bird in training cut down that extra 1/2 ounce and entered at quarry. The first kill is made the falconer is doing back flips and the hawk is allowed to gorge to bursting on her well deserved meal.

Two factors come into play here that precipitate a sour crop:

(a) The sheer volume of food present in the crop will obviously take a long time to be put over, sometimes well over 12 hours. All the while that food is at body temperature and the bacteria are continually multiplying causing fermentation.

(b) When a bird is in low condition, all the energy reserves are directed at the systems responsible for survival in the short term ie. heart, brain and flight muscles. The digestive system is somewhat lower down the survival list and so blood and energy supply to it are reduced, gut motility and digestion slow, and the downward spiral begins.

Incorrect storage can result in food fed too warm in which bacterial multiplication

will already have begun; food fed too cold can shock the crop effectively paralysing it.

This is especially important in hand reared eyasses fed on refrigerated minced quail for example.

Food that has been allowed to dry out lacks the lubrication of fresh meat and will be put over more slowly. It is also more important to emphasise that hawks depend on moisture in the food to meet their fluid requirements and so food fed too dry can rapidly lead to dehydration of the bird.

Particularly important in respect to smaller species is food quality: Higher quality food, that is higher in energy and is easily digestible protein needs to be fed in smaller quantities than poorer quality food.

For instance, my imprint spar flies at 8 & 3/4 oz and 1oz of minced quail will maintain her flying weight. If fed chick however, the amount required is 1 1/4 to 1 1/2 oz, a 25-50% increase in intake. This in itself is unlikely to result in sour crop in an otherwise healthy bird but can certainly be a contributing factor.

As discussed previously anything that interferes with gut activity can precipitate a sour crop. This includes physical blockages of any part of the gut.

Some such obstructions we have come across include rabbit thigh bones, ingested sand from aviary floors adhering to food and more recently - hedgehog spines! (The traditional quarry of the redtail - allegedly!)

Hypothermia in hawks will rapidly produce crop stasis or inactivity. This most commonly occurs in birds that have become waterlogged whilst hunting, and so have lost the insulating layer of air trapped by dry plumage. This can be avoided by:

- (a) Knowing when to call it day!
- (b) Using light waterproof coverings over the bird whilst on the fist or
- (c) As a friend of mine does (you know who you are!) take your mothers hair drier hawking!

The second major category is:

(2) Concurrent disease

This can be due to

(i) Gut parasites

(ii) Gut infections -

Bacterial

Viral

Protozoae.g Coccidia

Yeast e.g Candida

(iii) Aspergillosis - Although Aspergillus is more commonly known to produce respiratory problems it can manifest itself with vomiting, inappetance and sour crop. This occurs because the air sacs which act as bellows to store and force newly inspired air through the avian lung are found in the "abdomen" surrounding the intestine.

Aspergillosis is a fungal infection which sets up inflammation in these air sacs which in effect puts pressure on the intestine interfering with its motility and well

you know the rest!

(iv) Lead/organophosphate poisoning - Both these toxins damage the nerves innervating the gut effectively paralysing it. The former brought about by the feeding of lead shot pigeon/rabbit etc and the latter usually encountered after the treatment of aviaries with anti-mite preparations. The use of such products is fine so long as the housing is left empty and well ventilated for at least five days.

Some I feel I should mention at this point is that in the past I regularly fed rifle shot rabbit to my Harris, assuming if head shot the round would be in one side and out the other. I had just taken delivery of a batch of rabbits shot as usual with a .22 rifle and as it was a quiet I decided to x-ray the lot (As you do!)

What I found was that in each case the round had entered the skull, bounced around a bit and shattered, spreading shrapnel as far back as the chest. Removing the head only, as I had been doing, was therefore not a guarantee that no lead would be present.

Also just because your rabbits have been hawk caught or ferreted doesn't mean they haven't had a non-fatal peppering of shot in the past.

What I'm saying is that everything should immediately go out and buy themselves an x-ray machine and religiously x-ray their food on a daily basis....Just Kidding!!!

Seriously though, even if you are convinced your hawk could not have consumed lead, but it is showing signs of weakness especially of the legs with or without a sour crop, lead poisoning has got to be considered. It doesn't take a large amount either, a single lead shot is enough to kill a Golden Eagle! If your bird is weak or off its legs do get it checked out by an avian vet immediately.

While we are on the topic of lead, (I apologise for this digression), I would also like to mention that lead can only cause poisoning if ingested. If a bird sustains a non fatal gunshot wound it can live quite happily - (providing bits have not been blown off!), with the chunk of metal in situ, lead poisoning only occurs when lead is acted upon by stomach acid and it enters the circulation.

TREATMENT

When presented with a sour crop the priority is to encourage the crop to empty by regurgitation, manual emptying or digestion.

Initially the bird should be given a small amount of oral fluid (liquid lactade from your vet is ideal) by crop tube. Rough volumes are as follows:

Spar/Merlin - 1-2 ml

Tiercel Peregrine - 3-5ml

Female Harris - 6-8ml

This fluid lubrication can often allow the bird to put the crop over itself.

The crop is then massaged in order to lubricate and encourage the onward passage of food. Once out of the crop and into the proventriculus it will be acted upon by

the stomach juices and the majority of the bacteria digested.

If no improvement is seen with 1 hour the bird should be encouraged to regurgitate. Some hawks will regurgitate when travelling boxed so boxing the bird and taking it for a blast down a country lane is always worth a try. Explain that one to your local constabulary - "it's like this you see officer.....!"

Other methods that have been used to encourage regurgitation are

(i) Spraying with water and

(ii) The placement of a rubber band (not too tight!) over the back of the birds head and into the mouth like the horses bit in a bridle. This apparently stimulates the bird to gag and regurgitate the crop contents.

If the above fail to induce crop emptying, a vet should be consulted immediately.

The bird should be anaesthetised with a tube placed into the trachea and the contents milked back to the mouth and retrieved with forceps.

Having the bird anaesthetised and intubated reduces the biggest of this procedure ie. inhaling crop contents which would inevitably set up a life threatening pneumonia.

Alternatively an incision can be made into the crop and the contents removed, again this minimises the risk of inhalation pneumonia. The crop may be washed out to remove many of the toxins. At this point the bird is always given intravenous fluids, to combat shock and dilute the toxins.

Systemic antibiotics and a gut stimulating drug, 'cisapride', are also administered.

Once the bird has been stabilised it is then imperative to find out why the sour crop occurred in the first place.

Blood samples, faecal samples, crop/cloacal swabs and x-rays will all help to lead us to a specific diagnosis which can in turn be dealt with.

AFTERCARE

Once the crop has been emptied and flushed, careful feeding should follow.

Initially oral fluid is given by crop tube against in rough volumes as follows:

Spar/Merlin - 5ml

Tiercel Peregrine - 10ml

Female Harris - 20ml

This is repeated in 2 hours. If the fluid is put over, liquid food is given in the same volume. Hills a/d convalescent diet available from your vet is ideal, alternative liquidised beef/quail breast given every 3-4 hours over 24 hours.

If all is proceeding as planned the liquid feed can be substituted for 1/4 crop of chopped pigeon/beef/quail dipped in lactade and fed without casting. Once put over this is repeated and the weight of the bird put up in this fashion over the next few days. No casting should be given for seven days by which time the hawk should be fit again providing the cause has been determined and dealt with. If the birds weight has been low it should be increased well over flying weight.

PREVENTION

Prevention is always better (and cheaper) than cure and there are many things we falconers can do to minimise the risk of our birds developing sour crop.

The most important thing, in my opinion is flying your birds in as high a condition as possible, whilst maintaining obedience. Liam O'Broin sums it up superbly in his "Manual for Hawking" with his statement - "FEED HIGH, FLY HARD!" And this goes for all disease prevention in captive raptors.

This can be achieved by the flying of imprinted birds in certain species, using timing and appetite rather than strict weight reduction and increased socialisation/manning of our birds. I don't profess to be an authority on any of the above topics but there are falconers out there who are, so make use of their knowledge and experience. Approach senior club members and NEVER be afraid to ask advice.

From my own experience timing can be a very important factor and I have found that it is possible to achieve as good, if not better results flying my sparrow at 9oz and delaying flying time by 3-4 hours than I do at 24 hour intervals at 8 3/4 oz. A difference of only 1/4 oz., but every little bit counts when our birds are in this fine balance between health and disease, a balance that can be offset by the slightest stress.

A lot of falconers out there will probably disagree with my second point which is that hawks should never be gorged to bursting on a kill. Already I hear cries of "Well that's what happens in the wild!" But in my opinion there are two main differences.

(i) no matter how fit and well manned a hawk is even with imprints they are never able to match their wild counterparts in terms of condition and flying weight. In other words a wild hawk will have more energy reserves to help put over a bulging crop and better immunity and fewer stresses to deal with.

(ii) Through speaking with fellow falconers and from observations of hawks in their wild state, the second difference is the time falconry birds, as opposed to wild birds spend consuming their kill.

A wild hawk for example once at a suitable plucking post may spend hours plucking and consuming its prey, resulting in the food being 'put over', a small amount at a time.

A captive hawk however, being that much lower in weight and with a falconer hovering overhead will pile it away in minutes - cramming every last morsel into an already bulging crop.

This results in an overstretched atony - Imagine a crop is like a balloon: if inflated with couple of breaths and let out, it will return to its original size and shape. However, if you inflate it to near bursting and release the air it shrinks but not to its original size. The same will happen to the crop resulting in a flaccid, saggy crop

which is very slow to put over - sour crop city!

Problems associated with feeding have been discussed previously and so can be avoided by feeding a good quality, properly stored, lead free diet. As a rule 'if in doubt, chuck it out!'

With regards to food storage in the field I recently came across a series of food containers in Sainsbury's called Microban, which allegedly have built in antibacterial properties. The smallest of which, conveniently, is exactly the same size as the food pocket in my hawking waistcoat. I've been using it ever since and have not have one incident of reaching in to grab a bechinn only to find a rotting quail head - you know the score!

Probiotics are preparations that have come into vogue recently. These consist of a mixture of freeze dried 'healthy bacteria', which when added to food help to colonise the gut for a short time encouraging the right conditions for the natural bacterial flora to re-establish. We recommend their use in all eyasses, in adult birds at times of stress, egg training/transport/breeding and in all sick birds receiving antibiotic therapy.

There are numerous products available, the ones we recommend and use being 'avipro' by Vetark and Potent Brew by The Birdcare Company.

Apart from birds low in condition probably the most common reason we are presented with a sour crop case is some form of trauma in the field. A bird may have collided with a fence during a flight for example and sustained an injury, possibly a leg/wing fracture neither of which are initially life threatening.

The bird starts to go into shock, however, will be unable to put its crop over and so will gain nothing and eventually the crop will sour.

The bird should be immediately warmed up and given warm fluids (either lactade or 1 teaspoon of glucose in 1/2 cup of warm water) in the volumes described above, via crop tube.

These first few steps will save more birds than any amount of high tech surgery so get a crop tube from your vet.

They can be made simply from a 10ml syringe attached to a 20cm length of drip tubing, they cost pennies but are priceless.

The technique is easy once practised and our nurses regularly tube hawks single handed.

The hawk is held upright by a willing volunteer and the hawk's head grasped from behind. The beak is opened and the thumb and middle finger of the hand holding the head pushed into the bird's cheeks. This effectively gags the bird with the beak open enabling us to pass the tube.

Hold the birds head upright so the neck is straight, and I find it useful to hold the syringe in my mouth at this point freeing my right hand to pass the flexible tube.

At the base of the birds tongue is a slit like opening to the airway - the glottis.

When crop tubing a bird this is 'the only thing you have to avoid'; everything else is crop so once passed over this at the back of the mouth you are laughing.

You will find that in a bird the size of a Harris the whole 20 cm tubing can be passed quite easily but if you come across any resistance try wiggling the tube and adjusting the birds' neck - the straighter the better.

Once the tube is in place expel the fluid slowly keeping an eye on the back of the mouth for any welling up. If this occurs, STOP, and if any fluid wells up over the airway flip the bird upside down and let it drain out of the mouth.

As with everything else in life the key to it is practice.

Try the technique on a pheasant or pigeon from the freezer, then practice on a live healthy bird so when it comes to the crunch and you actually have a sick bird on your hands you can deal with the situation calmly and efficiently.

Finally, get used to feeling your birds crop and note how long she takes to put it over. This will obviously vary tremendously from bird to bird, with the type and amount of food, as well as with the time of feeding. that is, a crop is put over much quicker during the day when the birds natural metabolic rate is higher.

For example, I know that if I fed my Spar up to 10 1/4 oz in the evening she will have put it over completely within 10 hours. (roughly).

I pick her up the following morning and feel her keel and crop: If there is anything present although the bird appears completely normal there is potential problem which can be addressed.

The point is to be aware of problems as soon as possible, giving these fragile creatures we choose to share our lives with a much better chance of recovery.

I apologise that this seemingly simple topic has turned into a party political broadcast on behalf of the veterinary party but if after reading it one person learns to use a crop tube it will have been worthwhile.

Happy Healthy Hawking.

RESEARCH DATA WANTED

We are keen to carry out a research project this year into the faecal cortisol levels during the training period between imprint goshawks as opposed to parent reared goshawks.

If you know of any goshawk breeders through the club who might be prepared to collect faeces from beneath their birds on a daily basis for 3-4 weeks, we would be very happy to hear from them. We are ideally looking for 8 of each group.

The results would of course not be used at all against falconry, but simply to demonstrate the health benefits of training an imprint bird.

**Neil Forbes BVet Med CBiol
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England**

HARRIS HAWKS AREN'T HARD TO TRAIN?

Diana Durman-Walters

There comes a moment in ones falconry life when you wish life had dealt you a long straw. I'm sure it arrived in the shape of the Harris Hawk. Well most people would think so. Docile, easily pleased and receptive to catalogue of indifferent training they come shining through.

But is that the full picture? Can they be so resourceful that they can overcome the limitations of their falconers? Well, to date mine don't answer the phone or drive me to Safeways and a cohort group of three had been infuriatingly resistant to their own biological requirements to leave the fist and hunt.

Now this is not the norm with them. Last year I kept back three young hawks to train as replacements for three old-timers who were fast approaching nine years of age. These seasoned hawks had in their career taken a vast head of rabbit quarry and one in particular, named "Susannah" had taken everything conceivable before her.

The relentless pursuit of quarry was implacable and the ease of their achievements the same. The need to change the status quo arrived with injuries sustained in the field. Not unlike gifted footballers their legs were their Achilles heels. Talons I have found are their vulnerable features. They can be detached or split when tackling quarry in difficult positions, for instance rabbits have run into constricting tight corners ie drains or turned quickly at right angles. For the majority of hawks this is neither here nor there but for these three who had tackled over 500 rabbits apiece in their time, injuries were a real problem.

A conscious decision to retire them had come and three new '97 juveniles (two males and a female) were to replace them. The Winter of '97 wasn't a difficult regarding cold weather which we usually have plenty of, but it did seem to have so many days of wet, windy weather, (not unlike the Summer we're having) that the young hawks didn't get enough exposure to rabbits that were within their capabilities.

Late Spring saw a resumption of their training and young rabbits were now starting to show themselves in the fields. The female 'Scarlet' was keener than either of her brothers to tackle rabbit. She in fact was the first of the trio to do so. At this point I felt the young hawks would present no problem, but life isn't quite like that.

The hawks had been parent reared and raised. I was keen to have youngsters that were silent, without the verbal conversations that creche reared young indulge in. Parent reared young are much trickier than hand reared or creche reared birds. Temperamentally they are much more reserved and require considerably more manning, carriage and contact time. During this period they do not have the same levels of bravado as non-parent reared and they need a longer term to develop a relaxed approach to work.

Being uptight in human company has its advantages in the training programme. At this end they become very reliable in the company of dogs and will train comfortably in their presence remaining unfazed by them thereafter. I find that they are very similar to training goshawks at this point and can be walked, fist trained and lure trained with the dog in close proximity.

The other benefit is they are silent. These youngsters had been in with their parents in skylight, seclusion aviaries for 16 weeks before they were taken out. They were wild. All three were hooded and their immediate work was conducted as if they were a passage or haggard gos'. They were very reluctant to commit themselves to the immediate close contact with people. When the hood was removed in the late evening for feeding their crest feathers were thrust out into a gesture of defiance that reminded me of a young eagle. Wild eyes staring unmovingly, with beak open to gain the advantage of biting if they got the chance.

Their steady progress from this point to a state of what they considered acceptable

human behaviour took some time. In fact double of not treble the time it had taken to 'man' previous creche reared youngsters. Much of the Winter months were absorbed with their work.

Once a falcon or hawk enters its second season without having tackled quarry in its first year then the work needed to encourage them to hunt is made somewhat more difficult because the immediate stimulus to do so has been diluted by the constant provision of food by the falconer. The hawk sees this as the sole source of food.

It's a question of far greater perseverance. The young rabbits that surface in the Spring become the turning point for committing themselves. However, the cover also grows at a remarkable pace as well and this may mean that possible slips are going to end in failure as the rabbits sit only a few feet from the safety of the burrow.

Thankfully Harris Hawks are tenacious and simply don't give up. They will weigh up the odds of certain slips which may not have much appeal if they see the rabbit has the advantage of being too close to cover and may ignore what appears to be a good opportunity. In the case of the young trio, daily exposure to rabbit infested terrain and correct weight management had the desired effect. It seemed hard to imagine that I would be overjoyed that another rabbit had been successfully taken bit it had been a testing time and one which seemed as if it would beg the question; "are Harris Hawks hard to train?" The answer has to be that they are particularly bright and need to be brought along at a fairly smart pace so that they develop those keen minds at an early age.

As for the trio, they are now using their new found skills to great effect. They were a demanding group. Parent reared hawks do require more time, effort and skill, but you simply can't overcome the pleasure of having hunting hawks that are not screamers, whether on the bow perch or out in the field

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INTRODUCTION TO NYLON KITES FOR TRAINING FALCONS

Julian Stevens

The use of Delta Nylon Kites in training Game Hawks to obtain pitch, fitness, motivation and footing skills originates from the USA. Dave Scarborough being one of the earliest exponents in the late 1980's and the beginning of this decade.

It has been heralded as the perfect answer for training. At this early stage in this article I have to say that it is not!

Just because a falcon will readily fly up to a kite that has say 1,400 feet of line out (ie a pitch of approximately 1,000 feet, depending on drop of line and angle of kite that is adjacent to the Reel/Winch), may mean that without the kite the Falcon flies around you at 100 feet! One of the most highly respected falconry artists and practising falconers in the United Kingdom at present told me last year of the story that follows.

His tiercel, after a short while training to the kite, had successfully been entered at game. The tiercel was flying really well and obtaining excellent pitches every time he flew, held station well and was a highly motivated bird. On this occasion the falconer spotted what he considered was the "perfect" flight at a covey of French partridges in the middle of a field with little or no cover and far enough from any hedgerows to allow the peregrine to connect with his chosen Frenchman. The falconer, down wind and out of sight of the covey unhooded and cast the tiercel off his fist expecting him to mount around him and make his pitch directly above the falconer before moving towards the covey. To his disbelief he saw his falcon fly off in exactly the opposite direction to that which he

expected. It looked for some reason that he was flying at check, even though he had shown no inclination to do this before and anyway he was still making a great pitch as he flew out of sight.

When he eventually tracked the tiercel down with telemetry he found the bird flying around a microlight looking for a lure dangling beneath it! By the time he returned the covey had of course moved out of position and to close cover to consider a flight. It is worth taking note of this cautionary tale.

I also believe that not all falcons need this sort of training. A tiercel that I flew last year, only two weeks out of the aviary and first free flight off the creance, immediately went up to about five hundred feet and no kite to be seen anywhere.

I personally am sold on kite training for fitness and motivation but not necessarily pitch or holding station above you, which still requires the sort of discipline and dedication expressed so well by Ray Turner in his book "Gamehawk - Field and Moor".

Recently I took on a two year old Peregrine/Lanner Hybrid that had never really flown free before coming to us. Four weeks later she is flying every day (wind conditions permitting) up to eight or nine hundred feet and excelling in her newly found powers of flight.

I have yet to have a bird of my own fail to take to the kite and a motivated, fit falcon is a happy falcon. In fact even when there is not enough time to set up a flight with each of the falcons, at least if they are flown to

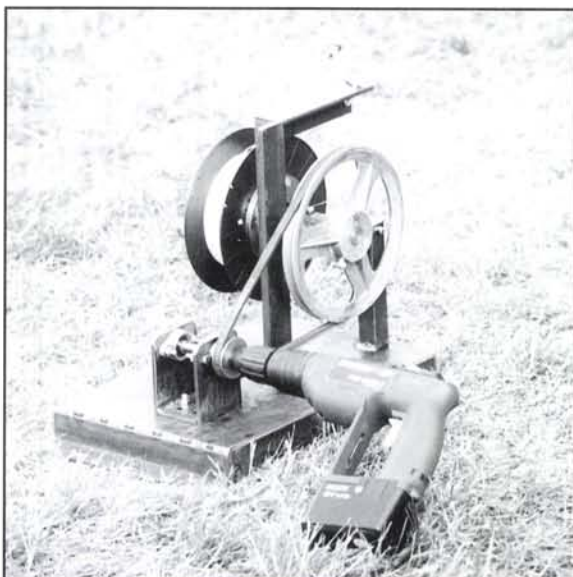


A typical Nylon Delta Kite. These are very light and strong, using modern carbon fibre and fibre-glass.

the kite the birds remain fit and healthier and come into condition for breeding far easier at the end of the game season and therefore if you are considering breeding from your falcon bear this in mind.

In short kite training is yet another discipline, adding more stress to the falconer with all its' many pitfalls - tangled lines, lures failing to release cleanly and come down the line, permission is required from both landowners and the authorities including the CAA (Civil Aviation Authority).

Whilst mentioning the CAA, the maximum permitted height to fly without a special licence is two hundred feet or sixty metres, no good to us falconers as the lure is attached to the line at between two and three hundred feet below the kite. Therefore we would be breaking the law without even getting the lure off the ground.



This is a prototype pulley which I have designed for use with Nylon Delta Kite, a cordless drill can be easily attached for rewinding.

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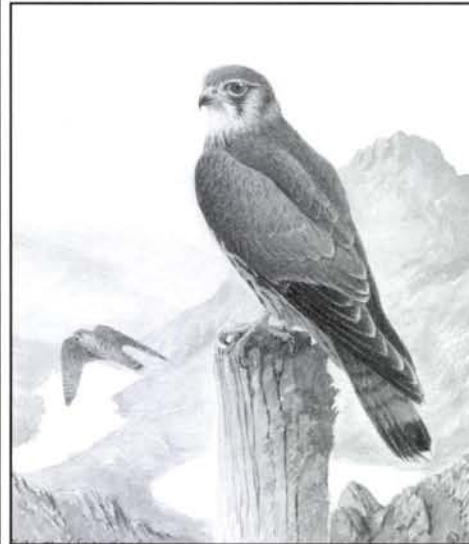


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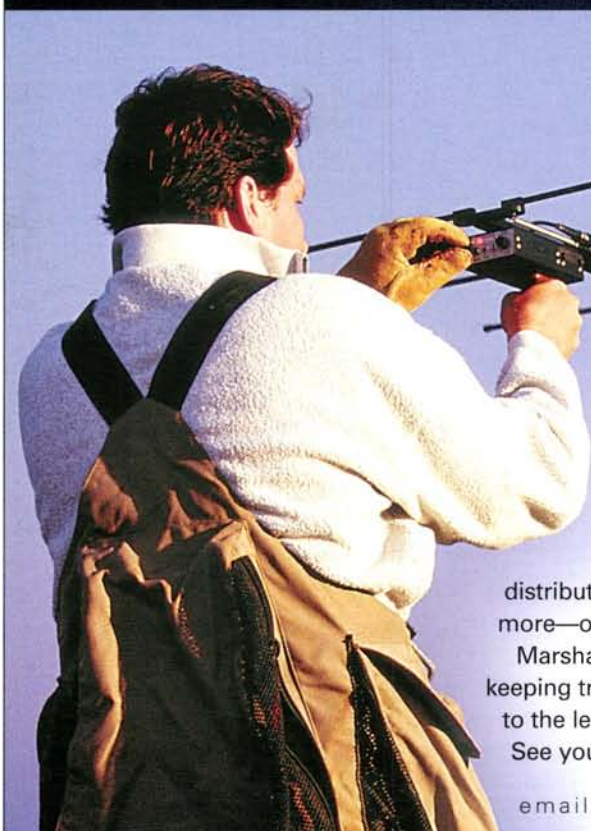
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