

# The World of Falconry

Issue No 7  
July 2011  
£5



The Magazine for Austringers and Falconers



A successful family owned business supplying quality frozen raptor food for over 20 years.

Run by Falconers supporting Falconry worldwide.

Distribution to major breeders, zoos and collections throughout the UK, Ireland & Europe.

Top quality Chicks, Quail & Rodents, carefully selected, packed and blast frozen by Honeybrook Animal Foods at our own premises.

Major sponsors of the International Festival of Falconry and the Campaign For Falconry.

For further information phone:

\*\*44(0)1386 830089 or FREEPHONE 0800 1971 777

Visit our web site: [www.honeybrookfoods.co.uk](http://www.honeybrookfoods.co.uk)



**Honeybrook Animal Foods for all your raptor's needs**

## FALCONRY BOOKS UK

*Coch-y-Bonddu Books, Machynlleth, Powys SY20 8DG. U.K. Tel: 01654 702837*

[www.falconrybooks.co.uk](http://www.falconrybooks.co.uk) [orders@falconrybooks.co.uk](mailto:orders@falconrybooks.co.uk)

**HUGE RANGE OF BOOKS ON FISHING & FIELD SPORTS @ [www.anglebooks.com](http://www.anglebooks.com)**

### NEW BOOKS ON FALCONRY & RAPTORS

THE HUNTING FALCON. Bruce Haak. Hbk.	£22.95
KAI: HAWKING IN BRITAIN WITH A REDTAIL. T Bomil. Hbk. £19.95	
DIRT HAWKING: RABBIT & HARE HAWKING. Joe Roy III. Hbk.	£25.00
GOSHAWK: MEMORIES OF A SPANISH GOSHAWKER. Pareja-Oregon. Hbk.	£50.00
Y2K FALCONRY. Pete Smith. Hbk.	£39.95
SHAHEEN: A FALCONER'S JOURNEY FROM TURKEY. Paul Harris Jones. Hbk.	£25.00
HAWKING & FALCONRY FOR BEGINNERS. A. Hallgarth. Hbk.	£19.95
HOOD, LEASH & LURE: FALCONRY IN THE 20th CENTURY. Roger Upton. Hbk.	£30.00
THE COMPLETE RABBIT AND HARE HAWK. Second edition. Martin Hollinshead. Hbk.	£25.00
HAWKING GROUND QUARRY. M. Hollinshead. Hbk.	£19.95
HARRIS HAWK DAYS. Martin Hollinshead. Hbk.	£16.95
ARAB FALCONRY. Roger Upton. Hbk.	£60.00
MUSINGS OF AN AFGHAN FALCONER. Sirdar Mohamed Osman. Hbk.	£30.00
HUNTING WITH HARRIS HAWKS. Bob Dalton. Pbk.	£12.95
THE RED-TAILED HAWK. Liam McGranaghan. Hbk.	£35.00
MY SAN DIEGO AND HER FALCONRY. Craig Culver. Hbk.	£25.00
SKY HUNTERS. Hossain Amirsadeghi. Hbk.	£45.00
<b>RONALD STEVENS - new editions for 2010</b>	
THE TAMING OF GENGHIS. Hbk.	£25.00
OBSERVATIONS ON MODERN FALCONRY. Hbk.	£25.00
LAGGARD. Hbk.	£25.00
A LIFE WITH BIRDS. Hbk.	£25.00
SET OF ALL FOUR RONALD STEVENS BOOKS.	£75.00

### RAPTOR MANAGEMENT & ECOLOGY

IMPRINT ACCIPITER II. Michael McDermott. Hbk.	£40.00
UNDERSTANDING THE BIRD OF PREY. Dr Nick Fox. Hbk. (£43.50)	£30.00
ACCIPITRINE BEHAVIORAL PROBLEMS: DIAGNOSIS & TREATMENT. Michael McDermott. Hbk.	£50.00
CAPTIVE RAPTOR MANAGEMENT & REHABILITATION. Naisbitt & Holz. Hbk.	£29.95
BIRDS OF PREY: HEALTH & DISEASE. J.E. Cooper. Hbk.	£84.99
RAPTORS IN CAPTIVITY: GUIDELINES FOR CARE AND MANAGEMENT. Lori M.S. Arent. Hbk.	£29.95
RAPTOR RESEARCH AND MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES. Bird & others. Pbk.	£29.95
CAPTIVE RAPTOR MANAGEMENT & REHABILITATION. Naisbitt & Holz. Hbk.	£29.95
RAPTORS OF THE WORLD. Ferguson-Lees & Christie. Hbk.	£60.00
RAPTORS OF THE WORLD: A FIELD GUIDE. Ferguson-Lees & Christie. Pbk.	£24.99
THE PEREGRINE FALCON. Derek Ratcliffe. Hbk. (£45.00)	£20.00
GYRFALCON. Emma Ford. Hbk.	£65.00
THE GYRFALCON. Potapov & Sale. Hbk.	£45.00
THE GOSHAWK. Robert Kenward. Hbk.	£45.00
OWLS OF THE WORLD. König & Weick. Hbk.	£45.00
OWLS OF EUROPE. Heimo Mikkola. Hbk.	£25.00
THE REALLY USEFUL OWL BOOK. Jemima Parry-Jones. Hbk. ...£4.95	
UNDERSTANDING OWLS. Jemima Parry-Jones. Pbk. (£12.99)	£7.95
FALCONRY EQUIPMENT. Kimsey & Hodge. Pbk.	£25.00
THE PRAIRIE FALCON. Anderson & Squires. Pbk.	£9.95

### COMPLETE WORKS OF JACK MAVROGORDATO

A FALCON IN THE FIELD, A HAWK FOR THE BUSH & BEHIND THE SCENES. 3 volumes. £110.00

### NEW LIMITED EDITION FALCONRY BOOKS

CLASSICAL FALCONRY: A TREATISE ON ROOK & CROW HAWKING. Nick Fox. Hbk.	£75.00
FALCONRY IN LITERATURE. David Horobin. Hbk.	£29.95
THE LOO FALCONRY. Van de Wall. Hbk.	£60.00
DUCK HAWKING. Joe Roy III. Hbk.	£29.95
REMINISCENCES OF A FALCONER. Major C.H. Fisher. Hbk.	£30.00
FALCONRY. Gilbert Blaine. Hbk.	£25.00
LAST WOLF HAWKER: THE EAGLE FALCONRY OF FRIEDRICH REMMLER. Martin Hollinshead. Hbk.	£30.00
GERMAN EAGLE. FRITZ LOGES: MASTER FALCONER. Martin Hollinshead. Hbk.	£30.00
LATHAM'S FALCONRY. WITH COMMENTARY BY DAVID HOROBIN. Two volumes in slipcase. October 2010	£145.00

### BARGAIN-PRICED HAWKING BOOKS.

FALCONRY & HAWKING. Phillip Glasier. New Hbk. (£35.00)	£20.00
THE MODERN FALCONER. D. Durman-Walters. Hbk. (£19.95)	£9.95
JEMIMA PARRY-JONES' FALCONRY: CARE, CAPTIVE BREEDING & CONSERVATION. Pbk. (£12.99)	£7.95
TRAINING BIRDS OF PREY. Parry-Jones. Pbk. (£12.99)	£7.95
ENCYCLOPEDIA OF FALCONRY. Adrian Walker. Hbk. (£39.95)	£19.95
FALCONRY FOR YOU. Drummond / ap Evans. Hbk. (£12.95)	£4.95
A MIXED BAG. Martin Hollinshead. Pbk. (£12.95)	£5.95
EAGLE DREAMS: SEARCHING FOR LEGENDS IN WILD MONGOLIA. Stephen Bodio. Hbk. (£15.99)	£9.95

**SECURE WEBSITE ORDERING - PAYMENT BY CREDIT-CARD OR PAYPAL - UK POST MAXIMUM £5**

# The World of Falconry

Edition 7  
July 2011



## Published by

The World of Falconry  
Hamptworth Estate Office  
Home Farm  
Hamptworth  
Salisbury  
Wiltshire  
SP5 2DS

## Telephone:

07774 267790

## Email:

worldoffalconry@yahoo.co.uk

## Website:

www.worldoffalconry.com

## Contributors:

World of Falconry welcomes submissions from would be contributors. Please either post or email any articles and relevant photographs to the Editor at the above address, or phone 07774 267790.

## Annual Subscription:

UK & Eire: £22.00  
Europe: £24.00  
Airmail: £32.00

For subscriptions contact the Editor at the above address. Cheques made payable to:  
'G. Anderson'.

**Disclaimer:** Whilst every care has been taken to ensure that data in this publication is accurate, neither the publisher nor its editorial contributors can accept any liability to any party for loss or damage caused by errors or omissions resulting from negligence, accident or any other cause. The World of Falconry does not officially endorse any advertising material included within this publication. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in any retrieval systems or transmitted in any form, without prior permission of the publisher.

## Editorial

Time, unlike the moult in the case of my hawks, seems to just be flying by and already here we are at issue seven of our magazine. I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank all of those that have contributed to the magazine and helped to ensure its continued success. It was really good to see so many of our readership at the Falconers Fair back in May and we hope to see a large number of you again at the CLA Game and Country Fair at Blenheim on July 22<sup>nd</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>. The magazine has a stand in the falconry area and we will be present on all three days of the event.

We are indebted once again to those that have contributed articles and photographs and we are always pleased to hear from our readers. If there are topics you would like to see covered, that haven't been up until now, then please get in touch and let us know what you would like to see and read about. In the pipeline we have articles from falconers in Peru, Russia, Kazakstan and South Africa. But we are always looking for more as well as falconry related photographs.

As always, good hawking.

The Editor

## Contents

- 4 News

---

- 7 Bumblefoot in Raptors  
The Straight Forward Cases  
by Neil A Forbes BVet Dip ECZM(avian) FRCVS

---

- 14 Philippe Vanardois –  
Artist and Falconer

---

- 17 The British Falconers Club Eagle  
Meet continued by Dr. David Glynne Fox

---

- 21 Falconry and Hawking with Harriers  
in New Zealand by Noel Hyde

---

- 24 Trapping my first Hawk by Jeff Price

---

- 26 Australian raptors

---

- 27 The New Adventures of  
The Old Ms. Elbert by Chuck Redding

---

- 32 Barga, the Egyptian Kestrel

---

- 34 British Falconry and Raptor Fair Report

---

- 35 UK Falconry & Hawking Event

---

- 37 Saints or Sinners, Heroes or Villains  
continued by Tiercel

Front Cover Photograph: Bob Dalton

# News

## Belgian Field Meet, Westmalle November 2<sup>nd</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup>

After the outstanding success of last year's inaugural International Field Meeting the Belgian falconry group, known as Equipage St. Bavo, will once again be playing to host to falconers from across Europe this coming November. The format of the field meet will follow the formula used last year and there will be hunting for hawks, falcons and eagles. Barrack style accommodation for falconers, their hawks, dogs and ferrets as well as breakfast, a packed lunch and evening meal will all be included in the attendance fee. As well as a banquet on the final night, complete with raffle and entertainment. For those that find the basic type accommodation not to their liking there are a number of nice and very reasonably priced hotels in the area. Most importantly there is a secure weather-

ing area for the hawks which is manned twenty four hours a day.

The editor of this magazine attended the meet last year and will be doing so again this year. In his opinion it was one of the friendliest and best organised meets he had ever been to. Last year the only shortcoming that could possibly be picked up on

were the limited opportunities for those attending with longwings. This issue has now been addressed and it is hoped for superior flying opportunities this year.

For further details of the meet and its relevant conditions you can contact the group on [equipagesintbavo@hotmail.com](mailto:equipagesintbavo@hotmail.com)



*Gos on pheasant*

## German Falcon – Expo, Bad Sackingen, October 1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup>

A new event on the falconry calendar will take place at Bad Sackingen in Southern Germany this coming October. Apparently the premise of the event will be along the lines of our own Falconry Fair



but will also include hunting in its many other guises as practised in Germany. The event will be based at the Golf and Leisure resort of Hochrhein and will be well supported, according to the organisers, by European equipment sellers as well as two of the three major falconry organisations in Germany.

For those wishing to know more about this event you can go to the web site [www.FALKNER-FESTIVAL.DE](http://www.FALKNER-FESTIVAL.DE) where you will find full details including an English version to download.

## NAFA Field Meet, Vernal, Utah, November 20<sup>th</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup>

The North American Falconers Association will be holding its annual field meet in Vernal Utah this year and should be very well attended. Always popular with overseas visitors, especially those from Europe, this meet offers the visitor tremendous opportunities to go out with a wide and extremely varied selection of trained hawks chasing an equally varied assortment



*Red Tailed Hawk*

of quarry. In the evenings there are plenty of interesting talks and seminars laid on as well as a very wide selection of falconry related vendors offering their goods for sale.

For those contemplating attending you can get in touch with NAFA's Foreign Liaison' who is Mike Hope, and he can be reached by e-mail at [NAFAForeignLiaison@n-a-f-a.com](mailto:NAFAForeignLiaison@n-a-f-a.com)

## Avian Vet Neil Forbes wins inaugural European Award

Neil A. Forbes, BVetMed DipECZM(avain) FRCVS, a qualified European Specialist Bird Vet, who runs Great Western Exotics, operating out of the Vets Now Referrals Hospital in Swindon has become the first ever recipient of the Helga Gerlach Award for Excellence in Avian Veterinary Sciences.

The award which was presented to Neil at the 11th Conference of the European Committee of the Association of Avian veterinarians (EAAV) on 28th April, was set up as part of the Helga Gerlach Fund in recognition of the work of Professor Helga Gerlach, who dedicated more than 50 years of her life to avian exotic and poultry medicine.

Neil was nominated and selected as the winner of the award from a selection of European contemporaries, who were required to meet a strict level of requirements, including having practised avian medicine for 15

years, and undertaken extensive teaching, writing, research and clinical performance in this field.

Raptor owners will be familiar with Neil, the specialist 24/7 exotic Veterinary services offered at Great western Exotics in Swindon, as well as his training courses. Neil, grandson of famous falconer Bill Ruttledge, has spent over 30 years studying, researching, teaching and providing raptor medical care. The facility is the only full time specialist staffed, exotic animal veterinary service in the Southern UK. Neil regularly contributes articles to periodicals on all aspects of Bird Medicine published both in the UK and across Europe.

Commenting on his award Neil says "To be the first recipient of this award is a great honour, especially knowing that I have been nominated and selected by my contemporaries across Europe. This is an area of veterinary medicine that I am extremely pas-

sionate about and want to encourage more vets to become involved in, so that the level of veterinary care provided can be raised. The Helga Gerlach fund celebrates and recognises the work being done by Specialist Avian vets across Europe and the world, and is an excellent recognition of the vast contribution that Professor Gerlach made to the advancement of avian medicine".

For further information about Great Western Referrals and their work log on to [www.gwexotics.com](http://www.gwexotics.com) or [www.vetsnowreferrals.com](http://www.vetsnowreferrals.com) or call 01793-603800.



Neil Forbes receiving award

## THA Annual Field Meet, Abilene January 13<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> 2012

The Texas Hawking Association will once again be holding its annual field meet in Abilene Texas in January 2012. This meeting is without doubt one of the friendliest and nicest meets to attend and the editor of this magazine would heartily recommend it to any falconer no matter where you are based. Texan hospitality really is second to none and the meet itself is within easy driving distance of so many major airports, Dallas, Fort Worth, Houston, Austin, that getting there just isn't a problem. The meet bases itself at The Whitten Inn Motel, which is reasonably priced, clean and relatively central to all the facilities a visitor could possibly need.



Anatum Peregrine Falcon

The hawking itself tends to be of a very high quality and the falconers involved are always more than happy to make visitors feel welcome and to ensure they get to see some sport. In the evenings there are always talks and various equipment sellers are present offering their goods for sale. The final evening sees a really good

banquet take place accompanied by an excellent raffle, both of which take place after the appearance of a guest keynote speaker.

For further details of the meet contact the THA Secretary/Treasurer, Jim Coody, at [treasurer@texashawking.org](mailto:treasurer@texashawking.org) or visit their website and click on events at [www.texashawking.org](http://www.texashawking.org)

## Gyrfalcons, secret seabirds

A recent report in BBC Nature News has reported on scientific claims that Gyrfalcons living in the high Arctic overwinter out at sea and spend long periods hunting and living on the pack ice. The research by Dr. Burnham makes for truly fascinating reading and this particular article can be found on the June 20th edition of BBC Nature. For those wishing to read the article it can be found on the web site [www.bbc.c.uk/nature/13791688](http://www.bbc.c.uk/nature/13791688)

## Gyrfalcons, a 2,500 year old nest discovered

An equally absorbing news item relating to Gyrfalcons also appears on the BBC Earth News site and concerns research work, again carried out by Dr. Burnham, which has discovered a Gyr eyrie that has been continually in use for more than 2,500 years. With the help of carbon dating it has been revealed that one nest site in Kangerlussuaq in central Greenland is between 2,360 and 2,740 years old. Also a feather found at one particular site was dated as being moulted by a Gyr some 670 years ago.

For those wishing to read this fascinating article it can be found on the BBC Earth News web site [www.news.bbc.co.uk](http://www.news.bbc.co.uk) and the article first appeared on June 17th 2009.



## Jack Bishop

Jack Bishop is a highly talented 18 year old who has recently finished a btec national diploma art and design course at St. Albans Oaklands City Campus Art College. Jack has always had a love of drawing and painting from an early age and this has gone hand in hand with his love of animals, which have always been the main subject matter for his work. Since an early age Jack has been surrounded by Pointers as well as hawks and falcons as his father is well respected falconer Dave Bishop.



Jack has taken the brave decision to start his professional career as an artist with immediate effect and to this end has produced a couple of limited edition prints of two different English Pointers. One is of "Bella" one of his father's dogs and the other is of "Jack" belonging to Lee Cooper.



For more information on these superb prints and other work Jack has in the pipeline he can be contacted at [jackbishop92@hotmail.com](mailto:jackbishop92@hotmail.com)

## Third Falconry Festival, Abu Dhabi December 15<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup>

The third Falconry Festival will be hosted by The Emirates Falconers' Club Abu Dhabi and will be held between December 15th and 17th at Jahili Fort in Al Ain. These are the dates for main public participation but the event will actually begin with the arrival of International visitors on Sunday the 10th of December. The next four days leading up



to the main public days will see hawking, preparation, excursions and evening events taking place. Opposite the Fort is the Rotana Hotel which will be used for the conferences and workshop meetings as well as housing visitors.

The web site for the event, which can be found at [www.falconryfestival.com](http://www.falconryfestival.com) is extremely comprehensive in its detail and should answer any queries any potential visitors may have. We will cover the upcoming event in a little more detail in our next issue due out mid October.

# Bumblefoot in Raptors

## The Straight Forward Cases

Neil A Forbes BVetMed DipECZM(avian) FRCVS

### Summary

Bumblefoot (raptor pododermatitis) has historically and remains one of the commonest and most serious afflictions of captive *Falconiformes*. This article describes the causes, disease process and treatment methods.

### Introduction

Bumblefoot is a term which is used loosely, relating to swelling, inflammation and typically infection of the underneath of a bird's foot, affecting either the ball of the foot or one or more toes. Bumblefoot is a common disease of large species of raptors maintained in captivity and tends to become longstanding and even if treated is often seen as being recurrent. The recurrence of cases is typically linked to a failure to reverse the cause, rather than a failure in treatment. The disease most commonly affects falcons (long-wings), eagle owls (*Bubo spp.*), whilst hawks (short-wings) and broad wings (e.g. Harris' Hawk and buzzards are very rarely affected. The condition is very common in captive birds (wild caught and captive bred birds) but is rare in wild birds.

### Causes

Raptor's feet are protected by a thick layer of protective skin, in turn covered by a layer of hard protective dead skin. The underneath of the foot is covered with hard papillae, these are thought to help to disperse the pressure of the weight bearing function of the foot.

**Bumblefoot is caused by either: 'penetration of the foot'**, (e.g. tal-

on, thorn or other sharp foreign body, rusty chain link fencing or any other sharp or abrasive object) or a '**pressure sore**'. The latter is like a bed sore in humans. This arises when a bird is sedentary for too long, or on an unsuitable perch. The weight of the bird, pushing down through the skin of the foot, restricts the blood supply to the area of 'foot skin', which is bearing the weight. Reduction or loss of blood supply to the skin, compromises the normal skin defence mechanism, such that bacteria which are naturally living on the skin, are able to pass through the skin giving rise to infection of the underlying tissue. Once this tissue is infected, it swells, but the bird is still standing on it (similar to us walking around with a stone in our shoe), this further impairs the blood supply to the now infected tissue and hence prevents infection control and healing.

Whilst most falconers believe their bird must have suffered a penetration, we know through research that 95% of cases are related to pressure sores and perching issues.

**So why do captive birds suffer, but not wild birds:** wild birds are more active, and so have a better blood supply to their feet, they spend less time standing on their feet, they can choose to roost, perch, eat, move in different places and hence enjoy better personal hygiene. In contrast captive birds are often confined to a small aviary, or tethered to one perch, missing out on the benefits of hunting, eating and perching all happen in a confined area, where over the course of months the level of bacterial contamination tends to build up. They are more sedentary,

may be higher in weight, have little or no choice as to what they should perch on, they are more prone to pressure sores and are also exposed to bacteria which live on human skin (e.g. *Staphylococcus aureus*), which is the commonest bacteria implicated in bumblefoot infections, but is not naturally found on 'wild raptor' skin. So raptors have never evolved a method of defending against *Staphylococcus spp* bacteria, and in consequence they are not good at it.

It is interesting that falconers in the Middle East, who historically flew wild caught haggard birds, if they had a bird suffering from bumblefoot, they would release it, to fly free. On occasions the same birds were later recaptured, by which stage the bumblefoot had typically self healed.

It is important for falconers to be aware that falcons are far more prone to bumblefoot compared with hawks, eagles or owls. If anything ever occurs to make a falcon favour one leg rather than standing equally on both, (e.g. hunting injury, broken or bruised leg etc), then the good leg must be padded, to prevent bumblefoot occurring. The problem with falcons is in part because they demonstrate an adverse reaction to infection with *Staphylococcus spp* (human skin bacteria), which hawks, eagles and owls do not. In essence falcons never evolved an ability to manage this bacteria, they only become challenged by it, because they are in captivity. There is a good argument to minimise these bacteria on falcons (in particular) feet, by applying F10 barrier cream once weekly on their feet.

**Perch surfaces:** there is no one perch surface or design which suits all birds. An aviary bird should always have a choice of perches, but will still tend to stand where she prefers (as a vantage point), rather than alternating or using the most comfortable perch. Astro turf is great to distribute the weight as the bird stands on the perch, but it is important to remember that bacteria live forever on astro turf, whilst they died rapidly on traditional perch surfaces such as cork, rubber, carpet, leather. This is certainly not a reason to avoid Astro turf, but rather a reason to clean Astro turf 1-2 times weekly with an effective and safe disinfectant such as F10.

**Glove hygiene and bare hands:** gloves which are used from bird to bird, are an excellent way of transferring unpleasant bacteria. Falconers should either keep a separate glove for each bird, or spray the glove with a suitable disinfectant between birds. From the details above, falconers will also appreciate that allowing a bird to stand on a bare fist, is exposing that bird to human bacteria which they are not good at coping with. This practice should be prevented.

### Clinical Signs

If bumblefoot is to be successfully treated it is imperative that the condition is recognised at an early stage. To help in the classification of the severity of cases, and to help in prognostication the following classification of stages has been created.

**Class I.** Early devitalisation of a prominent plantar area without disruption of the epithelial barrier, subdivided into :-

- a. Hyperaemia (bruise) or early ischaemia (a blanched area with compromised capillary perfusion).
- b. Hyperkeratotic reaction (an early callous).



*Class I Harris Hawk*



*Class I*



*Class I good*





*Class I lesions*



*Class I localised ishaemia*



*Class I pressure sore*



*Class I*



*Class II*



*Class II common site better*

Class I carries a favourable prognosis, as there is no evidence of infection. The changes generally respond to conservative, husbandry changes, including changing perching surfaces and application of topical emollients eg. Preparation H (human haemorrhoid treatment available from the chemist), or F10 Barrier cream.

**Class II.** Localised inflammation/in-

fection of underlying tissues in direct contact with devitalised area, with no gross swelling, subdivided into :-

- a. Puncture wound.
- b. Ischaemic necrosis of epithelium (a penetrating callous or scab)

Class II still carries a good prognosis as infection is localised. Such lesions may respond to medical therapy, with antibiotics, weight sparing

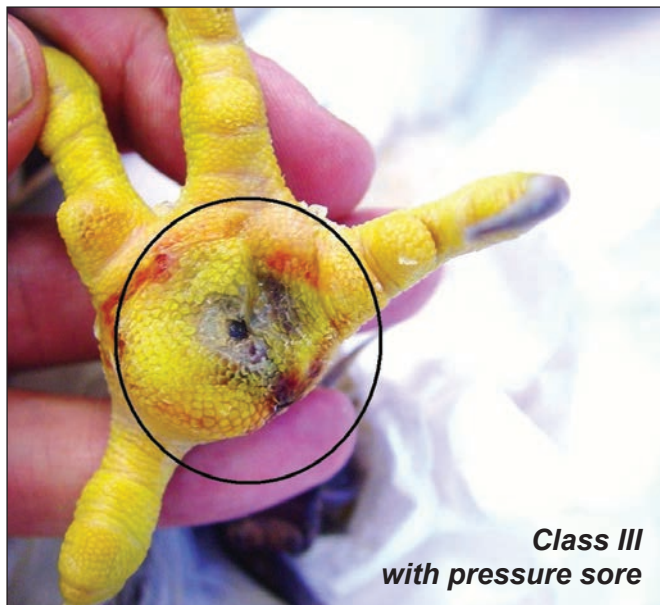
bandages, increased exercise, but failing this tend to respond well to surgery as the total affected area is easily resected and epidermal defects are characteristically small. As such the normal architecture of the weight bearing structures of the foot are maintained intact. This class generakly requires veterinary intervention and will generally not respond well to conservative treatment



*Class II lesions with localised swelling*



*Class II puncture wound better*



**Class III  
with pressure sore**



**Class III late identification**

alone.

**Class III.** More generalised infection with gross inflammatory swelling of underlying tissues. The origin may be puncture wounds or ischaemic necrosis, however by this stage the initial cause is of minor significance in comparison with the gross on-going pathology. By this stage the lesion may vary in appearance, but will be swollen, with gross inflammation and infection, there may be significant heat and pain involved.

Class III traditionally carries a good to guarded prognosis, as infection is well established, and structural changes have affected the foot. Some can be treated as for Class II, however the majority should be treated by complete surgical removal of all affected tissue, followed by first intention healing.

**Class IV:** such cases involve gross swelling and disease of the deeper vital structures. Radiology and surgical exploration will often be required to differentiate types III from IV. Class IV is a longstanding condition causing infection and inflammation of the tendons, tendon sheaths, bones and joints of the foot.

Class IV carries a guarded to poor prognosis as infection is harboured in and affected deeper vital struc-

tures, making surgical debridement difficult or impossible. In view of the chronicity pockets of encapsulated infective tissues are often present, which if not cleared will result in later reoccurrence (see treatment regimes later).

**Class V:** is an extension of Class IV it is characterised by crippling deformities, such cases have previously been considered to be inoperable and best euthanased without treatment.

Until recently the treatment of Class IV and in particular Class V cases carried a guarded to grave prognosis. This author has previously described the use of antibiotic impregnated bone cement beads, in the treatment of these cases. The implanting of these antibiotic releasing beads, following aggressive surgical debridement, offers an alternative method for the delivery of antibiotics to an infected site (Klemm 1993). Since the publication of the later paper, this author has also used the same AIPMMA beads in many Class V cases, with much improved recovery rates. Such cases would previously have been euthanased.

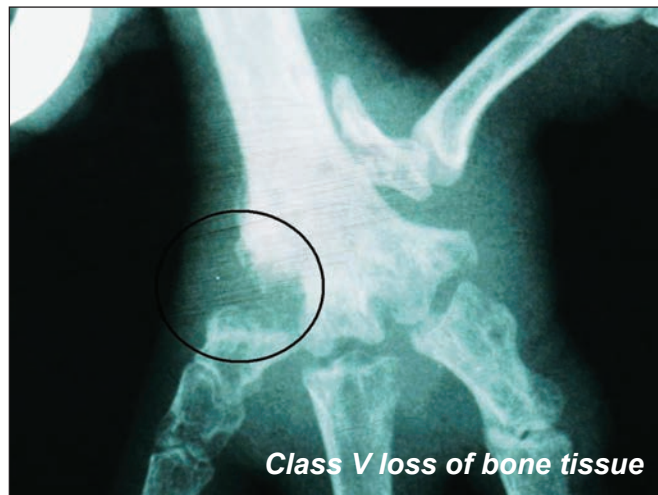
### **Clinical Management**

The first step in bumblefoot management is falconer education. The rou-

tine of daily handling, and monitoring of foot health is invaluable. Of course this is easy in falconry birds, but not so straight forward in breeding or aviary birds (hawks or owls), but that is no reason not to do the very best you can. If cases can be detected as Class I stage, then all will respond to prompt conservative therapy. Sadly in many cases the disease is not detected until it is advanced. Any case beyond a Class I, should be presented to a suitably experienced avian vet, as soon as possible.

On presentation a full history should be taken and the bird should receive a full clinical examination. Any concurrent disease, causing foot or leg problems (eg. pox, frost bite, spinal or pelvic limb injuries etc.) or general illness (eg. nutritional deficiencies, aspergillosis, tuberculosis etc.) should be evaluated. Some authors have considered Vitamin A deficiency to be significant. However any bird fed regularly on day-old chicks (so long as the yolk sack is left intact at last once a week) is highly unlikely to suffer such a deficiency. Vitamin E deficiency has also been implicated, this is most often caused by the excessive (i.e. >3 months) storage of frozen food.

In the management of bumblefoot



cases, what is forgotten by so many falconers and vets, is the necessity to elucidate the initial cause of the problem.

***There is absolutely no point in the vet doing a great job in resolving the condition, if neither the vet nor the falconer identifies the cause of the problem and corrects. If this is not achieved, once the bird returns to its previous management, the condition will reoccur. All too often the suggestion is that the vet failed to cure the problem, whilst in truth it is the vet and falconer between them who have failed to identify and resolve the underlying husbandry problem.***

Causes could be a previous penetrating wound (thorn, talon, bite wound), but is far more likely to be a pressure sore, repeated trauma whilst flying (hitting the lure or quarry too hard), grasping sharp aviary netting etc.. On examining the bird, if it has a lesion in exactly the same place on both feet, one can be certain that the bumblefoot is related to 'pressure sores'. If you observe that the bird always tends to stand on the foot that has the bumblefoot, then there must be some pain causing lesion elsewhere on the other leg or foot.

Bumblefoot never only affects one foot. As soon as one foot is affected

additional weight is born by the good foot, the latter rapidly leads to a pressure necrosis bumblefoot in the second foot. In view of this, if at the time of initial examination, only one foot appears unaffected, action (see later) should be taken to dissipate weight over the **whole surface of the good foot**, including the toes, rather than simply the ball of the foot, in order to prevent disease of the second foot.

Each individual case of bumblefoot should be considered on its own merits, and where possible entered into the Class I-V classification as described above. Having classified the case, the appropriate investigative procedures should be carried out, eg. microbiology, radiology, surgical investigation.

Where infection is present (Classes II-V) microbiology swabs should be taken for bacteriology and sensitivity testing, (if at possible, prior to surgery). Prior to the results of sensitivity testing being available a first line antibiotic should be administered. In this situation the author favours the use of beta lactamase penicillin or marbofloxacin, at standard recommended dose levels. Cases which maybe Classes IV or V, are radiographed prior to surgery, in order to assess any potential bone damage.

**Surgery:** the aim of surgery is to reduce the level of infected tissue, if

possible removing the infected and fibrotic tissue in toto thereby converting a necrotic infected area of tissue into a clean, vascular surgical site that may be closed and then heal by first intentions. Patients are routinely anaesthetised using Isoflorane gas. Prior to surgery the foot is scrubbed vigorously with a toothbrush and surgical scrub solution, to remove any hyperkeratosis and reduce the level of bacterial contamination of the skin. Prior to surgery a tourniquet is applied to the leg, (to control blood loss, but also to maintain full visualisation of the surgical site during the operation.

The initial incision should include all devitalised or ischaemic areas of the plantar aspect of the foot. The direction and size will take into account directions of tension and the requirement for normal function anatomy following surgery. All fibrotic, ischaemic, necrotic, exudative and caseous material is removed (if possible in toto). All surrounding tissues are curetted. Prior to closure of the wound, cavities are explored between each of the forward toes, in cases of severe infection an antibiotic impregnated bone cement bead is placed in each cavity. These beads may typically be left in situ, although the position of their placement is such that they may be removed from the dorsal aspect of the foot, if that should prove necessary.

Following surgery it is imperative that pressure is effectively relieved from the operation site (ball of the foot). In a normal stance the total bird's weight is applied to this particular area. In recent years a number of different systems have been advocated for raising the operation site off the ground. Differing structures are required for different species, for small species corn plasters are used, larger species a similar shaped dressing made of rigid foam, or a fabricated circular padded structure. Such dressings are shaped (similar to a ring doughnut) to make contact with the plantar aspect of the foot, at a point half way along the length of each toe. The latter dressings may be fashioned from rigid foam, plastic, wood or metal circle, amply padded with foam or cotton wool.

If correctly applied, birds appear comfortable in these dressings. Even birds with severely affected feet no longer spend periods of time lying down to rest their feet. The birds food does need to be cut up, as the birds are able to hold food in their talons and so cannot feed in the normal manner. Suitable sized dressings should be selected for each case. The ball of the foot is raised off the ground, air is permitted to circulate freely around the healing wound, to which topical antibiotic creams may be applied. The birds

weight is spread over the bases of all four toes. Antibiosis is maintained for 14 - 21 days. Long-term use of one or several antibiotics in birds seems to increase the risk of bacterial or Candida enteritis overgrowth, for this reason concurrent use of a probiotic during and for 10 days after the end of the antibiotic therapy is recommended.

## Conclusion

Bumblefoot has been a serious affliction of falconer's birds for thousands of years. A detailed description was made by Holy Roman Emperor Frederik II of Hohenstaufen (1194-1250) in his monumental treatise, De Arte Venandi Cum Avibus. The earliest reference to surgical treatment of the disease appears in Falconry, or the Falcons Lure and Cure published in 1615. However despite its long recognition, the condition remains an all too common affliction of captive raptors. The use of long-term antibiotics in combination with surgical debridement is the accepted therapy of bacterial granuloma. Full surgical debridement, in an aim to minimise pathogen loading and breakdown the fibrin barrier surrounding pathogens is still considered to be essential for successful adjunctive therapy employing the use of antibiotic impregnated bone cement beads, followed by pressure relieving dressings. Each part of this treatment regime is

essential, however in combination it has been shown to achieve a very high level of long term cure.

## Take Home Messages

**Check your birds feet daily, including aviary birds (binoculars if necessary)**

**Do not keep too many birds so you have time to check feet daily**

**Identify disease at 'Class I stage' and act to resolve the problem immediately**

**If you know or suspect your bird has suffered a puncture or bite to the foot, clean and disinfect the wound and seek veterinary advice before it becomes infected**

**Feed your birds on a good and varied diet**

**Fly your birds as often as possible**

**Prevent obesity in birds**

**Provide a range of suitably designed perches and observe that the bird is using them correctly**

**Maintain good aviary hygiene**

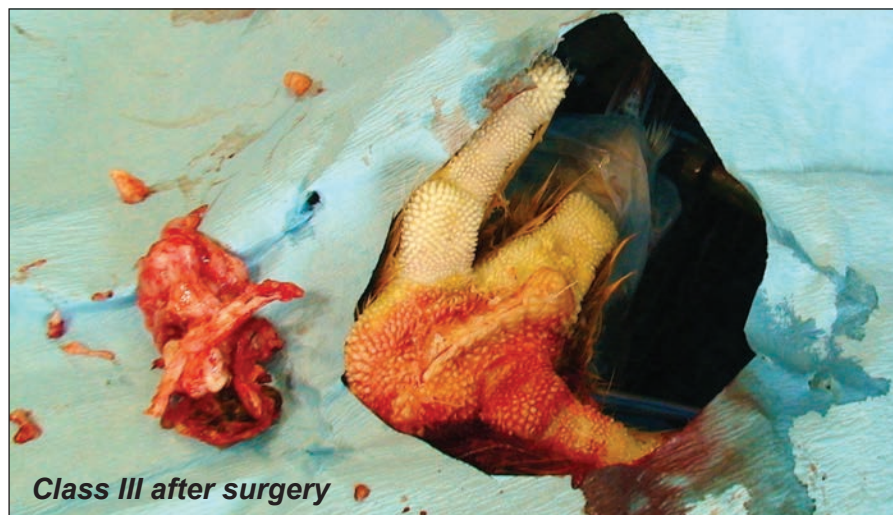
**Seek prompt veterinary intervention for non responsive Class I or more advanced cases, from a suitably experienced avian vet as soon as possible**

**If there is ever a reason for a falcon to take excessive weight on one foot, pad the good foot immediately to prevent bumblefoot**

***A further article will appear in the next issue, covering additional foot conditions such as pox, tendon ruptures, lost talons, furniture rubs and bite wounds.***

Neil A Forbes  
 BVetMed Dip ECZM(avian) FRCVS  
 RCVS and European College  
 Specialist in Avian Medicine and  
 Surgery

Great Western Exotic Vets  
 01793 603800 [www.gwexotics.com](http://www.gwexotics.com)



**Class III after surgery**

# Philippe Vanardois – Artist and Falconer

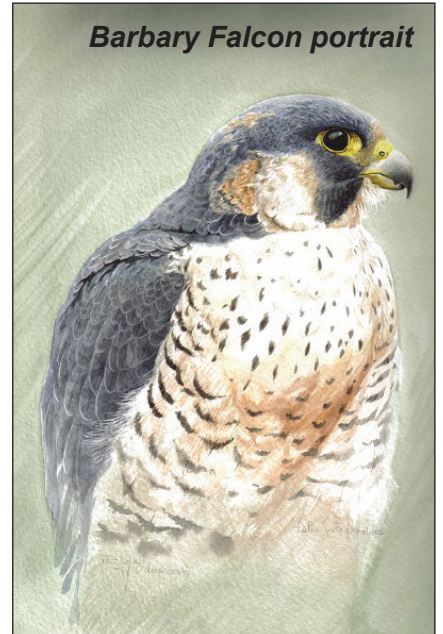


Philippe Vanardois, wildlife artist and ornithologist from the North of France, was born in the late fifties. Birds of prey became his passion at an early age thanks to an old book on falconry he found in a second hand bookstore. He started to observe them, but unfortunately at that time raptors were already in decline and becoming increasingly rare.

Philippe followed artistic studies in Belgium and then France and naturally started drawing and painting birds, which has been his profession for the last twenty-five years. At the same time he started caring for the ever increasing number of injured birds in general and birds of prey in particular, brought to him every spring, nurturing the young birds that had fallen from their nests. With the help of a vet, he founded the “Centre de Sauvegarde de la Faune Sauvage” (Wild Fauna Protection Centre) and took in on average three hundred birds from all breeds per year. Philippe adapted falconer’s techniques to train some of the raptors to fly and hunt in order to release them into their natural environment. He gradually developed his falconry hunting techniques with injured or sick hawks that had been left in his care by the public and

falconer friends. Species such as Kestrel, Hobby, Merlin, Peregrine, Barbary, Lanner and Saker Falcons. As well as the various falcon species there were also Sparrowhawks, Goshawks, Red Tailed Hawks and Harris Hawks along with Booted Eagles and Snake Eagles and even a Griffon Vulture. Needless to say there are always a great many owls as well.

During the peak of this period Philippe was caring for approximately one hundred birds at any one time. Observing birds at such close proximity, whilst they are sitting on the gloved fist, is an ideal way to draw and paint them. Understanding their behaviour is also a very important factor in illustrating them. Philippe has been commissioned by leading French editing companies, Gallimard, Natier, Hatan and Milan to illustrate birds as well as insects, reptiles and mammals. Philippe has also illustrated books on plants as he has an interest in every aspect of wildlife and nature. You can view his work on his website [www.philippevanardois.com](http://www.philippevanardois.com). Philippe exhibits his works several times a year and some of his hawk paintings have been sold at auction in Lyon.







# FOCUS ON FOOD

**Main Sponsors of  
The UK Falconry &  
Hawking Event**

## **Your supplier of Top Quality Frozen Foods**

Day Old Chicks, Rats, Mice, Guinea Pigs,  
Prime Organic and French Quails, Rabbits,  
Chicken and Duck Necks, Various species  
of Fish and Bird of Prey Sausages.

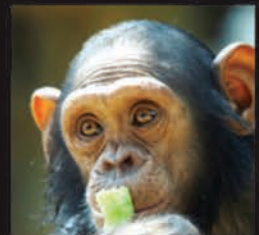
*Also available for delivery:*  
Avian Birdfood, Vitamin and Mineral  
Supplements such as CarniZoo, Vitamin A,  
AviVit B-50, Avi-Stress, Vitamin E, AviTotal.

**KIEZEBRINK**  
Kiezebrink UK Ltd

Tel: **01284 810779**  
Email: **sarah@kizebrink.co.uk**  
Web: **www.kizebrink.co.uk**

Kiezebrink UK Ltd.  
The Old Piggery, Church Farm, Church Rd, Barrow,  
Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk IP29 5AX

Official Sponsor of **The British Falconry & Raptor Fair**





# The British Falconers Club Eagle Meet – continued

Dr. David Glynne Fox

## Day Two. Eakring, Notts.

Day two dawned with a carpet of snow, which had been falling all night. However, the sun shone and the snow stopped as everyone wended their various routes to Eakring, close to Sherwood Forest, which was to be the flying venue for the day. Geoff Surtees had spent the night at my place and we set off with my son David for the rendezvous point in order to be on site by ten in the morning. The roads were hazardous with deep snow but we made it safely enough. The only problem was the sight of electricity pylons running across part of the ground that we were due to hunt over. This was a major problem and brought sad memories flooding back to Geoff, whose beautiful female Golden Eagle “Abbey,” had perished on similar lines just a few weeks previously. At first glance, the presence of these pylons was giving such concerns that the meeting at one point was appearing to look as though it would have to be abandoned, but Gavin took me around in his vehicle and provided we worked well away from the pylons towards the west, we should be reasonably safe. Many of us held doubts and worries, especially as the land available was not a fraction of the size that we had at Bunny the previous day. However, we were nothing if not resilient and managed to spend the whole day at the site and only walked up one section twice over. Hares were in abundance and yet again we had some thrilling flights.

I love hawking in the snow and one

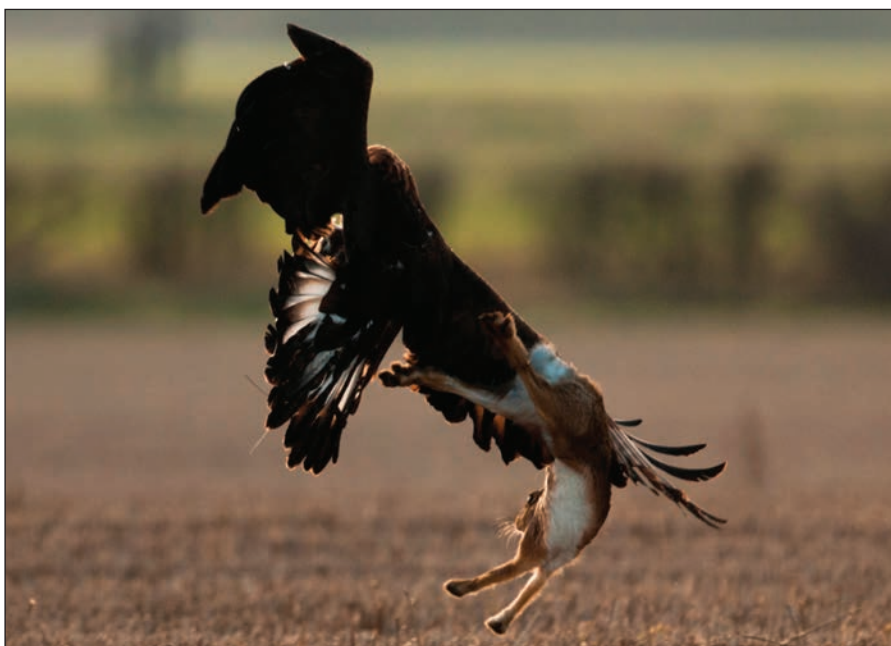


*Star closing in on hare*

could be excused for believing that hares would be much easier to spot lying in their forms, their dark colouration giving them away against their now white surroundings, but not a bit of it for hares are not only absolute masters of escape tactics, but also masters of the will o’ the wisp syndrome. Looking over these snowy fields gave the distinct impression that there was nothing living on this hilly, but rather featureless terrain, but one could not be more wrong, for we were flushing otherwise well hidden hares within minutes of putting our feet upon the land.

We were one eagle short for day two, because Simon Tebbutt had to be elsewhere, so his number was eliminated from the list. With the land being much more undulating than at Bunny, we experienced some great downwind flights down the hillsides and across the valley floor. All eagles were flying well despite being fed late in the day after the meet at Bunny.

Pete Sibson and Gary Knight’s eagles flew very well although both failed to connect. At one point, Gary slipped his eagle at a hare, which it did not see, so Chris Miller asked if Gary could retake the slip as the eagle was unaware of the hares’ presence and all were in full agreement. This demonstrated the fairness and camaraderie of the eagle falconers present at this meet, despite the fact that all wanted to fly their birds and all hoped for a kill. I slipped Star at a hare, which followed the contours of the hill and Star followed very closely. He flew just behind and to one side of it for a few seconds before going in, but the hare was ready for him and yet again evaded his murderous talons. He was quickly recalled and hooded and the drive continued. Glyn Thompson’s new eagle performed exceptionally well, considering how well fleshed out was his sternum. This eagle was very unlucky not to connect with a hare. Pete Sib-



son's eagle was cast of at a hare running downhill and put in three magnificent stoops, but the hare evaded all three. What a stunning flight that was. Then it was Roy Lupton's turn and he stood atop a large hill while most of the line beat at right angles to him. A hare was soon flushed and Baby was in action immediately. He seemed to be flying very slowly, but was in fact powering down the hillside and rapidly closing the several hundred yard gap, which separated hunter from hunted and this flight was captured on camera by Peter Moonlight and also his friend, Lee Webb, another wildlife photographer who had joined us for day two. The two dark dots against the snow merged as one and Roy's eagle had taken the first hare of the meet. The snow spray flew skywards as eagle and hare came together at the point of contact, and then it was all over. Roy drove down in his Argo Cat alongside the edge of the field and then walked the short distance to where his eagle and the stricken hare lay and took up his prize.

Roy then took Gary and I in the Argo Cat round the field and back up to the head of the valley where we waited for the others to beat the line, as Gary was the next to fly, followed by myself. One hare was flushed but at a great distance, so Gary did not slip his eagle. One our way up to the head of the valley, we had spotted what seemed like a hare lying in its form in a field which was particularly deep in snow. We made a note of its location and as nothing else was flushed, when everyone rejoined us at the top of the hill, Gary decided to use his turn against the hare we had marked down. He walked around the hare and got in a position above it so that it would have to run down the full length of the field, rather than a short dash into the nearest hedge. The hare was flushed and at one point we all thought the flight was over before



*Roy Lupton's Golden Eagle on hare, Eakring, Nov 2010 © Lee Webb*

it had begun, for Gary's eagle hit the ground and appeared to somewhat stumble, but it soon regained itself and followed the hare down the field. The flight was then obscured from my vision but a shout soon went up from a delighted Gary, whose eagle had just made its second only, hare kill. Gary then became the butt of the usual jokes that accompany eagle falconers, such as, "Oh, was that the

hare we saw earlier with three legs?" or "Was that the one on crutches?" etc. Gary took it all on the chin with good humour and to be truthful, everyone was delighted for him. His bird had flown well throughout the meet and had been amply rewarded. I was only sorry that other eagles had failed to connect, for all had flown well and provided some stunning episodes.

Many hares that had been flushed were observed to head in the direction of the first field that we had driven, so I suggested that as it was beginning to get rather late and darkness would soon be upon us, that we try the field again. It was my turn to fly and the beaters walked a line beneath the dreaded pylons. It had been decided at the outset that only hares running away from the py-



*Gary Knight's Golden Eagle on hare, Eakring, Nov 2010 © Lee Webb*



lons would be afforded a slip, and so was the case. A hare ran across my front at over a hundred yards distant and downhill, so I removed Star's hood and he was off the fist in a flash. I never throw my eagles off the glove but rather let them go in their own time, this way, I know they have seen the intended target and are not cast of willy-nilly at something they may, or may not have seen for themselves. Star was rapidly on the offensive and soon caught up with the hare, putting in a dramatic stoop, which the hare characteristically neatly side stepped. Star threw up high into the sky flipped over and came down in a thunderous pear shaped stoop, which again was avoided by the hare, as was a third stoop from Star and the hare made it to cover in a stretch of woodland. Star meanwhile took stand in a tree and I began to call him back, but he was concentrating on something in the distance. He took off and flew out of sight behind the hill upon which I was standing, so I lowered my garnished fist and wandered in the direction he had taken. As I rounded the crest of the hill, I saw Star on the ground, plucking something, and just above him was circling what I at first

glance thought was a Short Eared Owl, for it was circling in a similar fashion to the owl, but I soon realised it was a Buzzard. The Buzzard had been feeding on a dead hare and Star had driven the smaller hawk away and had taken possession of the hare. Not knowing what had killed the hare, or what it had died from, I lost no time in making in to Star and took him up from the corpse as rapidly as possible. He had barely broken into it and as I gave him a small reward on the fist, I covered the body of the hare with snow. Its eyes had been pecked out at some stage and those empty sockets stared at me, as if its demise had been of my doing!

I began to make my way back up the hill towards the hawking party, which were well out of sight on the other side, when I saw Glyn Thompson's Golden Eagle soar out over the hill top just above me. What a magnificent sight against the orange and blue sky. A second or so later, a hare came bounding over the hill and almost ran into me as I was struggling up the snow bound hillside. Glyn's eagle put in a tremendous stoop, which the hare nimbly side stepped in a manner of which only hares are

capable. The eagle threw up in a like manner to Star and Pete Sibson's eagle earlier, rolled over in mid-air and put in two more stoops before the hare made it to cover. What a fantastic days hawking this had been. The low kill ratio was utterly meaningless to us all, for we witnessed Golden Eagles flying so dramatically and at such relatively close range which few, even in the world of falconry, are ever party to. These huge and powerful birds are so majestic and dynamic that they can hardly be anything but awesome to watch and these last two days had certainly been awesome.

As the sun began to dip towards the western horizon, the sky took on a beautiful bright orange glow, which Peter took full advantage of, using these wonderful light conditions to create stunning silhouettes of eagles and eagle falconers against the backdrop of the now bluing fields of snow. The meet had been a great success and all eagles were safely in their respective travel boxes ready for the journey home. We all said our goodbyes and began to wend our weary way out of the fields to hopefully meet up again at some future eagle meet. I cannot wait.

# Falconry and Hawking with Harriers in New Zealand

Noel Hyde



## Background

The 1920's marked the earliest record for falconry practiced in New Zealand. Since that time, there are early recollections and photographs of falconry during the 1960's from Geordie Bennett, in the book written by his brother 'A Geordie Down Under'.

There are records of two falconers flying birds in the MacKenzie country in the early 1970's, along with Gerry Andrews who practiced falconry in the hills behind Palmerston North in the lower North Island of New Zealand.

UK falconer and raptor biologist Nick Fox, founded the Raptor Association of New Zealand (RANZ) in 1977 while in New Zealand completing a PhD study of the biology of the New Zealand falcon. The aim of the association was to encompass everyone's interest whether it research, rehabilitation or falconry.

At this time the common Australasian harrier (*Circus approximans*), was a

non - protected species and was used in falconry. Indeed, the inaugural meeting of RANZ was falconry in the Waihopai Valley in Marlborough, in the upper South Island of New Zealand. Several members had harriers, and Nick Fox took quarry with falcons he had trained for his studies investigating their hunting behaviour.

As RANZ evolved, a permitting system was put in place for those wanting to fly birds, including a written and practical test. Several keen falconers emerged at this time, and during the 1980's members held annual mini field meets, successfully hawking rabbits flushed by ferrets and dogs as well as others enjoying falconry on their own.

In 1985 the Australasian harrier became partially protected which meant they could be killed by landowners if causing damage to stock, eg killing poultry. During this time, a few keen individuals still continued to fly them.

A raptor facility at the Mt Bruce Na-

tional Wildlife Centre in the Wairarapa was disestablished in the early 1990's, and as a result, injured and orphaned falcons became available during the course of rehabilitation.

Training and flying these birds quickly built up a larger resource of falconry experience and expertise. While getting birds fit for release these falconers enjoyed great success; taking a variety of quarry with New Zealand falcons including pukeko (or purple swamphen) , mallard duck, spur-wing plover, Australian magpie, rabbit, pheasant, and a sundry of other species, even a ferret.

The experience gained during this period allowed a much deeper understanding of the behaviour and hunting capabilities of these remarkably bold little falcons that box well above their weight, and will be the subject of another article.

In 1992 Debbie Stewart, New Zealand's only woman falconer, founded the Wingspan Birds of Prey Trust, dedicated to the research, captive management and public awareness of New Zealand's birds of prey, (refer [www.wingspan.co.nz](http://www.wingspan.co.nz)).

Wingspan is New Zealand's premier bird of prey centre, where visitors see all of New Zealand's raptors at one facility, watch daily flying displays, and enjoy a close interactive experience with the birds. The centre has a small museum showcasing falconry around the world, including the biology and conservation of birds of prey.

Wingspan also houses the archives of NZ falconry. The five board members include three falconers, two PhD scientists, and all have pub-



Noel Hyde with Fran (haggard female Harrier) and Mallard

lished and co-authored scientific papers on NZ raptors. Wingspan remains a corresponding member of the International Association of Falconry, and works with overseas raptor specialists. On a national level Wingspan works very closely with RANZ, the Department of Conservation (DOC), including university researchers, vets etc, in all areas pertaining to raptors in New Zealand.

Today the Australasian harrier is still partially protected, but since July 2010, the need for all persons to obtain a permit to control problem birds has been removed. The New Zealand Department of Conservation culls harriers to protect endangered species programmes where harrier predation is a problem.

Because the public, including landowners, farmers, game farmers and Department of Conservation, can now kill hawks without a permit, Wingspan and the falconry community believed this policy discriminated against other user-groups like falconers, who would like to train healthy live harriers and fly them.

After submissions by Wingspan, and the Falcons For Grapes Project run

by Dr Nick Fox, we have after 30 years been successful in having recreational falconry with harriers, recognized and accepted as a legitimate field sport.

We are very proud that in August 2010, the same year UNESCO ratified falconry as an intangible cultural heritage, the first permits for legal falconry in New Zealand using harriers were issued.

Wingspan is now assisting the Department of Conservation with drafting of national falconry guidelines, and the New Zealand Falconers Association is soon to be launched.

### The Harrier as a gamehawk

New Zealand has only two species of diurnal raptors, the endemic, absolutely protected, threatened New Zealand falcon, *Falco novaeseelandiae*, and the native, common, Australasian harrier, *Circus approximans*. Sometimes called swamp harrier, or Kahu by Maori.

This harrier is the largest of the world's 16 species; trained haggard males fly around 580gs, imprint males fly around 640gms and hag-

gard females fly around 680-700gms.

In the wild, these hawks prey on a variety of quarry and are opportunistic feeders. They take mammals up to size of hare and rabbit, birds up to and including pheasant, domestic fowl and ducks. They also take eggs, large insects, frogs, fish and reptiles.

In New Zealand they often take carrion but apparently less so in Australia. Indeed, many New Zealanders still think harriers are strictly carrion eaters because they are commonly seen feeding on roadkill. Like all harriers, when they hunt, they typically search for prey by slow quartering.

Unlike New Zealand falcons, which are a bold and fearless bird, Australasian harriers are a more shy and nervous species, (probably due to years of continuous persecution). Haggards especially, can require a good deal of manning to settle them.

In the past, falconers flying harriers have taken a variety of quarry, particularly rabbits, rats, passerines, the odd pukeko and nearly a half grown hare. They are flown both from the glove, as well as from the air. Their light wing loading enabling them to easily wait on, circling tightly overhead while attempts are made to flush quarry beneath them.

On the wing, they can appear quite slow, but these birds can show some impressive speed when necessary, and they are spectacularly maneuverable. I've never forgotten my amazement seeing one of my first harriers, a haggard female, pumping hard a meter behind a rabbit, over quite some distance, twisting and turning at full speed reminiscent of a goshawk.

My early successes in the field were limited to the occasional rabbit or passerine, but when the bird was successful the rewards were incredibly sweet and well earned.

Most of my experience has been fly-

ing haggards, my present female harrier named Fran, after Dr Francis Hammerstrom. I was fortunate enough to stay with the Hammerstrom's on three trips to the United States in the mid 1980's and 1990's. She, as we all know, loved harriers and we talked at length about their potential as a falconry bird. She was very encouraging, telling me excitedly about American falconer Alan Beske, catching a green winged teal in fair flight with a northern harrier.

Fran would be proud of her namesake. Her first duck was taken one day quite unexpectedly while out flying her over the Wingspan farm. I was enjoying watching her, when all of a sudden she went into a dive at a flock of greenfinches which quickly rose in front of her and hastily sought cover in the trees. She pulled up at about 20m, then just as suddenly did a wingover, and dived vertically down grabbing a hen mallard that was standing with a drake unseen by me in the shadow next to a cattle trough. The drake jumped and flapped at Fran, but she wasn't about to let go of her prize and I managed to hastily get a couple of photos as I made in.

I have since flown Fran from the fist at mallard ducks that frequent a stream in front of our house. We approached within 25-30m of the ducks with her raised above my head, I would let her see them and she'd be off in a flash. Sometimes taking them before they got airborne and sometimes on the rise. If she missed she'd give chase, but would quickly be left behind. I am impressed with the way she is totally committed; she'll throw herself into the stream wholeheartedly, one time taking a duck in deep water and floating down stream on it. It was well dead by the time I got to her, and she was soaked up to her shoulders. Fran has taken several ducks in this manner, the flights are short but always very exciting.

Although mallard ducks can be taken by harriers, the Pukeko (*Porphyrio melanotus*), is potentially the ideal quarry for hawking in New Zealand. They are very widespread, common, often a pest, and classified as a game-bird species able to be hunted in the duck-shooting season.

An attractive bird, they are a large rail with a bright red beak and frontal plate, black head, back, wings and tail, indigo neck, breast and belly, and bright white undertail coverts, with long red legs and long toes.

Pukekos average 800-1000gms in weight and have proven to be a challenging quarry. They have a strong, stout beak and are not afraid to use it, they often live in large groups and will not hesitate to rush in and help one of their number when attacked by a harrier. Flights need to be chosen carefully, and the falconer has to be fit to get in quickly to assist the hawk.

A falconer who has had excellent success taking Pukekos with a harrier is Andrew Thomas. He flew a male eyass, this bird came to him at 2 weeks of age and was being trained and assessed for release back into the wild.

As soon as it was hard penned, training began in the traditional manner. From the beginning, the harrier showed a feisty disposition, being very free with his beak and feet; both on Andrew, and the lure. In turn the hawk showed good aggression on quarry, chasing and catching the first Pukeko he saw, something he continued to do very well prior to his eventual release.

This young male harrier was flown mainly from the glove with some waiting on, but was also very successful when slipped from the car window. Although often beaten up by other pukeko coming to assist their stricken comrade, this harrier per-

sisted in catching Pukeko on almost every outing, including several double kills.

Another falconer flying an imprint harrier, caught twenty five pukeko in six weeks as well as enjoying exciting flights at both pheasant, rabbit and hare.

## Summary

Falconry has been practiced in New Zealand for nearly a century, but after the 30 years since becoming partially protected, legal falconry in New Zealand with Australasian harriers has emerged, with the first permits issued.

However until comprehensive falconry guidelines and policy is finalised and firmly in place, the Department of Conservation is temporarily withholding all permit applications. Once this has happened, hopefully by December 2011 we expect more permits to be granted.

Wingspan Birds of Prey Trust continually advocates the sport of falconry. Working closely with Department of Conservation on these issues, as well as a draft written and practical examination for falconers to ensure high levels of competency. By extension, the New Zealand Falconers Association is to be developed, and in due course will be seeking legal access to game-bird species, currently available to bird hunters during the duck shooting season.

In New Zealand, the Australasian harrier offers the only choice for legal recreational falconry. These birds are proving themselves a capable game-hawk, offering good sport as well as unique challenges; an interesting and totally new species to the world of falconry.

# Trapping my first hawk

Jeff Price

Hi Bob, I was one of the apprentice falconers you gave your great "Hunting with Harris Hawks" book to at the recent Texas Hawking Association meet. I enjoyed reading the book and found it very informative. So now for my story.

I had been flying my sponsors Harris Hawk and he wanted his hawk back, and I don't blame him as it was a great hawk. My sponsor convinced me that trapping a late passage hawk would be a fun challenge, and with the new regulations in Texas we are able to trap year round. I had tried to trap a hawk three weeks earlier but had come up empty handed.

Yesterday my son and I headed out trapping. We left our house around eleven am for the five to six hour drive to Harris Hawk country around Hebbronville Texas. We got to the trapping area at around four thirty and immediately trapped an adult male instead of the passage hawk hanging back in the trees. We trekked down the highway throwing the trap out twice more only to catch adults. With time slipping away we came around a corner to see a Harris sitting on a utility pole, but the sun was in our eyes and we couldn't tell if it was an adult or a passage hawk. We decided to throw the trap out and just roll the dice. We did a drive by on the pole and threw the trap out and drove off to a safe observation distance. While we watched a second Harris came up onto a nearby pole. Then a third hawk came up and joined them, the only problem was they weren't looking toward the trap.

I made the decision to move the trap. We drove up, grabbed the trap and reset it where all the hawks could see it. No sooner had we driven off



when I saw one of the hawks go down on the trap and get caught. I turned the truck around and started to move forward. Just then a second hawk went for the trap and was caught. I decided to wait a second before driving up to the trap; I could clearly see both hawks were caught. Then a third hawk went down onto the trap followed by a fourth. It appeared they were trying to get the trapped hawks up. I decided it was time to move in. We drove up and found an adult and a passage male firmly caught on the trap. An adult female was sitting on a fence post about ten feet from the trap as we drove up. She flew up onto a nearby utility pole as we got out of the car. We got down to the trap and quickly released the adult hawk then re-

membered I had a camera with me and took a few photos. Then we got the passage hawk off of the trap, had a quick feel of his keel and he was fat almost no keel at all. We got him wrapped up in a casting jacket and set off on our six hour trek home.

**Editors Note;** As regular readers will know I attended the Texas Hawking Association annual meet this year and as a thank you to the club took ten copies of my Harris book and donated them to apprentices. The above story was e-mailed to me by THA apprentice Jeff Price on the 12th march and subsequently he has informed me the Harris, now called Turbo, was 21ozs when trapped and ate properly on the fist and took pieces from the fingers some two nights later.





*Turbo on the trap*



*Wrapped up and ready to go home*



*Turbo on the fist seven hours after being trapped*

# Australian raptors

Some superb photos on Falcons employed by Paul Willcock of Adelaide, South Australia, in his bird control business



# The New Adventures of The Old Ms. Elbert

Chuck Redding



Chuck with Ms. Elbert

*“She didn’t carry, but she screamed and became very aggressive. I released her without continuing to hunt because she was so unpleasant and loud. I’m sure she would have continued to catch and maybe would have gotten over her bad behavior in time, but there didn’t seem much point, and my neighbors were complaining.”*

An email from Matthew Mullenix referring to his last red-shouldered hawk...

When I submitted the article preceding this one, I was downright tickled with my red-shouldered hawk, who I called Ms. Elbert, or MsE for short. She had taken a dozen birds and was well behaved. She was quiet, at least by red-shouldered hawk standards. I anticipated a great season, as I eagerly awaited the rabbits and game birds to fill our fields and the seasons to open.

Reality has a way of catching up. There were plenty of adventures

ahead, but of a different sort than I was anticipating. Ms. Elbert got into trouble and became some trouble herself. She began to scream, which I learned much later was weight related. I was fooled because when the screaming began, she had a full crop from a bird that she had killed and eaten. I never considered her lean, just typical or maybe on the plump side for a falconry bird. The reader might recall that I acquired her at around 600 grams, and worked her weight down as I trained her. I had her as low as 508 one day, a little lower than I wanted, but she performed well, catching a cotton rat. Her screaming became awful. I often took her to the field with my wearing ear plugs as I drove the vehicle. Fortunately, when hunting she was quiet, and when cropped up after a hunt, she was quiet on the trip home. One can hear a RSH a half mile away. Having that “*keer-keer-keer*” in the truck with you is bad. Strike one against Ms. Elbert.

She continued to ride the T-pole well, and caught scores of grasshoppers, footing them in flight and often bringing them back. Probably because of a drought, we saw few birds and cottontail rabbits, which was discouraging. Occasionally she would put in a great flight on a bird or chase a rabbit, but the grasshoppers were a distraction. At some point she started catching cotton rats, and did not catch a bird for the rest of the season, which ended in early April.

Part of the problem with the MsE began as I integrated Cisco, the red-tailed hawk, into the hunts at the end of his molt. This was early November. Cisco was successful immediately, with his first kill of the season being an adult swamp rabbit in Oak Forest, north of downtown Houston. In autumn, in addition to my weekend hunts, I take half-day vacations from work, typically twice a week, so that I can take the hawks out. Last fall I always gave the red-shoulder preference, giving her first crack at the field; early in the season she got considerably more hunting time than Cisco. Her focus seemed to drift especially when the cold weather diminished the numbers of grasshoppers, but there was little game in the field. We were not catching much. I was always hoping for a slip on a smallish cottontail, and avoided the swamp rabbit fields unless I was hunting with only the red-tail. I did not want the first cottontail that the red-shoulder grabbed to be a 4 1/2 pound “cane cutter,” which might put her off rabbits for good. On a typical morning I would hunt with MsE first, put her back in the car and then take Cisco out. Occasionally, in the very



*Ms Elbert*

same field, minutes after putting the red-shoulder in the truck, Cisco would catch a small cottontail, perfect for the red-shoulder. That was frustrating. This was a very low season for rabbits, by the way. The red-tail only caught ten, and this includes the trips to Fort Worth and Dodge City, where he caught three or four. As the season progressed, the red-shoulder lost her focus, would sit in trees, wouldn't follow-on very well, but steadily caught cotton rats. On almost every outing, she would put in at least one really good flight on a bird or the occasional cottontail, which would encourage me. In Dodge City at the NAFA meet, she put in some fantastic cottontail flights, and grabbed a cock pheasant. Nothing in the bag, though.

During the season, I moved her weight up and down across a fairly wide range, from around 515 grams to 565. Because she had aspergillosis while she was starving last summer I was very careful not to push her weight down too far. I could not see any detectable change in her behavior, and no "hot spot," across her weight range. Her screaming was bad.

One evening in November I took her to a nearby field. She rode the pole well and suddenly attacked and bound to what I momentarily thought was a rabbit. I was excited. Unfortunately, it was a skunk. The hawk had murder in her eye for about five seconds, then she bailed out and flew back the T pole with a yellow blotch

on her breast. She was gagging and puked up her crop, her nictitating membranes fluttering. The odor was so strong that I truly couldn't smell it but could hardly breathe. I had to walk a half mile through heavy brush to the truck with a sick hawk and my own gagging. I raced to the drug store for some peroxide, baking soda, and detergent, the modern remedy. At the time I was taking care of Mike Wiegel's Barbary tiercel, so I treated her at his house, which picked up the odor just from having the hawk perched in his living room for about ten minutes. I drenched and rinsed the hawk repeatedly, and the smell, which remains on the hawk to this day, was greatly diminished. She now is blond on one wing, apparently the result of inadequate rinsing. Next time I'll use tomato juice. She smelled skunky for a while, but was fine.

On a cool and sunny Tuesday morning, also in November, I had her out



*Hunting from a T perch*

in Katy TX. Not typical, I flew the RT first and he caught a cotton rat. I then took the red-shoulder out. Riding the pole as I walked the ditch, she landed on the ground not far away. I walked up and saw her shaking; she had an odd posture and she was strutting on the ground. She turned suddenly and grabbed a small water moccasin by the head, which she killed and ate. I called her to the T pole, and knew something wasn't right when she immediately lifted her foot; obviously she had been bitten. I set her on the ground and called her again, this time giving her a small crop of rabbit. But she was getting ill. In her hawk box, I could hear her bumping against the side, as I made turns with the truck. At the house, I called Charli Rohack (my rehabber friend and apprentice) and told her what had happened. The hawk's feet were swollen. At this point I still was not overly concerned, because of some misadventures Rob Evans had with his female red-tail and three water moccasins the season before. I told Charli I would go to work, but would keep an eye on Ms. Elbert with my Internet camera, and if she looked worse, I would rush home and take her to emergency vet. Just as I was leaving, Elbert closed her eyes. That was not a good indication. I called Charli back and she told me that a young veterinarian friend of hers was at the wildlife rehab center off Katy Road, but would be returning to Texas A&M veterinary school that afternoon. I took the hawk and gave her to the woman. The report that evening from Charli was that the hawk was passing blood and was quite ill and weak. However, she recovered quickly over the next few days. Charli told me that Ms. Elbert was acting very depressed, and "dull." I had some business in Dallas on Thursday. When I was finished, I called Charli and told her I would come by to see the hawk on the way



*Just visiting*



*Any perch will do*

back to Houston. When I got to Bryan, where Charli lives, I put the hawk on my fist. She perked up and seemed quite content. Charli told me that my coming down there made all the difference in the hawk's attitude. Great..... a red-shouldered hawk who loved me. Just what I needed. The hawk required a few more days of treatment. Saturday, I picked her up on the way to the NAFA meet in Dodge City, Kansas and she was remarkably improved. As previously mentioned, I flew her one afternoon at the NAFA meet where she impressed everyone with her flights on cottontails and the pheasant. She looked good.

MsE had a few more misadventures. One was in Uvalde, TX, where she flew a block from the location where we were hunting starlings, to fly around in the traffic on Highway 90A. That was a very tense moment for me, but she was oblivious.

Possibly the most dangerous moment for Ms. Elbert occurred when I had her tethered in the back yard one sunny day at my friend Stephanie's house. Elbert and Cisco were perched close together; Stephanie

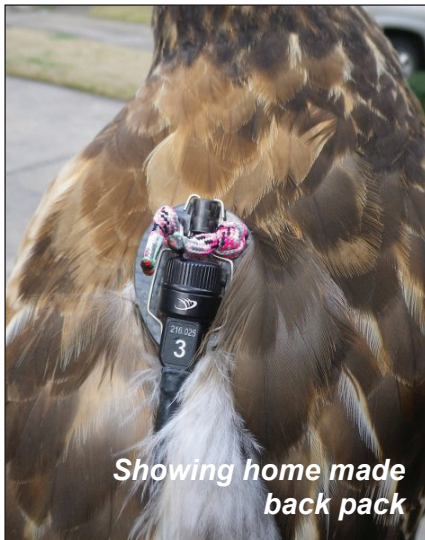
and I had been doing chores around the house, generally keeping an eye on the hawks. Steph was on her back porch and I walked out to join her. Suddenly Cisco looked into the trees, and started the classic RT scream. Steph said, "What's up with Cisco?" I replied, "Maybe he sees another red-tail." Shooting across the yard through the trees was a juvenile red-tail heading straight at the red-shouldered hawk. I yelled, waved my arms and ran at MsE's perch. The RT broke off the attack and flew off. By the way, Stephanie is convinced it was an owl. That would have been the end of this RS hawk, had not Cisco screamed, and we had been right there. Since then I have never left her unattended while weathering in the open air.

I took her hunting in December quite a bit, usually driving to the field with some ear plugs. When I got her to the field she would ride the T-pole and occasionally catch a cotton rat. But she was not fun. She would frequently attack plants and break up on the rhythm of the hunt standing on the ground. Her bad behaviour appeared exaggerated because my

other hawk was always so consistent and focused. Because of my mew facilities, I have no free-lofting capability, she seemed to be miserable tethered indoors, and her screaming precluded her being outside much. In early January, I called Charli, who was happy to take MsE back. Then in mid-month I took her to the Texas Hawking Association meet. Elbert caught a cotton rat in Fort Worth (Cisco once again caught a small rabbit), and I returned her to Charli on the way back to Houston.

For some reason I took possession of the red-shoulder again in late January - Charli brought her to Houston. Charli remarked, "She's a little heavy." Heavy indeed. When I put her on the scale, it read 695 grams. She was hog fat. Amazingly though, her fist response was excellent so I took her hunting. Her screaming was gone! While I was looking for cottontails for her, she chased sparrows with great determination. A few days later on a freezing cold February morning, she caught a cotton rat on the same day the Cisco caught his first squirrel of the season. The next day at the THA Associate's Mini-





Showing home made back pack

Meet in Houston, she caught another cotton rat, again showing great style in the field. Cotton rats were the main game species this season. Among my red-tail, Lynne Holder's Harris' hawk, and MsE, the hawks caught around 90 cotton rats. If it weren't for cotton rats, it would have been a sorry season for us. Certainly not the game of choice, but rat hawking is fun when there are few rabbits or game birds around.

I continued to hunt with MsE, but because of the scarce amount of game flushed, she began to self-hunt more and more. She would leave the T pole to sit in a tree and was very hard to move. It became frustrating again, so I returned her to Charli for the molt. Again Elbert was miserable up in Bryan, acting depressed and nervous so she's back here with me in Houston, maybe for good. Originally I thought I would tame-hack her over the summer, so she wouldn't have to be tethered all the time. I decided against the tame-hack, as she seems to like hanging out in the yard, and now doesn't mind being tethered. Because she no longer screams, I don't have to keep her inside. A smarter, less sentimental guy probably would release the bird, but I have grown attached to her.

She finished the season with a dozen birds, ten cotton rats, three mice, two snakes, including the one that nearly

killed her, a frog the size of a nickel, and a small lizard. And of course, an uncountable number of grasshoppers and insects. This season the red-shouldered hawk caught more birds than the RT and my erstwhile HH combined.

My conclusion about this red-shouldered hawk is that I'm glad I am having had the experience. Would I recommend a red-shoulder? Probably not if one can find a Harris Hawk or good Red Tail. Nevertheless, when Ms. Elbert is "on," she is terrific. Her footing is excellent; she can fly almost straight up, and has good maneuverability and acceleration. She is the only hawk I have ever seen fly from a tree down to the fist, carrying a live bird. She was unafraid to try to catch a big cock pheasant in Dodge City. Like my erstwhile tiercel Harris' hawk, she can fly out of high brush where the higher wing-loaded red-tail has to hike out. Now that she does not scream, as a companion hawk, she is first rate. Unlike the hawk described by Matthew Mullenix, she is not unpleasant at all. Quite the contrary. She's very entertaining and personable. She is bonded to me, and happy to sit in my company or on my fist. Maybe next season there will be more game in the fields for her to catch and stay motivated. I would really like to figure out what her flying weight is.

Determining a flying weight is difficult when a hawk catches game at 508 grams, and catches the very same quarry at 700, and has little discernible difference in her general response except that it appears that the fatter she flies, the better she is. I'll probably take her out this summer to try to ambush starlings, since she is currently molting at three ounces less than her highest flying weight. Go figure.

One last point. I mounted a tail plectrum on this hawk with two parachute cord loops under the wings to make a backpack. I got the idea from Kevin Johnson, who makes his own transmitter harnesses out of cord. The cord goes under the wings very loosely, rather than across the chest, so a hawk's weight increase does not make the harness tighten. The red-shouldered hawk has worn it for months now. If you are interested, get in touch with me. See the picture. The plectrum and transmitter are pulled out for visibility.

Anyone interested in seeing some video clips of Ms. Elbert should go to my YouTube account: chuckr1951. Probably the best is titled: *Trained Red-Shouldered Hawk Hunting*. This was the day she took two birds, including a Sora Rail.

All pictures except that of the plectrum are by Bob Dalton.



# Barga, the Egyptian Kestrel

“Barga”, Arabic for thunderbolt. An imprinted wild taken eyass European Kestrel flown by one of our readers Gasser Mohy El Dine who lives in Cairo, Egypt. “Barga” has a flying weight of approximately 700 grams.





## THE INDEPENDENT BIRD REGISTER

THE proactive approach to Lost & Found birds

- Open from 08.00 to 21.00 hours 7 days a week
- Lost, found & stolen register
- Bird registration
- Breeders rings
- Split telephone rings
- Registration documents
- Captive breeders certificates
- Independent advice
- THE Falconry Directory
- THE Online Falconry Directory
- Daily updated Birdmart on the web
- Over 14,000 members

**We also sell the following:**

- Vitamin support supplements
- Aloe Vera products
- All your basic falconry equipment

**01748 830112**

[www.ibr.org.uk](http://www.ibr.org.uk)   [juliana@ibr.org.uk](mailto:juliana@ibr.org.uk)

Tiercel House, Falcon Close, Scotton, North Yorkshire DL9 3RB



## Ben Long

Experience Days and General Tuition  
Introduction to Longwings  
Coaching and Troubleshooting  
Specialist topics (kite training, etc)  
Professional Training of Raptors  
Displays

[www.falconry-courses.co.uk](http://www.falconry-courses.co.uk)



The world's best range of falconry  
equipment and products  
-the choice of professionals

[www.benlongfalconry.co.uk](http://www.benlongfalconry.co.uk)  
<mailto:info@benlongfalconry.com>

Ben Long  
PO Box 65  
Stinchcombe  
Dursley  
Gloucestershire  
GL11 6WZ  
0844 879 3238  
07970 038169



# Masters of the Mews

## Suppliers to Falconry and Hunting Enthusiasts

First class custom-made  
falconry equipment, why  
settle for anything less?

Contact:

Dell Shaylor

07811 463097

e: [info@mastersofthemews.co.uk](mailto:info@mastersofthemews.co.uk)

w: [www.masterofthemews.co.uk](http://www.masterofthemews.co.uk)



41 Meadow Mills Industrial Estate, Dixon Street, Kidderminster, Worcs DY10 1HH

# British Falconry and Raptor Fair Report



*Dr. David Fox with Star the Golden Eagle, Roger Upton president of The British Falconers Club and Bob Dalton*

Welcome back old friend. The Falconers Fair was back with a bang this year and the combination of some decent weather and a new and exceptionally good venue helped make the event a resounding success. I don't think anyone would argue that in recent years the Fair has lost a little of its sparkle and appeal and needed a shot in the arm to survive. Chetwynd Park may well have been a nice setting but it was awkward for many to get to and certainly was not a pleasant venue to fly hawks and falcons at. The move to Ragley Hall was an inspired one and once again the backdrop for the Fair was a suitably impressive one. The venue itself was nice and central with good nearby motorway access and the local area itself is rich in eating places, hotels and B & B's.

Opening the proceedings this year was Dr. David Fox who has done so much over the past four decades for falconry in general and Eagle falconry in particular. Arena events had been re-vamped and the flying demonstrations were a mixture of familiar faces old and new. Falconer's Fair

stalwarts such as the South East Falconry Group and Jemima Parry-Jones gave their normal high quality and extremely informative displays. The first flying display of the day was given by members of staff from Eagle Heights in Kent and they certainly impressed with a well drilled and highly polished display featuring some unusual raptors not normally seen in the arena. They proved to be very popular with the crowds and it is hoped that they will be back next year.



*Perlin stooping to lure*

As well as some top quality flying displays in the main arena there were also some excellent displays by working dog trainer Graham Watkins. Having a great many years experience training working dogs for both shooting and falconry Graham's displays are always extremely interesting and to the point. No Country Fair would be complete without the very traditional Parade of Hounds and this was executed in exemplary fashion as always by Michael Sagar. As well as the dramatic displays in the main arena there was also a constant stream of activity in the mini arena with subjects such as basic training for a hawk or falcon, use of ferrets and working dogs when hawking. Dale Johnson and his team from the Yorkshire Hawking Club ensured that things in this area ran smoothly and according to plan.

This year the event featured two weathering grounds, instead of the normal one, and both were extremely well attended with a large and varied selection of hawks and falcons on one and an amazing display of eagles on the other. Many thanks to all those who worked so hard to ensure that such an excellent selection of trained raptors were on display and also looked after so adequately for the weekend.

Life at the stand of the principal sponsor, Kiezebrink UK Ltd, was somewhat hectic with Jemima Parry-Jones and Bob Dalton giving two displays of coping and imping each day. These demonstrations drew good numbers of spectators and proved to be highly popular. No doubt this event will be expanded upon next year.

It was very good to see a significant increase in the number of wildlife



*Laura Dugardin, a young falconer from Belgium, with her newly acquired male American Kestrel*



*George Roach and Bob Dalton with Diana the Aplomado Falcon*

and raptor artists that attended and all seemed more than happy with the event and the sales they had achieved. It was particularly good to see Chris Christoforu back at the Fair and running a large marquee filled with the work of a selection of artists from both home and abroad. Gathering new talent has always

been a forte that Chris has excelled at and he has been missed from the last couple of Fairs that he was unable to attend.

Trade stands, both falconry related and general country sports, were present in increased numbers this year and all seemed to report that they had had a good fair and were

pleased with both the venue and the re-vamped organisation of the event. All of which was no doubt helped by the glorious weather that accompanied the whole weekend. Let's hope that next year's event continues with the large improvement seen this year and that the weather, once again, is kind to us all.

## UK Falconry & Hawking Event

An exciting new falconry event has been planned by the UK Falconry Club and Jemima Parry-Jones OBE and is being held in the grounds of the International Birds of Prey Centre, in Newent, Gloucestershire this September.

Based at the spiritual home of UK falconry and organised by falconers for falconers, *'The UK Falconry & Hawking Event'* (sponsored by Kiezebrink), aims to be an annual grass roots meeting for all UK clubs, breeders, manufacturers and falconers. *'The Event'* will deliver an intimate, low key and unifying celebration of the diverse range of hawking occurring in the UK today.

*'The Event'* is not about commercial enterprise or profit, but about safeguarding all of our collective futures.

It will hopefully provide a place that serious falconers and their families can attend, put factions aside and share and build bridges for the greater good.

As such, the single most important aspect of *'The Event'* will be the participation of UK and overseas club members. The members of any club are the backbone of successful fal-



*Jemima Parry-Jones*

conry; as such each club will be given pride of place in the special *UK Club Marquee* which is sponsored by *Marshall Telemetry*. The aim is to encourage communication and discussion between members. The *International Club Marquee* has been kindly sponsored by *Gamehawker* and there will be clubs from mainland Europe and North America in attendance.

There will be a comprehensive seminar programme each day with talks and discussions from leading experts discussing a wide ranging series of topics such as: *Black Sparrowhawks in South Africa - Nigel King*, *Artificial Insemination with Goshawks - Lee Featherstone*, *Trapping Falcons in North and Latin America - Craig Hendee*, *Trapping and Hunting Accipiters in Pakistan - Ben Crane*, *Training and Flying Eagles - David Fox*.

Along with talks from leading raptor vet *Neil Forbes*, and talks from *Lantra*, *The Campaign for Falconry*, *The Hawk Board* and falconry equipment makers with a practical demonstration from the *Tommy Miles* on fitting back packs.

There will be ample opportunity before the start of the season to pick up last minute bargains and much needed pieces of furniture and equipment. 'The Event' has a variety of the UK and Europe's best and most reliable falconry equipment and food retailers.

In the main arena and throughout each day there will be displays aimed at the general public and which show display falconry in an informative and positive light. Stalwarts of the circuit include *Jemima Parry-Jones*, *Gary Bidiss*, *Terry Large* and *Jonathan Marshall*. There will also be dog handling and dog display work from first class falconer, *Mike Roberts* of *Miliscer Gundogs*.

For those with a broader interest in falconry related culture there will be an Art Marquee celebrating the work of *Carl Bass*, *Erna Goudbeek*, *David Rampling*, *Steve Greaves*, *Martin Hayward Harris*, *Adam Crisford*, *Neil Davies* and many more besides. Other attractions include a hood making competition, children's entertainment, food court and full access to over 300 different species of raptor inside the *International Centre for Birds of Prey*.

We look forward to welcoming you to your event, *The Kiezebrink UK Falconry and Hawking Event 2011*.

Advance Tickets £10.00 Adults, Children £6.00, Family Tickets £30.00 (2 Adults & 2 Children) are available direct from the ICBP – TICKET HOTLINE Tel: 01531 821 581

Tickets on the day £12.00 Adults, Children £6.00, Family Tickets £32.00

For further information please contact the organisers office:

Jan Hart or Neil Davies at  
The Kiezebrink UK Falconry & Hawking Event, Rosslyn, Burgage, Wellington, Somerset TA21 8NB.  
Tel: +44 (0) 1823 666 176  
Email: info@falconryhawking.co.uk  
Web: www.falconryhawking.co.uk

KIEZEBRINK  
Kiezebrink UK Ltd.

KIEZEBRINK UK MAIN SPONSORS OF THE UK FALCONRY & HAWKING EVENT

# THE UK FALCONRY & HAWKING EVENT



The International Centre for Birds of Prey, Newent, Gloucestershire GL18 1JJ  
Saturday 3rd & Sunday 4th September 2011 - Gates Open: 9.00am - 5.30pm

An action packed weekend dedicated to the art of falconry

**Advance tickets sales: 01531 821 581**




Falconry Equipment Makers • Falconry Telemetry • Artist Marquee • UK Falconry Clubs • Raptor Food Supplier • Falconry Displays • Seminars  
Gun Dog Displays • Ferrets • Hood Making Competition sponsored by American Hoods & Bells • Gamekeeping Suppliers • Gun Dealers • 4 x 4's  
Shooting Accessories • Angling Outlets • International Falconry Clubs Marquee sponsored by Gamehawker Ltd • The Campaign for Falconry  
Hawkboard • KK Catering Food Court • Largest collection of Birds of Prey in the Country • Camping for Caravans and Tents

JOINT EVENT ORGANISERS  
THE UK FALCONRY CLUB & THE INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR BIRDS OF PREY

www.falconryhawking.co.uk

# Saints or Sinners, Heroes or Villains continued

Tiercel

Another two edged sword that has joined the falconers armoury is the hybrid falcon. Although eagles and hawks have also been hybridised they are still in their relative infancy when compared to falcons. It is often quoted that falcons were only ever originally hybridised due to the relevant legislation in The United States regarding the ownership of indigenous species of raptors at the time when the Peregrine Falcon population crashed there. By producing hybrids it was possible to legally own



*Peregrine x Saker x Gyr*



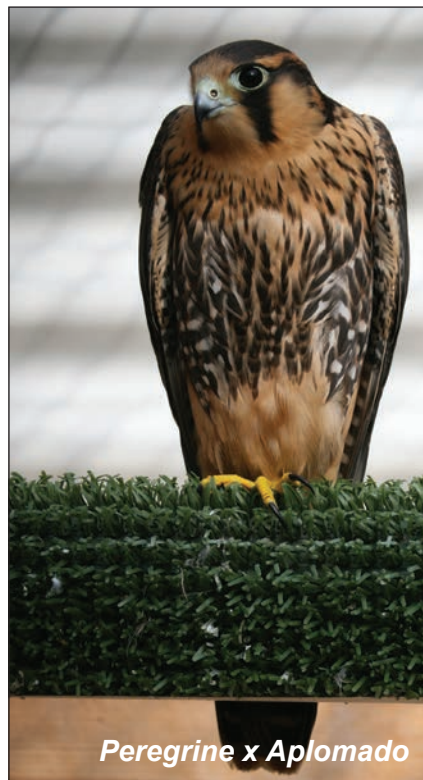
*Prairie x Merlin*

and, more importantly to some, sell the progeny. But I suspect this series of events only served to act as a catalyst and bring about hybridisation a little earlier than would have happened anyway. Man has always been a curious creature and surely the production of hybrids was going to happen sooner or later, the only real question being was when this would occur.

At first the crosses were straight forward and usually took the form of Prairie crossed with Peregrine Falcon. Supposedly the first known and documented hybrid falcons were the result just such a pairing produced in the wild. This particular mix was soon followed by Gyr x Peregrine, Gyr x Prairie, Peregrine x Saker and Gyr x Saker. The progeny from any of the above pairings were going to be big powerful falcons capable of taking decent sized game. The size and, in many cases were the Gyr part of the pairing was a white Gyr, the colouration of the falcons made them highly desirable to the Arab market. This led to an absolute explosion in the numbers of breeders

setting up projects, both in America and in Europe to produce hybrid falcons more or less purely for the Arabian market. Certainly the vast majority of any females produced were shipped to the Middle East and it was the smaller males that were left for sale on the relevant home markets. Even though falconers in Europe tended to be left with what was considered unsuitable for Arabia due to lack of stature hybrid males were still quite a bit larger than their pure bred equivalents. For example a male Gyr x Peregrine flew at some four to five ounces heavier than a normal straight male Peregrine.

What was surprising, at least to the author of this article, was the way that different hybrid combinations went through almost a period of being the latest must have falconry fashion accessory. It was quite literally a case of one particular type of hybrid would appear to be fashionable and was without doubt the only falcon worth the trouble of training and flying. Then two or three years later this would be surpassed by another particular combination and that became the must have falcon of that period with all other hybrid combinations being considered old hat. Classic examples of this fashion type thinking would be Gyr x Prairies. These were big powerful falcons and initially found favour throughout the UK and Europe, due mainly to their increased size over a straight pure female Prairie Falcon. But Prairies had never been an overly popular falcon in Europe due to their temper and rather uncooperative attitude towards the falconer in early training. Subsequently when Gyr x Peregrines became available the Prairie combination hybrid was more or less dropped over night and their subsequent value dropped to less than half of what it had been. How can that possibly be, it is still the same falcon it was.



But to my mind the hybridisation of falcons took leave of its senses when combinations such as Gyr crossed with American Kestrel began to appear. Some small falcon hybridisation had been carried out and of these Peregrine x Merlins and Gyr x Merlins had proved highly popular with falconers. Although such hybrid combinations are of no interest to me personally, I can easily understand why they might prove to be popular in the hands of capable falconers. But if someone could explain the desirability to me of a Peregrine x European Kestrel or even worse a Gyr/Saker x Merlin then I would be extremely grateful. It would seem that now many crosses are being produced simply to see what the young will turn out like.

One thing that is without question is that all hybrid falcons are endowed with what is known as hybrid vigour. They are definitely easier to get hunting, and please note I stress the word easier as opposed to stating easy, and consequently a great many falconers that would probably not have otherwise killed with a falcon are now doing so. As no doubt will be clear

from the tone of the article I am not enamoured with hybrids of any description and cannot see why they are considered in any way remotely superior to the pure bred equivalent. Having flown pure Gyrs and Peregrines at quarry for many years I cannot see that they lack performance, tenacity or efficiency when taken to the field in correct hunting condition. I feel that as in the case of the Harris Hawk with Austringers, they hybrid falcon flatters to deceive a great many Falconers that choose to fly them.

After a degree of relative uncertain dabbling hawks and buteos are now being hybridised on a fairly regular basis and there are several eagle crosses currently being marketed and flown. There is even a Harris Hawk x Golden eagle being flown. The fact that anybody would want such a thing, let alone consider and then set about producing one leaves me speechless.

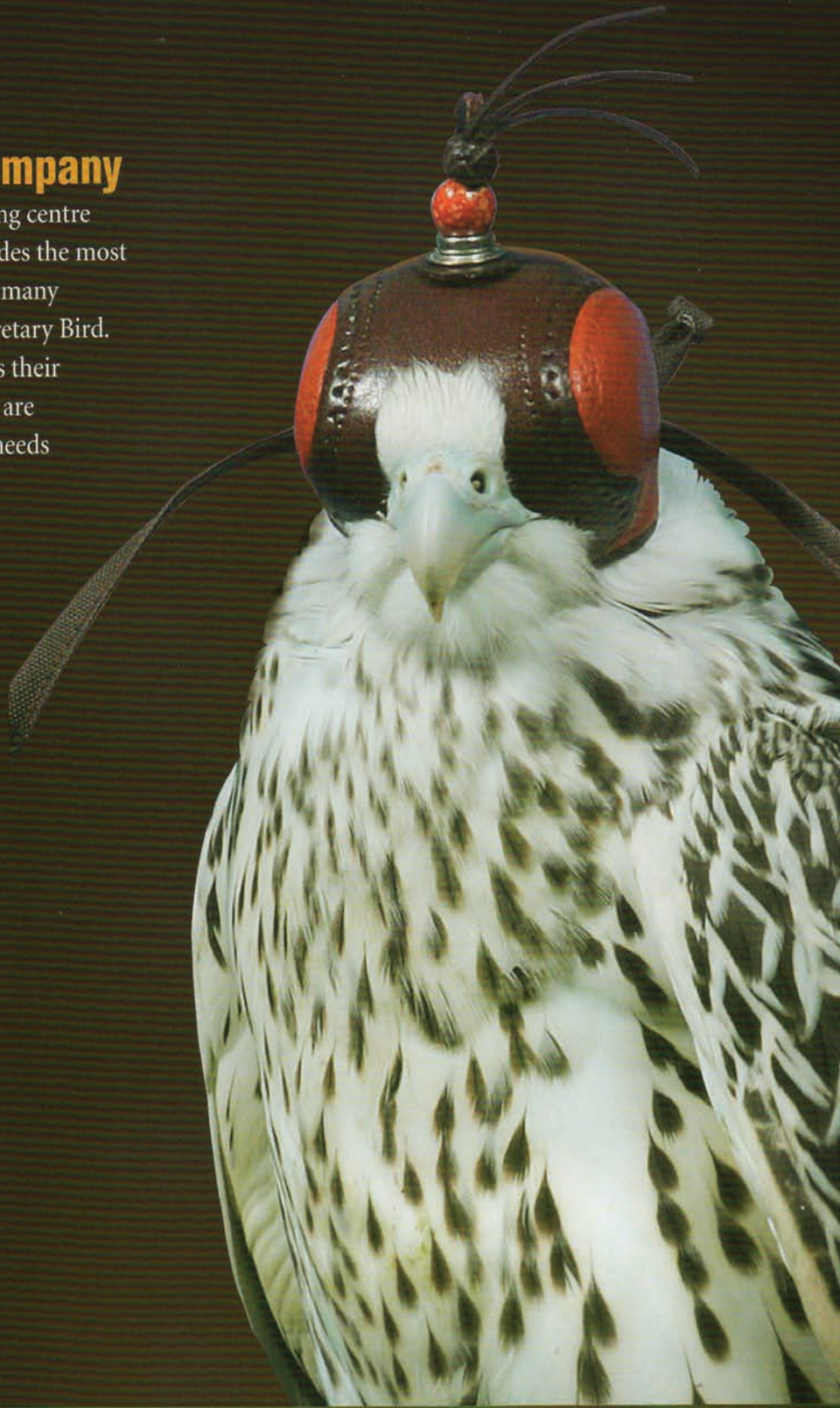
There are those that would argue that producing hybrids is the way forward and after all it has been done for generations with cattle, dogs and waterfowl. But I would argue that nature has honed and developed a series of predators to occupy a particular niche and thereby be suited to particular quarries. Falconry is supposed to be the art of hunting wild quarry in its natural environment with a trained hawk or falcon. The assumption being that the trained hawk or falcon is one that is fairly matched and is flying against a quarry it would do in the wild. I am not a tub thumping anti hybrid campaigner and wish those that choose to fly them well. However I have to say I am more than happy to stick to pure bred falcons and carry on with what I consider to be falconry as a true sport, which is a fair and even contest between a hawk or falcon and its natural prey.

## A bird's eye view of our company

Falconiformes is the biggest breeding and rearing centre of birds of prey in Europe. The collection includes the most common species of hawks and eagles as well as many different special and rare birds, such as the Secretary Bird. The birds are cared for by people whose work is their hobby; people who respect the birds. The birds are housed in spacious aviaries customized to the needs of the various species. Falconiformes is therefore proud of its good success rate in captive breeding.

Kleihoogt 42  
2651 KV Berkel en Rodenrijs  
The Netherlands  
Tel 0031 (0)10 51 99 382  
Fax 0031 (0)10 51 99 381  
info@falconiformes.nl  
www.falconiformes.nl

For visiting hours: visit our website.



**Falconiformes**

International Breeding  
and Trading Program  
for Birds of Prey

# FALCON LEISURE



Purchase your falconry equipment from a practising falconer with 40 years' experience. For your FREE catalogue please write or telephone.

## FALCON LEISURE

Pointers Rest, 1 Witt Road, Fair Oak, Eastleigh, Hants SO50 7FW

Tel/Fax: 02380 696921 Mobile: 07774 267790

Email: [aplomado@btinternet.com](mailto:aplomado@btinternet.com) Website: [www.aplomado.co.uk](http://www.aplomado.co.uk)