

The World of Falconry

Issue No 8
October 2011
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The Magazine for Austringers and Falconers



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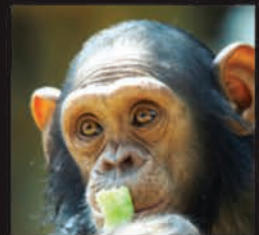
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Editorial

The UK Falconry and Hawking event took place recently and I think it would be fair to say it was considered by one and all to be an all round success. On a much smaller scale than either The Falconer's Fair or The Falconry Festival but this probably helped to make it such a friendly and almost intimate event. Let's hope for a repetition next year. The next major event in the falconry world is in fact the third Festival of Falconry which is being held in Abu Dhabi from December 15th to 17th inclusive. Once again falconers from around the globe will gather together for a celebration of the sport of falconry. Of all the events on the falconry calendar this is the one that should not be missed if at all possible.

In this issue we certainly have a wide and varied selection of articles with contributions from Peru, Baluchistan, Mongolia as well as some from here at home. The George Edward Lodge Trust are preparing a new and major work on George Lodge and are asking falconers if they can possibly help with photos or information relating to a period in the life of the falconer/artist. We also take a look at the early career of George Roach, one of Britain's falconry stalwarts.

By the time this magazine reaches its readership the hawking season will be well and truly underway and life can return to normal, or at least normal in the eyes of a falconer. Also I will have attended the Falcon-Expo in Germany and will shortly be attending an International Field Meet in Belgium in the first week of November. Our next issue will carry reports on both events. In the meantime I wish everybody good hawking.

The Editor

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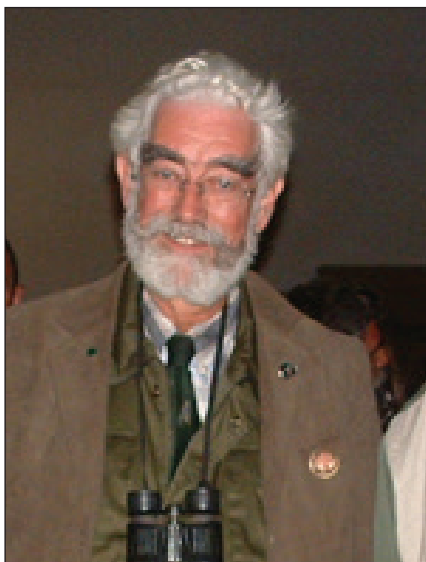
Front Cover Photograph: George Roach

News

Sad News

Unfortunately we have to report the passing of Christian De Coune, former president of The International Association of Falconry. Christian was a passionate falconer and a very positive force in the political world of falconry. He will long be remembered with affection as a sportsman and true gentleman.

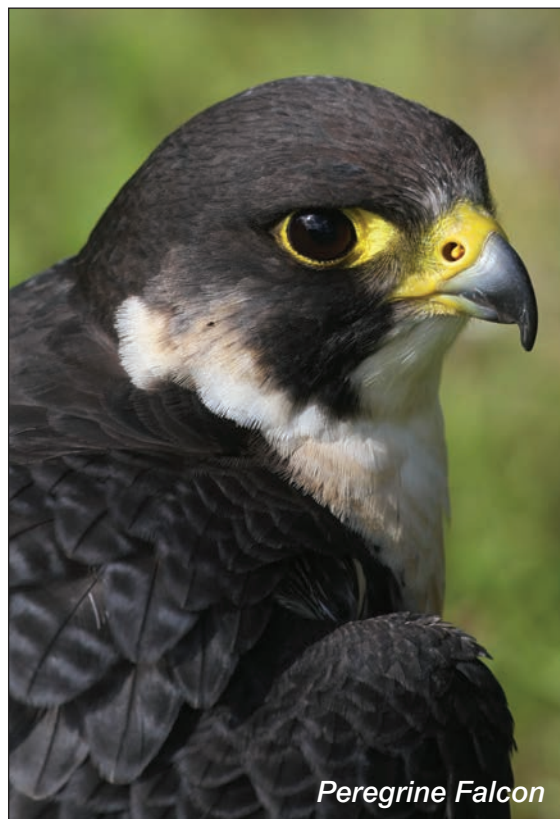
Christian was buried on the 26th September at "Les Forges" church in Gomzee-Andoumont in his native Belgium.



Symon Latham

The long awaited reprint of Symon Latham's "The Faulcons Lure and Cure" by Coch-Y-Bonddu books is finally close to being available. This is a reprint that has been in the pipeline for several years now and has long and eagerly been awaited by quite a number of people. The work is a reprint of the 1633 edition of the book which was in two parts. The first being "concerning the ordering and training of all hawks in general; especially the haggard falcon gentle. The second book "teaching approved medicines for the cure of all diseases in them".

The reprint, overseen by Paul Morgan, has a facsimile copy of the original Latham accompanied by a commentary volume by David Horobin. The two volumes will come in a slip case and will be strictly limited to an edition of 100 copies only. The price of this superb and highly desirable work will be £145. For those interested in this falconry classic all the contact details for Coch-Y-Bonddu books appear in their advert on page 39 of this issue.



Peregrine Falcon

Squirrel Chaps

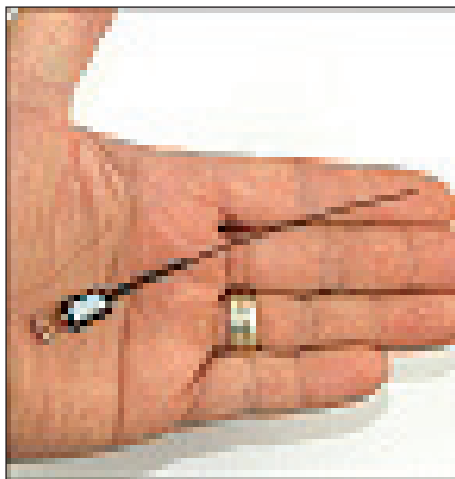
Calvin Crossman from UB Falconry UK is producing a range of Squirrel Chaps suitable for the larger broad and short wings to help them prevent getting bitten when flown against Squirrels. As we all know a Squirrel bite can often result in the loss of toe for a hawk and has, on far too many occasions, led to the death of some hawks. For further details on the chaps contact Calvin on either 07800-754947 or by e-mail at uglybear@live-co.uk . For those wishing to use mail you can reach him at UB Falconry UK, 35 Martin Avenue, Hampton, Evesham, Worcs, WR11 2NP.



Harris Hawk with squirrel chaps

Recent products from Falconry Electronics

This season has seen three new products added to the extremely comprehensive range of Telemetry products marketed by Falconry Electronics Ltd. A new, incredibly small high powered transmitter and two accessories that are a little unusual.



The transmitter is The Merlin MX Micro and is ideal for use on small raptors such as Merlins and American Kestrels. It is exceedingly powerful and yet still incredibly light at just three grams including battery. Priced at a very competitive £130 it fills quite an important niche in the transmitter market.

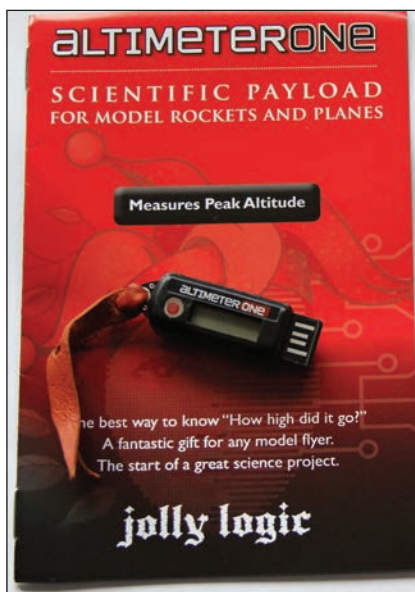
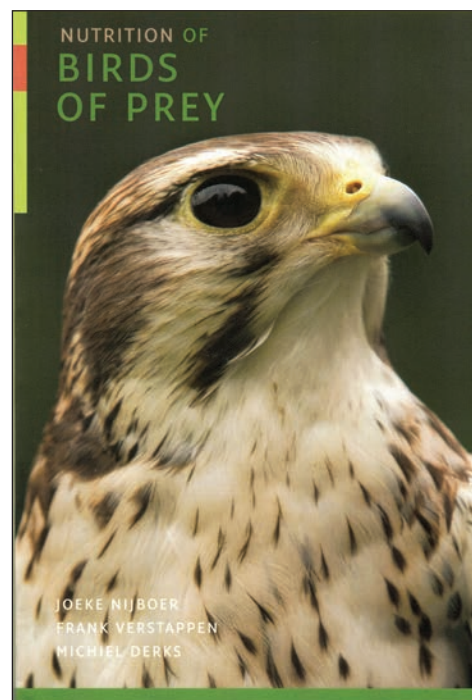
The first accessory is an Altimeter priced at around £48. This is an amazingly small and light, yet highly accurate piece of equipment that measures the highest point achieved by a falcon during a flight. Accurate to 1ft in 10k the device still only weighs just less than 7 grams and gives the reading it has obtained in either feet or metres via a clear LCD. The internal battery is rechargeable via any usb port on a computer. Settles a lot of Arguments about just how high falcons actually go.

The second accessory is a signal finder. This is a piece of equipment, that since its purchase, I use all the time. It checks whether a transmitter is emitting a signal or not without the use of a receiver and means any number of transmitters in a relatively close proximity can be checked without the need of switching any individual transmitter off. It will also act as a magnetic key if desired and be used to turn on and off transmitters that are activated via a magnetic stick. An extremely useful item at just £30.

Falconry Electronics Ltd can be contacted at www.falconryelectronics.co.uk or on 01422-376127.

Nutrition of Birds of Prey

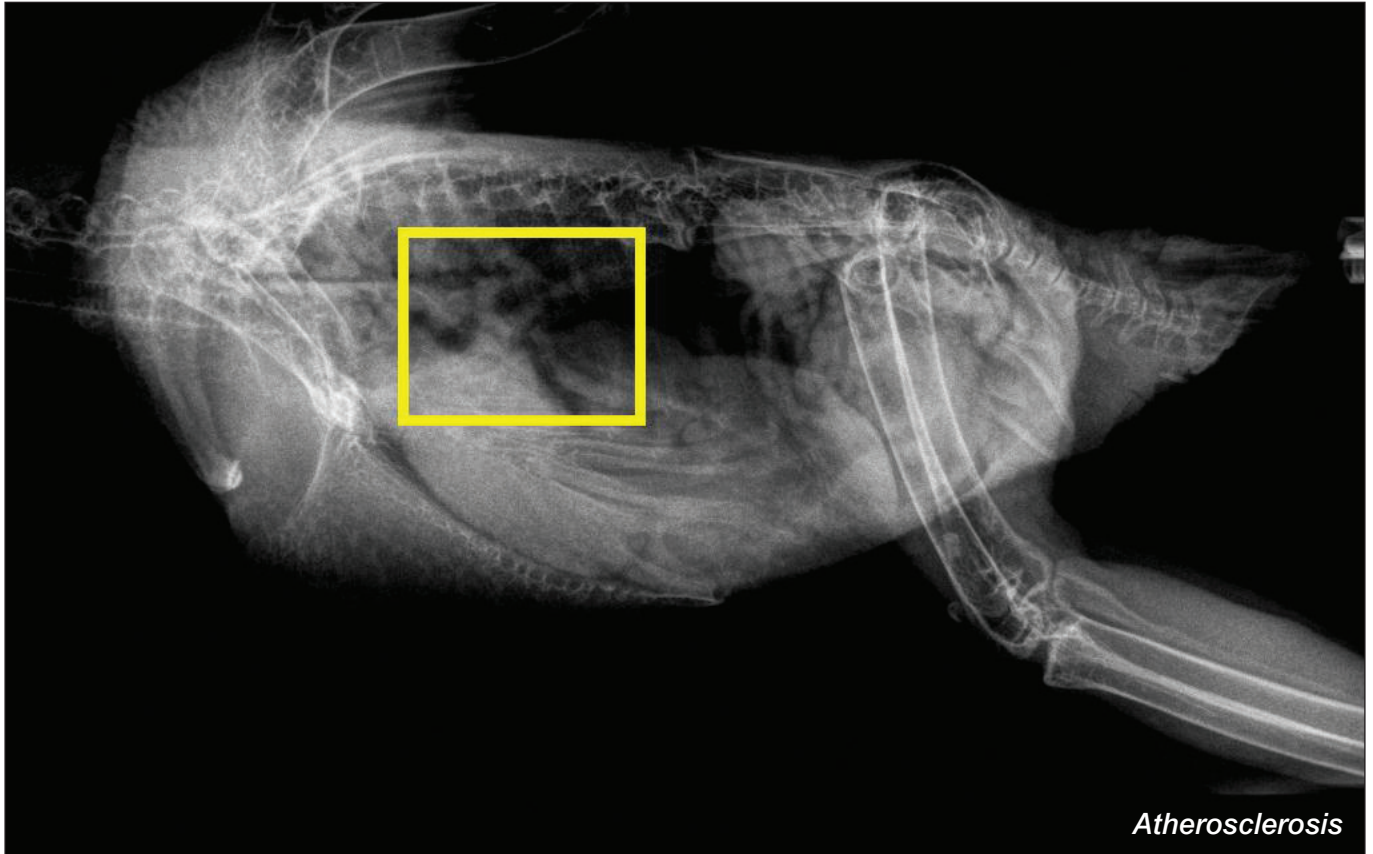
An exceedingly handy and information packed book on Nutrition of Birds of Prey has been put together by three authors and is now available here in the UK. Along with information about the core of nutrition, the book also contains descriptions of the most popular species of birds of prey, analysis of animal prey and meat products, food related diseases and problems. Additionally the book contains information about weight loss with flying, cleaning and disinfection, names and translations of nutrients and conversion tables in several languages. For more information on this useful book or to order a copy go to www.birdsofpreynutrition.eu



Atherosclerosis – The silent killer

Neil A Forbes DipECZM(avian) FRCVS

RCVS and EU Recognised Specialist in Avian Medicine



Why is this a problem

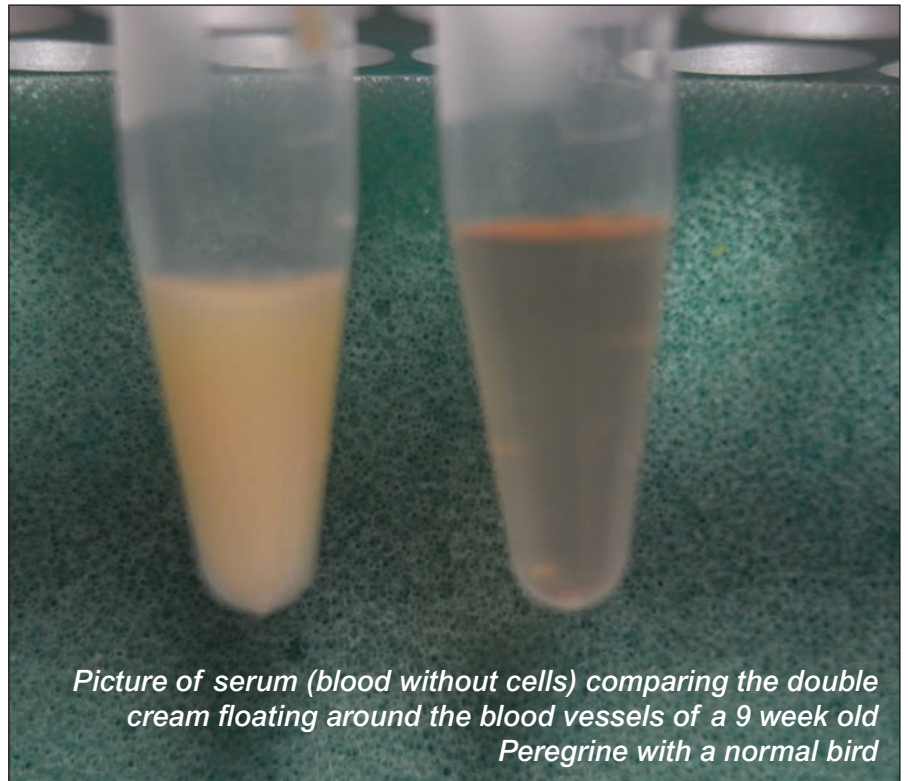
In recent months we have seen a great increase in the numbers of captive raptors suffering from heart disease and often dying at very young ages, simply due to atherosclerosis. Research has shown that a bird can demonstrate atherosclerotic changes within three weeks of being on a bad diet and can be clinically ill within 9 weeks of being fed a bad diet. This year we saw a nine week old tierce, which suffered a fat embolism, and had a blood cholesterol level 2.5 times the maximum recommended level. Whilst individual birds can suffer a hereditary susceptibility to high blood cholesterol, it is also true that a bad diet can rapidly cause the same problems, to the point of killing a bird.



Many readers will be familiar with the terminology 'atherosclerosis', but what really is it. **Atherosclerosis** is a condition in which an artery wall thickens as a result of the accumulation of fatty materials, principally cholesterol. The disease affects the arterial blood vessels, i.e. those leading away from the heart. It is commonly referred to as a hardening or furring of the arteries. It is caused by the formation of multiple yellowish waxy plaques within the arteries.

The atheroma comprises a nodular accumulation of soft, yellowish material comprising white blood cells, secondly there are underlying areas of cholesterol crystals and lastly, when the lesions have been present for some time, the older and more advanced lesions become calcified – giving rise to the hardening of the arteries.

Atherosclerosis is also a common disease of humans, typically developing gradually over decades, in the absence of any clinical signs. So what makes atherosclerosis dangerous. Firstly if one draws an analogy between the furring up of plumbing pipes (with hard water) and arteries with atheromatous lesions, one will understand that if there is an accumulation of rubbish within a pipe, the internal diameter of a pipe is reduced, so either less fluid flows through it, or the pump whose job it is to push fluid through has to work harder. So in the case of a bird suf-



Picture of serum (blood without cells) comparing the double cream floating around the blood vessels of a 9 week old Peregrine with a normal bird

fering from atherosclerosis, either less blood is delivered to the body, or the heart has to work harder, but typically both occur. On occasions artheromatous lesions are described as unstable (as opposed to stable), in the former material from the artheroma can break off (similar to a blood clot) and float off around the circulation, giving rise to a blocked artery (potentially a coronary, i.e. artery supplying the heart muscle), deposition in the brain (a stroke), or in any other vital organ, e.g. kidney etc...

Human and bird atherosclerosis patients are typically normal, until they suffer a catastrophic accident or di-

saster which may be fatal. The only signs which are likely to be seen are exercise intolerance or high blood cholesterol levels.

So what causes cholesterol build up and atheroma formation:

It is interesting that the disease commonly affects humans and birds, but not cats and dogs. The underlying issue is a high cholesterol diet (especially when combined with a high fat diet), leading to a high blood cholesterol level, concurrent with poor exercise levels. In birds the situation is compounded in female egg laying birds due to fat mobilisation for egg yolk production.

So what foods are bad (high cholesterol) for raptors – not surprisingly exactly the same as those which are bad for humans. What matters is not just the cholesterol level of the food, but also the fat level and in particular the levels of poly unsaturated fats as opposed to saturated fats.

However as with human health, there are things we can do to lower our blood cholesterol, such as eating polyunsaturated fats and reducing saturated fats, eating fish oils (high

Food high in cholesterol

Poultry and red meat are similar	75-85 mg cholesterol per 100g
Beef heart	191 mg cholesterol per 100g
Beef liver	389 mg cholesterol per 100g
Chicken liver	631 mg cholesterol per 100g
Lamb	106 mg cholesterol per 100g
Egg yolk	1235 mg cholesterol per 100g
Salmon	63 mg cholesterol per 100g

in omega 3). From this point of view poultry and other white meats are good, whilst beef and other red meats are bad. Fish oil is shown to have a beneficial effect on reducing blood cholesterol levels in birds just as in humans.

So how can we reduce the blood cholesterol levels of captive raptors

Reduce fatty food

Trim fats off meat

Never feed old spent laying quail

Only feed rodents at 60-70% of maximum weight or less (as these have lower fat levels)

Reduce red meat

Increase white meat

Reduce egg / chick yolk (de-yolk chicks, but add a vitamin/mineral supplement to make up for the loss of vitamin A, E and calcium)

Increase fish oil (give fish oil capsules 1-2x weekly) or feed 'oily fish' once a week

Do not over feed birds

Maintain regular exercise – this is especially important in larger birds e.g. eagles and in female birds after the breeding season.

If a bird has been laid off flying for more than a year have a health check including a blood cholesterol level and an x-ray before you start to fly it again.

Any bird which demonstrates exercise intolerance (flies badly), should be investigated. This is just the sort of bird, which if pushed to exercise, may just drop down dead.

Too many birds are dying young, because of how they have been fed and managed and we know how to prevent these problems occurring.

www.gwexotics.com



A picture of health

UK Falconry & Hawking Event

Bob Dalton

Finally the waiting was over and everyone got to see what the new and much hyped event on the falconry calendar was actually like. Staged as a joint venture between Jemima Parry-Jones and The UK Falconry Club and with sponsorship from Kiezebrink UK Ltd the International Centre for Birds of Prey was the superb setting for what promised to be a highly enjoyable weekend. I think it would be fair to say that on reflection it was an absolutely unqualified success on practically all fronts. Stall holder numbers were not what they could have been but then this was the first staging of the event and things like this are always quite slow to get up and fully running and establish themselves on the falconry calendar. But I have a feeling this one will establish itself quite quickly.

With the event being staged at the ICBP entertainment was limited to flying displays and, on the second day only, a working dog training display. The nature of the venue precludes a lot of the sort of entertainment that you would normally associate with a large country sports type event and I for one was extremely grateful for the fact. The venue meant that visitors could not bring dogs and quite why you would want to subject your dogs to that sort of a day out always baffles me anyway. Some people did mention the fact that they were disappointed they couldn't bring their own hawks but then you can't to any normal game fair and you certainly can't to the Falconers Fair. With such an active program of flying displays it really isn't feasible to have people wandering around with hawks with no form of control on them. However with such minor considerations aside the vast



The Kiezebrink stand, sponsors of the event

majority of those attending certainly enjoyed themselves and to a man said they would come again if the event were to be staged again.

With the ICBP playing host for the weekend it meant that all visitors had an opportunity to see and enjoy the simply fabulous collection of raptors that Jemima has amassed. As always the staff and numerous volunteers at the centre keep the place looking absolutely immaculate and despite visitor numbers the centre was equally well presented on the Sunday as it was on the Saturday. As well as being able to enjoy the collection there were also a series of seminars on both days and these included such luminary figures as Veterinarian Neil Forbes and Falconer Nigel King talking about Black Sparrowhawks in falconry. It goes without saying however that the principal attraction and entertainment centred on the flying displays which

are always of such a very high standard at Newent. Jemima and her team flew a staggering array of birds of prey ranging from Merlins and Barbary Falcons through to Kites and a Tawny Eagle. The wow factor was probably the flying of the Steller's Sea Eagle and certainly each time it took to the air all you could hear was the clicking of cameras.

Some invited guests also flew various falcons with three falcons in particular being somewhat outstanding. Gary Biddis, chairman of The South East Falconry Group, aided by club secretary Dean White, gave a demonstration of training a falcon to the kite with the emphasis on the actual introduction of the falcon to the paraphernalia involved. A great many of those watching found this of great interest as it is in the introduction where some falcons can be put off the idea for life. Having such a clear and ably demonstrated run down of



Nigel King with his Aplomado Falcon



Aplomado Falcon

the routine involved was first class. However when most of us think of Gary we tend to think of his amazing Perlin, which always flies so spectacularly at the Falconers Fair each year. We were not to be disappointed with the little falcon putting on a staggering display of speed and agility each day, although it would be fair to say that on the Sunday a great deal of coaxing was required before the Perlin decided it was time to earn his keep.

A special treat was in store for those who attended the second day with Nigel King from the Imperial Academy of Falconry flying his beautiful Aplomado Falcon to the lure. This falcon has presented Nigel with one or two problems in the behaviour department and Nigel explained these to the crowd and what he has done to circumnavigate them and also the fact that the falcon is exercised in a slightly different style to normal in order to accommodate them. The falcon flew really well and was a real credit to Nigel. With more and more Aplomado Falcons becoming available now it is hoped one or two more will be used in display so as to allow

more people to see and appreciate them. Also let's hope a few more actually get used for falconry instead of just immediately being paired up without ever having been given the opportunity to prove themselves in the field.

On the Sunday only there was an excellent display of working and gun dog training with a team of Spaniels. This was one of the best I have seen for a very long time with trainer and dogs obviously having a very genuine and deep felt rapport with each other. The whole display was thoroughly enjoyable as well as informative.

On the Saturday night there was a superb bar-b-que and this proved an ideal time for stall holders and visitors that were camping at the event to mingle and enjoy each other's company. The almost party like atmosphere of the bar-b-que tended to sum up the whole ambience of the weekend itself. People had come to participate in and enjoy a new and hopefully to be repeated event. As with any new event there were some quite minor niggles and the odd hic-

cup, all of which were dealt with quite swiftly and efficiently by Jemima and her staff and ever present volunteers. If you wanted to have a minor moan then the additional toilets and outside catering would be areas that, in my opinion, would stand justified criticism. Otherwise the whole weekend was a thoroughly enjoyable one and, hopefully, it will be a case of roll on next year's event.



Perlin belonging to Gary Biddis

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EXOTICDIRECT

The George Edward Lodge Trust – can you help?

Can you help? The George Edward Lodge Trust are currently collating artwork images and photographs for a future book publication – George Lodge's hawking diary. The work will be published as "Diary of an Artist Falconer".

The George E. Lodge hawking diary gives the reader a unique insight into falconry from the painters' hand, and the falconers' eye. Many of the past celebrated falconers' within the diary were close hawking companions, and in a few cases, George Lodge struck up a friendship which lasted a lifetime. Lodge would sketch and paint their hawks, and produced artwork on raptors that could not be equalled for detail, both in anatomy and plumage. This combination of meticulous study has earned him the title of 'The falconers' artist', and his raptorial artwork will always be revered by falconers'. George Lodge's lifetime work on the noble sport has assembled a historical picture of British falconry during the 19th and 20th centuries.

The volume(s) will contain a high percentage of material which has not been previously published. The Trust has researched this project for over four years, and catalogued some significant material to accompany the diary manuscript. This will be a real treat for falconers' and sportsmen alike, to acquire in the future, a truly special publication on Falconry Heritage.

Do you have in your possession any relevant George E. Lodge falconry artwork or photographs between **September 18th 1886 through to August 26th 1939**? If you do the Trust would like to hear from you.



George Lodge with a falcon on the fist 1894

The images required are of George Lodge's hawking companions and their hawks. These individuals include;

Major Charles Hawkins Fisher, E.B. Michell, T.J. Mann, Alfred Frost, Gerald Lascelles, J.E. Harting, Captain R. Thompson, Lord Leicester, W.R. Bryden, Grant and Boyd Harsburgh, B. Jones, W. Jones, A. Newall, Colonel Watson, Colonel Sandford, DR. H.O. Blandford, George Oxe, R. Gardner, Rowland Ward, Captain Gilbert Blaine, A. Reed, Harmsworth Family, Leonard Potter, Sir Umar, H. Swann, Kim Muir, Bobbie Spens, B. Rutledge, Phillip Glasier, Jack Mavrogordato, Hugh Knight, Charles Knight, Norman Knight, Harry Savory, Robert Blockley, Hugh Manson-Bahr, Clinton Manson-Bahr, Major

Stanley Allen, Basil Chamberlain, Gordon Robinson, Tony Jack, Guy Aylmer, Mr & Mrs Michael Scott, Mr and Mrs Williams, Armstrong Payne, General Bermess, Major Maydon, Mrs Davenport and Telford-Smollett, Some unknown surnames; Hemley, Patterson, Kintyre, Standon, Studley, Long, Chalmers, and Calcroft.

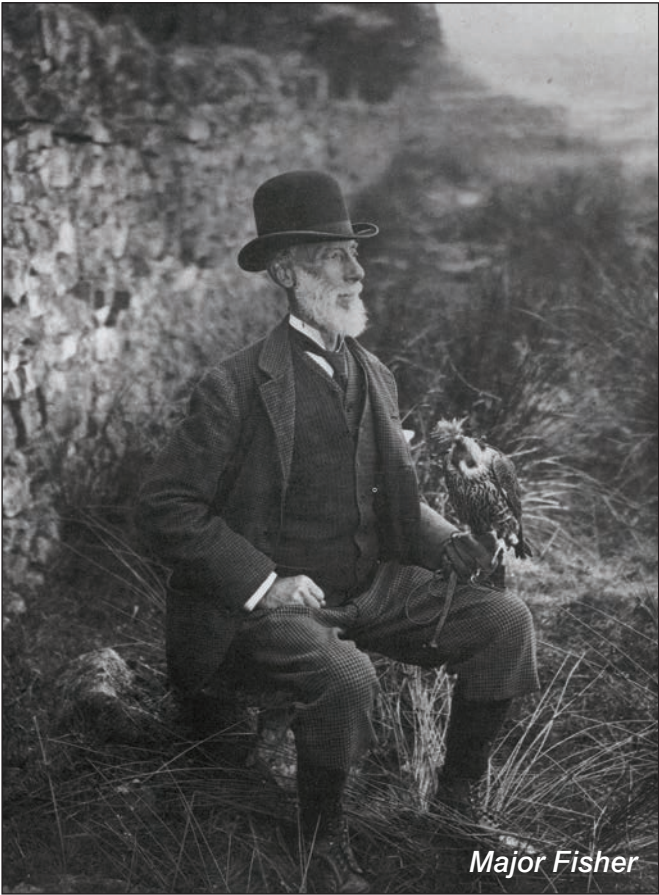
This is a rare opportunity to become involved and contribute towards a piece of falconry heritage. All contributors will have an acknowledgement within the publication, or remain anonymous, if they so wish.

You can contact the Trust either by e-mail, info@georgeedwardlodgetrust.co.uk or telephone 01747-840923.

The Trust needs your support.



George Lodge working in his studio



Major Fisher



Sketch of Diana 1936 from the 1936 Avebury sketch book



GEL Falconers Gauntlet



GEL Gravers

Supplementing the diet of Birds of Prey

Udo Eelman

Supplementing our bird's diet with vitamins, minerals and multivitamins can be a valuable tool for those with dietary imbalances or different nutritional needs. For birds of prey keepers and caretakers, it is important to know the natural diet of their birds. The challenge is to approach and treat this diet in the best possible way. In practice, however, this can be difficult because the availability of the different types of required food is not always available; it can very often be something of a problem.

Vitamins are natural substances that the body needs in order to grow, develop and function normally.

A well balanced diet usually provides all the vitamins required. In general, birds of prey hunt and eat a wide variety of animal matter. Prey items such as birds, small mammals, fish, reptiles, snails and amphibians are consumed. Some birds of prey are real generalists and eat many different kinds of prey if and when they are available. Others are specialists and hunt only for a few particular prey species. Many birds of prey are opportunistic and take anything that they have at their disposal. However, there are times, when captive birds need more vitamins and minerals than usual. A lot of keepers of birds

of prey use frozen prey items, as these are the most readily available. But frozen prey items are obviously nutritionally 'less complete' than fresh prey items. This due to vitamin loss suffered during the freezing, storage and thawing processes. Depending on the storage and thawing conditions, you might need to add vitamin A, vitamin B1 and vitamin E. The additional usage of a supplement depends on many factors such as size, weight, temperature, life phase, age and activity. Be cautious not to over supplement your birds. This can lead to various nutritional disorders.

Diet related problems and diseases

Most diet related problems occur in situations of physical stress. Such situations might arise when moulting, when reducing the weight for training, especially during initial manning, during breeding, growth of youngsters, extreme temperature changes and of course when ill. In stressful circumstances there is also a higher need for certain proteins as energy. The effects of dietary deficiencies are only recognized in relation to a small number of different nutrients.

The most important vitamin deficiencies are vitamin A, vitamin D3 and vitamin E. Calcium and vitamin D3 deficiencies often manifested in growth disturbances of the long bones from legs and wings. A shortage of vitamin A (Retinol) results in weight loss, growth disturbances, kidney problems and raised susceptibility for infections, especially mouth, respiratory and kidney. Over dosage is dangerous. Research



Immature Goshawk



Mature Peregrine Falcon



Golden Eagle

shows that 10 fold the average dose is toxic to chickens.

Deficiencies and excesses

The effects of dietary deficiencies are only recognized in relation to a small number of different nutrients. Calcium and vitamin D3 deficiencies are often manifested in growth disturbances of the long bones from legs and wings or in an abnormally formed keel bone. Many of the nutrient deficiencies however are not clearly visible and the disease symptoms not specific enough to make a diagnosis. In general it is much safer to supplement with a well-balanced multi vitamin. This will cover the normal, physiological needs and prevents an overdose. Recovery from a deficiency should be done with care and caution. A complete and good quality supplement is essential during growth and feather development. Since a bird changes feathers at least annually it is important that a diet contains the essential nutrients

required for feather formation. Some amino acids are considered essential in this respect. In particular, methionine is regarded as an important protein for the feather formation.

After a period of testing and fine tuning, Avian Bird Food Products proudly presents the product CarniZoo. This product contains all necessary minerals, trace elements, vitamins and amino acids for your carnivore animals and birds of prey. The product is especially developed for meat eaters like your birds of prey but also the group of felines, ursidae (bears), canidae (wolves) and reptiles. By supplementing CarniZoo along with the meat, the animal will get the essential quantity of minerals, trace elements, amino acids and vitamins for their everyday activity. Next to the mainly soluble ingredients, CarniZoo contains taurine, carnitine and an excellent Ca:P ratio.

Like all Avian Bird Food additives, the basis for CarniZoo is a mixture of knowhow and experiences of different zoos, together with the nutritional

and analytical skills of our nutritionists.

Composition: crude protein 2,65%, calcium 20%, phosphor 4%, also: magnesium, potassium, sodium, iron, manganese, copper, zinc, iodine, cobalt, selenium, methionine, taurine, carnitine, vitamin A, vitamin D3, vitamin Hy-D, vitamin E, vitamin K3, vitamin B1, vitamin B2, nicotinic acid, pantothenic acid, vitamin B6, vitamin B12, vitamin C, choline chlorid, folic acid.

Administer 1% CarniZoo with the daily meat ration and give power and strength to your birds of prey.

CarniZoo is easy to dose, user friendly and is marketed in a range of different sizes. The product is readily available through Kiezebrink UK Ltd who can be reached during normal working hours on 01284-810779 or contacted through their web site at www.kiezebrink.co.uk

Used sources: Dr. J.Nijboer, Drs. F.Verstappen, Ir. M.Derks

Baluchistan Conservation Society

Interview with Nemat Ullah Baloch



Volunteers at the organisation headquarters

Nemat Ullah Baloch is the Executive Director of the Baluchistan Conservation Society (BCS).

Baluchistan is the largest province of Pakistan, covering an area of 347,200 square kilometres. The province commands major overland access routes from Europe to South Asia and is a vital link in future transportation corridors from the Central Asian Republics to the Arabian Sea. Baluchistan shares river basins and ground water resources with Iran and Afghanistan. It is located on the migration routes of economically and biologically important wildlife populations. It has a major stake in and responsibility for coastal and marine resources of the Arabian Sea.

Baluchistan inherits a wide range of flora and fauna, from coastal zone marine animals to the deserts reptiles and amphibians and the high land mammals. Over the last decade rainfall in the region has lessened and therefore a situation of drought has destroyed the natural habitat,

moreover the lack of awareness about the wildlife conservation and natural habitat protection had seriously threaten many species to extinction in Baluchistan. Some mammals are already extinct such has the Black Bear of Baluchistan.

The situation is severely critical in Baluchistan and therefore a lot of efforts and funding is required to protect the biodiversity and educate the people of Baluchistan for the conservation of Natural habitat and wildlife.

When was your organisation established?

Baluchistan Conservation Society (BCS) is the Successor Organization of Houbara Protection Organization which was established in May 2005 and registered with Social Welfare department Government of Baluchistan under the 1961 Volunteer Social Welfare act (Registration and Control) ordinance 1961 (XL VI of 1961).

What are the aims of your organisation?

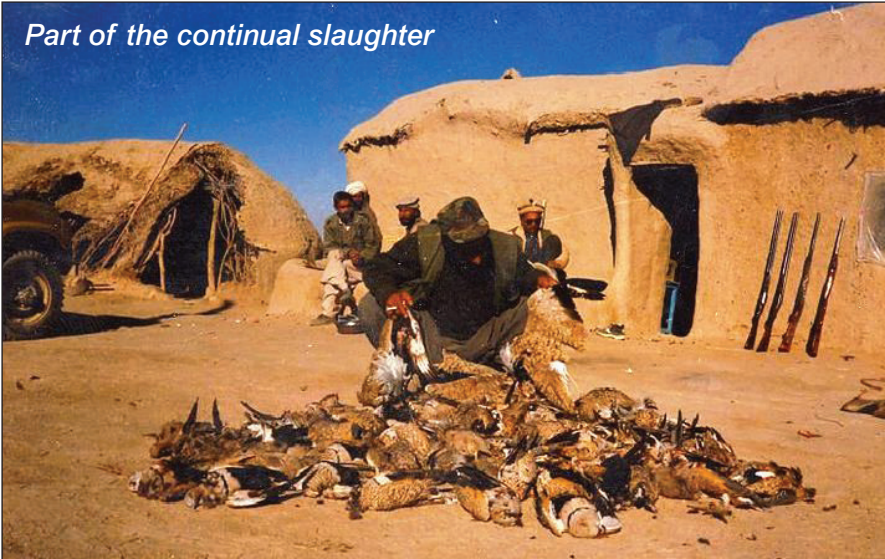
Baluchistan Conservation Society had the following aims and objectives:

- Prevent wildlife of Baluchistan, especially the Houbara Bustard, from extinction .
- Conservation of Wildlife, Forest, Biodiversity & Ecosystem through community participation.
- Ensure long-term ecological sustainability of all migratory bird populations.
- To Conserve Biodiversity and improve the quality of people's lives.
- Increase socioeconomic benefits.
- Improve bird watching, breeding of endangered species.
- Increase awareness of the value of migratory birds and their
- Conserve and protect habitats for their intrinsic, ecological, recreational and economic significance.



Falconer with Saker and Houbara

Part of the continual slaughter



- Raising awareness regarding the unsustainable and over hunting
- Raising awareness on alternative and renewable energy sources
- Conservation of fresh water sources

Does the organisation receive government backing?

Baluchistan Conservation Society is working in close association with the government of Baluchistan but we are not getting and financial assistance from government of Baluchistan.

How is your work funded?

Baluchistan Conservation Society had so far completed following projects for the accomplishment of its aims & objectives:

1. Formation of 30 conservation committees in different parts of Balochistan where the wildlife is seriously threatened.
2. Awareness raising training for the community members and the conservation committee members regarding the importance of habitat & Wild life protection.
3. Distribution of 680 LPG cylinders among the community members of in different areas of Baluchistan in order to introduce an alternate fuel for the kitchen use in order to protect the natural forest

which are otherwise used as a source of energy.

How many staff are employed either on the payroll or in a voluntary capacity?

There are 116 people working with Baluchistan Conservation Society all are volunteers.

What species are most under pressure?

Some animals are near to extinction in Baluchistan and are seriously endangered. According the IUCN Red List the following

Houbara Bustard, Gazella bennettii, Gazella Subgutturosa, Capra aegagrus, Capra aegagrus chialtenis, Capra falconeri jerdoni, Ovis vignei, Ovis vignei blanfordi, Ursus thibetana

nus, Vulpes vulpes, Vulpes bengalensis, Vulpes Cana, Canis aureus, Canis lupus, Hyaena hyaena, Panthers pardus, Felis chaus, Felis caracal, Reptiles in Chagai.

Since the Baluchistan Conservation Society is Successor of Houbara Protection Organization until recently our organization had primarily focused on the Houbara Bustard and the Habitat it resides, but we aim to work on the diversified range of endangered species in Baluchistan in future to conserve and protect other endangered species as well.

Is it local hunters or those that come in from abroad that cause the most damage to wildlife in your region?

The Government of Pakistan issues number of licenses to Hunters who visit Baluchistan every year to hunt, these hunters are given free hand to kill as much as they want, which is more like a genocide then sport.

Meanwhile the local hunters are also causing a disaster, which is a continuous process of genocide of wild animals, so in my view the local hunters are causing more damage than the foreigners because they are continuously hunting down the animals throughout the year.

Does hunting bring in a signifi-



Uncontrolled hunting



Falcon on Houbara

cant income for local people and does this affect the work you are trying to do?

The local people use hunting as a source of recreation mostly and nearly 95 percent people do not use hunting as a source of income for economic benefit. The hunting effects our work to a great extent, as the people lack awareness regarding the wildlife protection as well as the habitat protection, for example our organization had successfully mobilised the community in Nag Rakshan valley to protect Houbara Bustard from Hunters and poachers, but as the people use the forests and local flora for their kitchen needs hence they are unintentionally destroying the forests and specifically a plant locally called as "Kreech" which is used by Houbara Bustard as a feed and a place to lay eggs.

So I think that only stopping hunters/ hunting won't help, one needs to protect the complete ecosystem cycle in order to protect the endangered species and the habitat they reside.

Beside that we suggest that sustainable hunting in a controlled fashion such as trophy hunting may help the local community to generate income

for themselves as well as generate funds which may help to conserve the habitat and wildlife in a self sustainable fashion.

Is the Houbara under most threat from shooters or falconers?

Houbara Bustard is not threatened by the falconers much as it is a natural way to hunt, and doesn't disturb the nature much, the main threat is hunting Houbara by the firearms and unnatural means. Both the foreign and local hunters mostly use unnatural methods for hunting Houbara Bustard, causing the genocide of the poor specie.

Do you feel your organisation is making a significant difference to the preservation of wildlife in Baluchistan?

Wildlife education or literacy is not very common in Baluchistan, and it is my faith that with honest and untiring efforts we can bring awareness among the people of Balochistan about the importance of wildlife and natural habitat protection. I would like to share our two success stories though those are on small level but I count them as the first drop of rain.

Nag Rakshan Valley:

After an extensive awareness campaign my team succeeded to stop hunting and poaching with the help of local community, the local community is itself protecting and game watching on volunteer basis.

Though we have provided them with the required equipments and training in this regard and also created liaison with the local law enforcement agencies and forest department so that they could get a legal status in order to stop the hunters from hunting in their area.

Panjpai:

Our organization had recently convinced the local community in Panjpai region of Baluchistan bordering Afghanistan to stop the illegal hunting of migratory and residential birds, the community had showed much interest and taken several steps to impose a complete ban in the area on hunting.

These are the encouraging factors for our team to continue working in the field and educate the people about the importance of biodiversity, wildlife protection and introducing alternate source of energy.



Houbara-Bustard

These stunning photos of Goshawks were taken by falconer/photographer Ricky Daniel. Ricky is always keen to take photos of hawks in action and would always appreciate any invitations to accompany falconers out hawking. You can contact Ricky at ricky9904.daniel@ntlworld.com



Berkutchi (a falconer in the Kyrgyz language)

Andrey Shapran



Kadyrin with Oimok

After a week of a sleepy life on pastures of the Song-Kul Lake, overcome with the calmness of the mountains, fresh cold water, cool air and tough sun of the highlands we were looking for some more active experience. We did not hurry to descend to the capital city Bishkek, to its dusty heat, messy traffic, smells and noise of crowded Asian bazaars. Without any plans I and my guide and assistant Olga were going down in the direction of Issyk-Kul Lake, when in the process of a brief talk with our local driver we suddenly knew where our next point of interest was going to be. It was a village on the southern coast of Issyk-Kul. Hopefully we were going there to see firsthand traditional hunting with a golden eagle.

That night I had a very strange dream. The old man died, my dream was clear about this. Where did these words come from and who were they about I did not know. I opened my eyes, it was getting light.

That day we had to go by car more than two hundred kilometres along the mountain and steppe roads of Kyrgyzstan and end up in one of villages on the Issyk-Kul lake coast, there we hoped to find the old berkutchi, Sagymbay.

Our driver found Sagymbay's house almost without any hesitation or delay. The seventy-years-old eagle hunter was famous throughout Kyrgyzstan. There was big uncertainty that we could find this man in the hours of daylight: the car had broken down twice, we lost time and started to have doubts about whether or not we would actually get to see an eagle



Oimok and Kadyrin



Andrey Sharpan with Oimok

hunting. But any hope we had was finally dashed when a woman, the mistress of Sagymbay's house, came out to the entrance and informed us that we would not be able to see the old falconer at all. The old man has died this morning; the funeral was to be tomorrow.

We went from the house with a mixture of sadness and utter frustration. The driver, as if justifying himself, said it seemed he had heard that Sagymbay had been very ill, but he had not known for sure if this was true. He had brought us to the old hunter's house in the hopes that things would be well. We had to change our plans, surprisingly and unexpectedly our driver helped in this. Not far from here, within five kilometres or so, in the neighbouring village, there lived a good falconer. "He is my cousin, said the driver, and the best middle-aged hunter around here". So we drove to Tertkul, a small village where Kadyrin Shermambetov lives.

Kadyrin's father Osmon was a very famous berkutchi in Kyrgyzstan, as was his grand-father also. Kadyrin is

a fourth generation falconer. With his eighty year old father, still a very strong and able man, we sat in a large guest room on blankets spread on the floor around a low table piled with small pieces of fried pate called boorsoks and drank endlessly of warm tea with milk.

A huge oil painting, a quite primitive landscape, hangs on the wall. Kadyrin's father in his young days bought

it from a travelling artist for a whole calf. "A calf can get lost, get ill or you can just have eaten it! But a painting has stayed here", he explains. The picture actually hangs here, but the calf has already gone for a long time.

The art of falconry in Kyrgyzstan was recorded as having first appeared here, near Issyk-Kul' lake. At this moment in time only three real hunters still live and hunt around here. Although there are many falconers in Kyrgyzstan, most of them keep the golden eagles just to earn a living by entertaining the growing number of tourists.

The Kyrgyz falconers take very young eyass eagles from the nest in the high mountains. A month or so later after that age and it will be too late says Kadyrin. The last golden eagle he got himself at this age from the rock up in the mountains. For a long time he has watched a place where the nest of the eagles is, then climbed up and eventually made his way down to the nest by rope. He took a couple of very young, still white birds. One of them he gave away to another hunter, the second one he kept for himself.

Until the golden eagle grows up and become strong and fully feathered it



Oimok



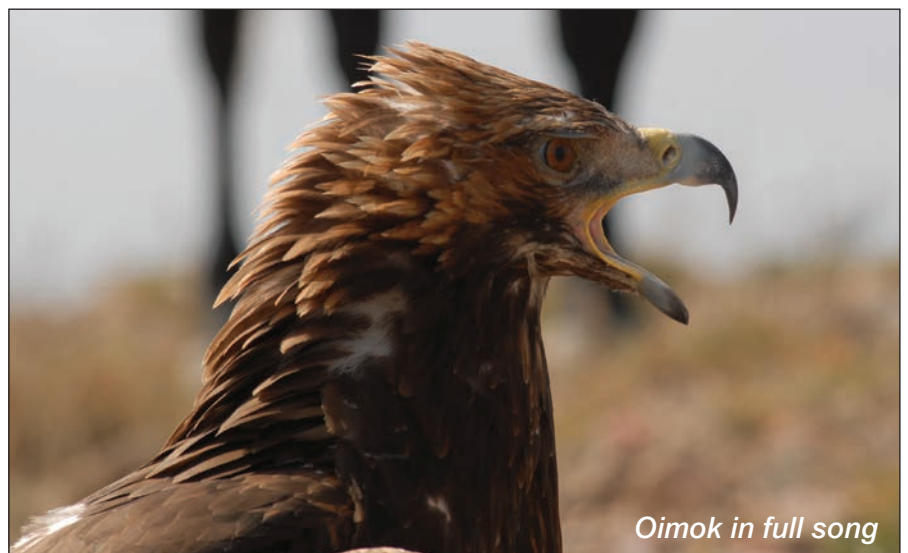
lives in a cage. During this time the wild bird must get accustomed to man and everything associated with him. Later the hunter, with the help of an assistant, using different length pieces of the cord gradually teaches the eagle to come back to the falconer. But not every eagle can be taught to hunt with a man. As Kadyrin talks, his eyes – the eyes of a hunter are glistening bright. He leaves the room and after a while comes in with a huge beautiful eagle perched on his gloved hand. The bird is screaming in a sharp voice, restlessly, almost unbearably. The eagle's eyes are covered by a basic but efficient hood of simple construction. The hood is known as a Tomogo.

I ask Kadyrin a series of questions regarding his eagle and he patiently replies to questions he has no doubt heard many times before. What happens if the eagle grabs you? Then deep scars remain. What is the largest animal the eagle can catch? A fox. Do you think your son will become a berkutchi? Who knows, but he spends all day in the garden pretending to hunt with his toy gun. But it is impossible to become a falconer at an early age. The strength of a

man's hand is required as a eagle can weigh 6 or 7 kilos. What happens to an eagle when its owner dies as with Sagymbay? The eagle is a valuable asset and will be passed on to another berkutchi. Who is smarter eagle or man? Kadyrin laughs, man of course. Man trains the eagle not the other way round. Do you give your eagles names? Yes my current eagle is called Oimok, which means pattern, decoration. Kadyrin says that one of the most important things is being able to understand your eagle and sense her moods. His wife laughs and says that "he loves this last eagle more than he loves her".

The autumn time, September and October, is the right time for man and eagle to begin their hunting together. During that period Kadyrin says he goes to the mountains almost every single day to hunt. I ask what form the hunting takes and am told it is easy. "I watch through binoculars for a beast and then let my eagle fly". A Golden eagle can see accurately for a distance of three kilometres. The eagle does not carry the game but grabs it with its powerful feet and claws and holds it tightly. Kadyrin says no wild creature ever surrenders without fighting. Every animal, fox or hare, wants to stay alive and struggles right up until the last moment of life. But the Golden Eagle always wins. This particular falconer says it is the most exciting moment when you watch the battle between a bird of prey and, say, a fox. Hunting forays normally last around two hours and Kadyrin is a very confident hunter. His wife says he is one of the most successful hunters in the region and never returns home from the mountains without game.

We are sure Kadyrin's wife is right; we have no reason to doubt her statement and never having seen an eagle fly and hunt before we are extremely uncertain as to what to expect. We want to see the eagle flying and hunting but at the same time have sympathy for any fox we may or



may not encounter. During the night the foxes come out of their holes to scavenge around the village and surrounding area. But at dawn they make their way back to the safety of their dens and accordingly miss the attentions of the blazing sun and any hunters that are abroad. The hunters use the Kyrgyz hound, the Taigans, to find the foxes in their dens and evict them so that the eagle can hunt them. Accordingly when we set off to hunt two of these dogs accompany us.

Kadyrin carries Oimok hooded on the fist as the three of us set off on horseback, in company with the Taigans, to hunt for foxes and hares. The hooded eagle looks like a small severe god of an ancient religion with the flapping of its wings and constant screaming reminding us it is a living creature. There is the distinct feeling that we are all taking part in an enigmatic ritual. For five hours we rode through the foothills of the mountains constantly accompanied by the eagle's sharp voice. Six pairs of eyes scanning the ground keeping watch for the possibility of a flight. But it was not to be, no quarry was found. What was bad luck for us was certainly good fortune for the local fox population.

With the constant scrabbling of the ponies across the broken ground, the blazing sun beating down on us we decided to head home and try again tomorrow. Everyone was tired, particularly the ponies and of course Kadyrin's arm was feeling the effect of carrying the eagle for such a long time. Although we hadn't seen the eagle hunt the day had still been an enjoyable one and an experience never to be forgotten.

Latvia—Kyrgyzstan—Russia
September, 2009



Looking for prey



Oimok leaves the fist



Oimok and Andrey

“World of Falconry” Interview

Questions for Norman Quiros Bazan



1. When was it you first become interested in falconry and what was the first species of hawk or falcon you trained? What sort of help did you have when you started, was there a local falconer to help you?

First of all, thanks Bob for helping me to recall some points of my falconry history and letting me share them through this interview. In response to your first question, in my earliest memories, rather than an interest in falconry I can remember a deep admiration for birds of prey. The first such memory is when I was about 5 years old (1977). Someone commented that someone known to my family had an eagle in his courtyard; I remember that I felt very eager to go to see it and know more about it.

The next memory I have is when I was in third grade of primary school, in my book of natural sciences there was a drawing of a bird of prey and beside it beautiful Amazon Parrot. I remember that I spent long hours contemplating this drawing. That same year, in a sheet of types of animals and birds, I found one that had a tremendous impact. Yellow legs, a figure that appeared to be made of steel, but at the same time I saw of noble look like that of killer whales. I remember that the eyes were round with a yellow surround equal to that of the legs. I remember that underneath the illustration it said “Peregrine Falcon”. For me I had found the most beautiful creature around the world.

At the beginning of the 1980s I lived near Lima and here there was a flea market most Sundays where occasionally parrots and birds of prey





would be offered for sale. My father would regularly take me to the market so I could look at the wonderful birds there. I always wanted to return home with a raptor, but obviously my father would not agree to this.

In 1985 we had moved to Cajamarca and a cousin of mine told me that an acquaintance of his had some falcon chicks. I remember that I asked my parents for permission to travel from Lima to Cajamarca to pick up my first falcon chicks. Sixteen hours each way on a bus from Cajamarca to Lima and then home again. I remember the feeling that I had when I saw my first ever falcon chicks. I thought they were very beautiful, very expressive and rather funny looking, but I was delighted. The passage of time revealed that the chicks were in fact from a Kestrel not a Peregrine Falcon as I had been lead to believe. I remember that I managed to get the kestrel to fly my fist on the roof of our house whilst attached to a very crude homemade creance. Eventually I flew the little falcon loose but very soon he was gone.

Later a friend taught me to make a small trap of the bal-chatri type and I



then trapped and trained several Kestrels, six in all I think. I still do remember that none of them stayed with me very long and I still don't know how this didn't end up dampening my spirit and discouraging me.

One of my big memories was my fourteenth birthday when my father gave me a copy of "The Art of Falconry" by the Spanish master Don Félix Rodríguez de la Fuente. I remember that my father tried to deter me from continuing in my attempts to become a falconer, reasoning that the book showed just how much ded-

ication and time was required to be an able and competent falconer. In fact he even put a dedication in the book which read "Son I give you this book on falconry so that you can leisurely read it in your spare time even though you will never get to practice falconry". Surely my father thought it was a book of stories about falconry he had given me; he never imagined that he was putting in my hands the most detailed and full descriptive manual that has ever been written on falconry in Spanish. It would be very difficult to ever improve on the knowledge or firsthand experience of the late Félix Rodríguez de la Fuente, one of the most respected falconers of the twentieth century.

The language of Don Felix Rodriguez was very passionate about falcons and falconry and fired my enthusiasm ever more. I had never been particularly fond of reading up until that point but from then on I spent all day reading the manual whenever possible. After school I passed many hours reading and re-reading the manual. Having done so I had decided not have any bird of prey until I had completely understood and mastered the manual. After several months of studying the manual, I felt safer and then decided to look in the market to see if perhaps there was a large bird of prey





for sale. The book of Felix spoke of European species: the Peregrine Falcon, Sparrowhawk and Goshawk mainly. Then in the market I saw a hawk very similar to a goshawk and I really liked it. It was all black with yellow legs and face. I bought it with money that I had been religiously saving for many months.

I remember that I followed the instructions and advice given by Félix Rodríguez to the letter. I made a hood and taught my hawk to wear it and all the equipment exactly as it was described in the book. I first got my new hawk to eat calmly on my fist and then to promptly flew to me on my call. In the meantime I did everything I could to learn more about falconry. I visited the Museum of Natural History, College of Veterinary Medicine, Faculty of Animal Husbandry, and Faculty of Biology all in the hopes of learning more about falconry and perhaps finding a fellow falconer. Everywhere I was told the same thing, that in the Peru no one practiced falconry.

Then one day I happened by chance upon another falconer. He was exercising a hawk in the area where I took mine each day. He admired my Harris Hawk and told me I had done well to train an adult Hawk. This falconer turned out to be Mario Castag-

nola and we are still friends to this day. Although unfortunately Mario has had to give up falconry now as he has entered the priesthood.

2. Is falconry a very popular sport in Peru and is there any form of national falconry association? The hawks you use for your sport are you allowed to take hawks from the wild or must they be captive bred?

Falconry has not been a popular sport in Peru. Currently it is becoming slightly more popular; however, if a young person wishes to engage in falconry then currently they must buy a hawk from one of the few captive breeding centers in Peru. This seems unfair, because I was fortunate to learn with wild birds. Now if

someone has the desire to become a falconer it is very difficult to have a legal bird of prey. Although there is still a small element that doesn't care about this and take hawks from the wild. However more and more police men are becoming better qualified in recognizing birds of prey and are acting promptly to take illegal birds from those that should not have them. I hope that once we have an organization of serious and responsible people that they can guide future generations of falconers to the assessment and conservation of the birds of prey.

3. Before working professionally as a falconer what hawk/falcon did you fly and what quarry species did you hunt?





Before working professionally as a falconer I trained and flew mainly two species of birds of prey, Harris Hawks and Aplomado Falcons. For the Harris Hawk I preferred the late passage male because it was the only one with which I could hunt small birds close to home. Then when I had access to the Aplomado Falcons I had no preference with regard to males or females as I always liked to hunt small birds with them, so either sex would be fine. Even though I could have handled Peregrine Falcons, the sort of country side and types of quarry required to fly them properly were not available to me. With the Harris males I have hunted in particular: Wrens (*Troglodytes aedon*) and Blue-Black Grassquit (*Volatinia jacarina*) with Aplomado Falcons have hunted in particular: Wrens (*Troglodytes aedon*), Blue-Black Grassquit (*Volatinia jacarina*) and Turtupilines (*Pyrocephalus rubinus*).

4. You now fly hawks and falcons at Cusco Airport, how did this contract come about?

In January 2007 I was doing a course of specialization in marketing at a university in Lima and I received a phone call from my friend Ivan Cas-

taneda. He told me that he had heard Lima Airport were looking for a falconer to help them frighten pest species of birds away from the Airport. He suggested I get in contact with them and gave me a number to call. I went to the airport with my brother who has always accompanied me when I was hawking, although since this time his other passion, drumming, has taken over completely and he now works as a musician.

It took us around six months to study the problem and work out a satisfactory method of bird dispersal that caused minimum disruption to activities on the Airport. The work we did proved a great success and subsequently the Peruvian government wanted to protect the Airport at Cus-

co. They launched a public competition to see who could come up with the most practical and cost effective method of bird control. We were evaluated and it turned out our company had the highest qualifications and practical experience in this field and so we were awarded the contract.

5. What are the main problem species at Cusco Airport?

We have problems with the river which borders the airport since it brings with it an infestation of gulls. In addition to the side of the runway are two chutes of water which run down the valley and in these you can find ducks of various species, yanavicus and other water birds. Also in Cusco we have problems with the fact that many of the surrounding people breed and fly pigeons (*Columba livia*) and these people have already attacked our Aplomado Falcons. In addition, very often when we fly to our Aplomado Falcons, wild Aplomado Falcons come in to attack them, similarly we occasionally suffer the attentions of aggressive Harriers and Eagles. All these birds must be expelled from the airport.

6. Because Cusco is so high above sea level does the lack of oxygen present any special problems to the falconers or the hawks?

The birds of prey we bring up from Lima take up to two months to get





fully fit, acclimatized and reach their full potential in the rare atmosphere. In actual fact this is longer than for a human who normally takes around a month.

7. How many falconers work at the airport and what numbers and species of hawks are employed?

We currently have five or six falconers by each airport and handle some eight raptors at each site in particular Harris Hawks and Aplomado Falcons.

8. Do you lose many hawks in your bird control work, in that they either fly off or get killed?

In Cusco because of the height we have lost one Harris Hawk which died and due to the pigeon breeders we have had one Aplomado Falcon killed in the past two years.

9. Do you find that working as a professional falconer at the airport takes any of the pleasure away from your own hunting or does the job keep you too busy to still practice falconry purely for fun?

The work at the Airport is the main thing for me at the moment and the satisfaction that this work brings. The safety of the lives of the thousands of people that land and take off every day and for whom we are guardians is a great responsibility which we all

take seriously. I enjoy flying the hawks and falcons each day even though it is not hunting as such. I think of my work as applied falconry and enjoy it very much. I don't think anything could make me feel more satisfied.

10. Does your company do any other form of bird control work with hawks such as protecting crops or keeping buildings clear of birds. If not then are you looking to expand your commercial falconry?

Our company is prepared to apply the lessons learned at airports to other fields, such as agricultural industry.

11. What is your favourite species of hawk or falcon to hunt with and why?

Every bird of prey is special, from an American Kestrel on upwards. Each one has its charm. If I had to choose, I would choose them all.

12. Is there any species of hawk or falcon that you really want to train and hunt with but haven't had the opportunity to do so yet?

Yes, a good example would be a Golden Eagle or a Goshawk which I would fly at Hares in Juliaca. Or a Gyr/Sakers Hybrid Falcon to fly at Gulls. The Grey Bellied Hawk (accipiter poliogaster) to hunt Peruvian Quails. The beautiful Bat Falcon (fal-

co deiroleucus) to hunt Peruvian doves. There are many falconry delights I would like try.

13. What Are your future aims as a falconer?

I would like to breed in captivity all the species of Falconiformes applicable to falconry or the bird control work that we do. I would also like to breed some foreign species. In addition, I would like to provide decent work as falconers to many people here from my native Peru.



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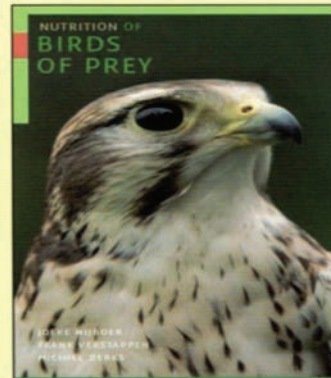
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Conversation with George Roach



Gentleman George with Hooded Falcon

know George for some considerable time and he very kindly agreed to tell me a little about his early life in falconry and those who had been of help and encouragement to him. So George chatted and I took notes which I hope will help reflect some of the interesting events that George encountered on the way to becoming a very well respected falconer. I apologise in advance for the quality of some of the illustration that accompany this article but they are scanned from photos that are in many cases more than forty years old and taken originally on non digital equipment. Others are taken from faded press clippings that have lain in drawers untouched for an equally long time. It was felt that their quality was outweighed by their importance and therefore they are included.

"I left school in 1949 and went to work at a racing stables in Nottingham as an apprentice jockey. In September 1950, with a little help from my grandfather who was well known throughout the racing world, I transferred my papers to a major John Heddel and went to work at the Buck-

George Roach is a well known and highly respected falconer who has been flying hawks the better part of sixty years. He has several different claims to fame in the falconry world each one of which would be sufficient to single him out from the crowd. George, along with the great Hungarian falconer Lorant De Bastyai, was one of the very first to give public flying demonstrations with birds of prey in Britain. Not just the run of the mill falcon to a lure demonstrations either. George stepped, or rather rode, into the arena as Saladin, astride Blizzard his Arab horse and flew falcons with tremendous style and panache. Later, in conjunction with his good friend Gary Balchin, George founded The British Hawking Association and steered it towards establishing itself as a major club in Britain. The BHA was the first falconry club in the UK to have a proper apprenticeship scheme in place. Also as a hood

maker George has very few equals and his work is considered amongst the finest available. The one thing that singles George out probably more than anything else is that everyone you ever talk to about him considers him a true gentleman in every sense of the word.

I have been fortunate enough to



1964 Lorant de Bastyai and George Roach at Twycross Zoo

atema Horse Racing Club in Singapore. My job there required that I go to the track at 4am for five days each week to ride and work there. On the site there were actually 14 different tracks and I used to travel from one to another so as to ride for different owners”.

“One day I saw two Malayan boys with hooded and belled hawks on their fists as we passed them on the road. Before I had an opportunity to talk with them they turned off at the next rubber plantation. I thought it unlikely I would ever see them again but two days later I met them by chance and spoke with them. For the next eighteen months, once my work was finished I would spend my free time with them and this is where my life as a falconer started”.

“In May of 1952 I returned to the UK and because I had grown too much my chances of race riding had disappeared. I did, however, manage to find a job working with horses. I would often think about the two Malayan lads, Abdul and Nigia, in Singapore and all that I had learned about falcons. Around this time I happened to see a falcon advertised for sale in the Birmingham Post and as accordingly paid a visit to Tysley pet store. The result was that I brought my first falcon, a female Lanner, and I was extremely happy about it. I began to train her as I had so carefully been instructed by Abdul and Nigia”.

“In 1955 I got married and we moved to Nottingham. Some years later a friend told me about a man flying falcons for demonstration at Twycross Zoo. That man was none other than Lorant De Bastyai and I made arrangements to meet him. I went to see Lorant at Twycross and we became very good friends. The day I met Lorant he was giving a couple of flying displays and on seeing my Lanner Falcon “Wendy” he asked if I would fly her in one of the displays



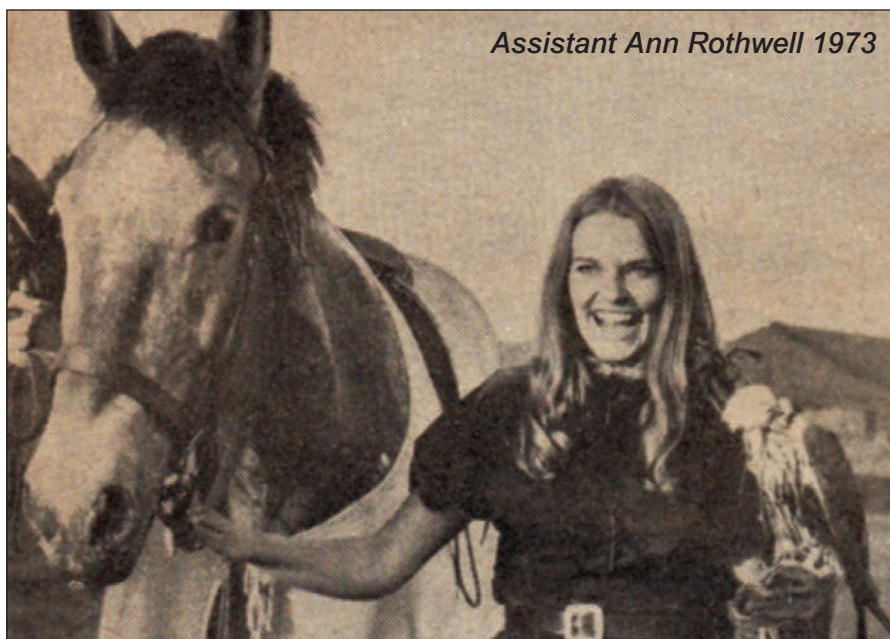
1969. Standing Brian Ford and John Haywood with Falcon, seated George Roach, Lorant De Bastyai and Mario De Silver.

that day. I did and continued to do so for the rest of that summer. At the time Lorant was flying his two famous Sakers “Sally” and “Kisci” as part of his display team”.

“Watching Lorant fly his Sakers made me want to acquire a female so I wrote to one of the well known hawk dealers of the day, a Mr. Chaudri Mohammed Din at 27 Railway Sidings, Lahore, Pakistan. I had been given his name and address by my good friend Doctor Supeamarmiam, head pathologist at Singapore general hospital. The doctor was one of the owners of the Buckatema race track where I had previously worked. Through his good services I finally managed to purchase a pair of Sa-

kers Falcons from Mohammed Din”.

“It was about this time that I started to teach and give displays with Jousting and Falconry and through this work got involved with a TV unit from the BBC. Bob, the man responsible for supplying the horses for the TV and jousting unit asked me if I would be interested in flying falcons for him. He was in the process of setting up a team for weekend shows and I agreed to join him using one of his horses for my display for the first season. Due to the success of the display work it was to be continued and accordingly I brought my own horses, two beautiful Arabs. One was a young colt and the other a four year old bay gelding. So it was that Saladin, riding his full blood-



Assistant Ann Rothwell 1973



Ann Rothwell 1973

ed Arab "Blizzard" and flying a team of falcons, came before the public. A year later I met an agent who was involved in outside shows at Country Fairs, Fetes etc and from that point on I had considerably more than twenty very enjoyable years doing display work throughout the season".

"One winter Lorant and I had made arrangements to meet two other falconers and we duly set off to Salisbury. Here we met with Jack Mavrogordato and Dr. Del Maestro Calvetti. Jack Mavro was famous for having written "A Hawk for the Bush" and was to go on to write "A Falcon for the Field" two all time classic works on falconry. At the time Jack was flying a female Black Sparrowhawk and Dr. Calvetti two Red Naped Shaheen Falcons. We spent some very happy times together with their hawks and my Pointers".

"In 1961 I brought a female Goshawk from a dealer at Matlock in Derbyshire due to the fact that I had access to plenty of extremely good land around the Nottingham area which had plenty of rabbits on it. From a falconer's point of view it was ideal country with an abundance of quarry for a Goshawk. One day I went to Mansfield Cattle Market to see what was for sale in the



George Roach as Saladin

way of horses and quite by chance I met someone else who, as it turned out, also had a Goshawk. Back in those days it was very rare to meet someone who was also interested in falconry. His name was Jack Lee and we became firm friends as falconers up until his death two years ago. In those days I was a member of the British Falconers Club but Jack would not join a club, he was always one of a kind. God bless you Jack".

In 1966 I met a man called Martin Lacey and he wanted to start a Zoo at Hucknall which eventually became the Sherwood Zoo. Martin was very good with big cats. He came to see me to enquire as to whether or not I would be interested in constructing all the cages and enclosures for the Zoo,

which I finally did. I also flew my falcons at weekends there and it was about this time that I started to get quite a bit more TV work. I was already doing work as "Saladin and the Arabian Falcons" which lasted over twenty five years in all. In fact in 1971 I became a full member of equity due to my regular TV appearances".

"I have been fortunate enough to meet a lot of falconers, both in this country and abroad, and have seen a lot of changes in the world of falconry. Not all of them for the best. Over the years I have taught and helped a number of people to become falconers and it gives me great pleasure to see them working their hawks and falcons".



George on one of his Arab horses

Cold Weather Precautions

Jemima Parry-Jones

Wild raptors choose where to sit



Autumn has arrived faster than I have seen in many a year, the leaves are already falling from some of our trees, and the colours promise to be spectacular in a few weeks. Last winter was severe, hard on us and harder on the birds. We ended up putting builders plastic on the front of most of the aviaries to give the birds a little more shelter, and we have very sheltered enclosures that are completely rooved in. I have to say I did pity birds that were in wire enclosures with little in the way of options for shelter.

I think what one has to understand is that in the wild a bird has the choice to a certain degree of where it sits during the day and roosts at night, or vice versa with the owls. Whereas in captivity they only have whatever option we, the owner, supplies. Therefore it is absolutely our responsibility to make sure that any animal in captivity is as comfortable as we can make it, and that does not mean the attitude that – oh well my bird/dog/horse/parrot survived the winter fine, because if you spent all night out on one of those freezing you would no doubt survive, you would probably have to move around a lot, but you would survive, however you sure as hell would not be particularly comfortable and I would be willing to bet that given the chance you would rather not do it again. So why would you put a bird or dog through it??

It was very interesting that the large and very thick and sheltered Leylandii hedge that is at the back of our small falcon block of enclosures was the roosting place for quite a number of wild Tawny Owls during the very cold period. They tucked themselves deep into the branches and were well out of the cold and wind – from choice, which they had!



Steppe Eagle in the snow

With birds such as Harris Hawks, Lanners, Spectacled Owls, all the species that are known to come from warmer climes than ours was last winter; enclosures should be as sheltered and warm as possible for them and NOW is the time to make sure that you have winterised your enclosures. But in fact all your birds should be given consideration and almost every species can get wing tip oedema both in aviaries and tethered, and even tethered indoors if the place is not suitable.

But most crucial are the tethered birds of almost any species. Being tethered they are much closer to the ground and to frost and cold. I dread to think how many captive birds in the UK came down with wing tip oedema this year after the freezing temperatures in the winter, but I suspect the numbers are extremely high and I also suspect we will never know how many have. The sad thing is that it is completely avoidable, it should not happen, we know it occurs, we know why, we know what to do to avoid it. So why is it happening. Is it lack of knowledge – that is no ex-

cuse, is it lack of caring, that is most definitely not an excuse, is it unexpected and an accident – well after the last two winters we should all be aware of it and what to do to avoid it. So consider the dangers as we are coming up fast on what is predicted to be another bad winter, which will be the third one in a row, and it may well be that these will become the norm, and do something about it NOW. Prepare for housing your birds well if the weather turns. Bear in mind that on some of those very cold

days the temperature never got anywhere near above freezing, so birds should not have been tethered outside at any time during those days...

So what can you do. Well we have an indoor Hawk Walk here and it did not suffice last year, we could not keep it warm enough, in the end we put as many birds as we could into aviaries free flighted and moved the rest onto carpet in the Education room with the boiler in there turned on and checked the birds regularly through-



Wing Tip Oedema

Result of Wing Tip Oedema



out the day and sometimes the night. So as that was not easy or that suitable, this year we are now in the throes of making the outdoor compartments warm and safe for use during the winter, we are doing this because each outside compartment is considerably smaller than the Indoor Hawk Walk and should be easier to keep at a reasonable temperature. We have built timber doors that are insulated with Kingspan, or something similar – you can get it from 'Seconds' who were very helpful. We have also put a window in the doors so that the birds have a view if they have to be closed in all day and we can see them, and they are not in the dark, we are using a double glazed unit for good insulation. We have lined the three walls and covered in 6ml Plywood and painted them to keep it light in there, we have also lined the roof as well, the only thing we have not insulated is the floor, and that may have to happen. We are then going to put electric tubular heaters below the shelf perches and put in a Max Min thermometer now to see what is happening.

So with all this work we are hoping that the tethered birds, which are much more vulnerable, will be safe and comfortable this winter and in winter's to come. Did we get wing tip

oedema in the last winter even with the care we took – yes we did in two Lanners, but thanks to the speed and hard work of my staff neither bird lost any part of their wings and one is back on duty flying here on a daily basis, the other will be.

So what can you do. Well if you only have one bird and are not keeping it free lofted in an enclosure then you are not wise in my opinion. Almost any bird can be free lofted and keeping them comfortable and fit is much easier. It is also easier to care for if

you have to go away or have an unexpected emergency. It is known that I prefer totally rooved enclosures, but if you don't have one, at least make sure that a large part of it is sheltered, and put a metal tubular heater below one of the sheltered perches, if you make it a shelf perch then there is no chance of the bird sitting on the heater. Make sure the wires are safe and I am assuming that you will have built something with a double door, so put the electrics through the safety area. I have no idea what enclosures most people have, but now is the time to think ahead and make sure that you or better still a decent electrician has made sure that any heating you have for the bird is safe, secure and will do the job. I prefer under shelf heaters to heat lamps as heat rises naturally and more fires have been started with overhead heat lamps than most other causes in barns. They are also very expensive to run. Check the heater is working daily and get it up and running now so the bird knows where the heat is and you know it is safe and works.

So what about putting them in a box



Jemima Parry-Jones



inside overnight, well I suspect it will depend on a number of things. Firstly there is no point in putting them in a box in a shed that is below freezing, it will exacerbate the problem. Secondly, it may well be illegal to put a bird in a box for an extended period of time every day. Thirdly what are you going to do with the bird if the weather is still below freezing during the day, or you are away at work and the temperature drops dramatically and your bird is still outside?! Or worse you have left it in a box all day – very definitely illegal!! I suspect that if the box was large enough with a barred door for light and air then that might work but a dark box like most I see for travel – no no no! So if you don't have any aviary that can have a heated area, think of a way to house your bird so that it is safe and warm and legal and can be left there during the day for extended periods in the sort of weather we had last winter. Perhaps make a part of the garage insulated, light, airy, above freezing at all times, and have your bird tethered on a good shelf perch with something to look at, daylight during the day and a heat source if needed.

There are many answers, but you need to get organised so that you are not caught out and so that your bird or birds are not at risk. Because it is YOUR RESPONSIBILITY to make sure that wing tip oedema and frost bite does not happen, and that your bird has a comfortable and safe winter ahead.

Editors Note; To show what can be done if the condition is caught quickly enough are the final three photographs showing the dramatic response, and improvement, to the correct treatment. The key really is to prevent the condition in the first place but should it unfortunately occur then catch it early and see a vet immediately.

Dutch Passage Hawks of 1895

The Tidal Train bringing passengers from flushing via Queensborough to London, on Friday week, brought also the annual consignment of Dutch hawks for English falconers. They were fifteen in number, in the charge of Mr. George Oxer, falconer to The Old Hawking Club; and under his assiduous care they arrived (hooded of course) on two caddies, in perfect order, without a feather broken. A little party of expectant hawkers were on the platform to meet them, and the birds on arrival were eagerly scanned and criticised. There were twelve falcons and three tiercels, all birds of the year or, as



Karl Mollen from Valkenswaard and George Oxer



Passage Falcon

they are generally called, red hawks, from the rufous tone which at that age pervades the dorsal plumage. Not a single haggard had been captured, nor did any goshawk, gersfalcon or merlin add variety to the picturesque group of "falconer's favourites".

Seven tiercels had been ordered by would be purchasers, but three were caught, two of which went to Mr. T. J. Mann, of Hyde Hall, Sawbridge-worth, the third to Mr. St. Quintin of Scampton Hall, Yorkshire, whose success in partridge hawking with tiercels was lately chronicled in these columns. Of the falcons, eight were reserved for the club; two went to Mr. Hinchcliffe of Leeds, one to Mr. Marchant in Kent and one to Mr. Blaine in Somersetshire.

It is not to be supposed that these are the only hawks which are just now in the hands of English falconers, most of whom have birds of this year as well as last in their mews. There is, fortunately, a supply to be obtained from English, Scottish, Welsh and Irish eyries, as well as

some from North Brabant; and there are some experts who, for game hawking, prefer English or Scottish eyasses to Dutch passage hawks. For rook hawking, however, as lately described in our columns, passage falcons are generally allowed to be superior; and it is for this sport that most of the newly arrived birds will be trained.

This delightful description of the passage hawks arriving from Valkenswaard appeared in the sporting press of 1865. There are a number of things that I find interesting about it apart from the obvious falconry history aspect of the piece. Firstly that the language used to describe the hawks and their future intended usage. It is obvious from much of the terminology used that the writer and editor supposed their audience would readily understand such terms as "passage", "hooded", "eyasses".



Passage Falcon on kill

Also it was interesting to note so many famous falconry names of the past being allocated hawks. It has to be assumed that Mr. Blaine of Somersetshire was none other than Gilbert Blaine who went on to become one of the all time doyens of British falconry.

I am indebted to Mr. Brian Bird of The George Edward Lodge Trust for the opportunity to peruse the hawking diary of a Mr. H. Willmont and the random clippings on falconry it contained. It was amongst these clippings that this particular gem was found.

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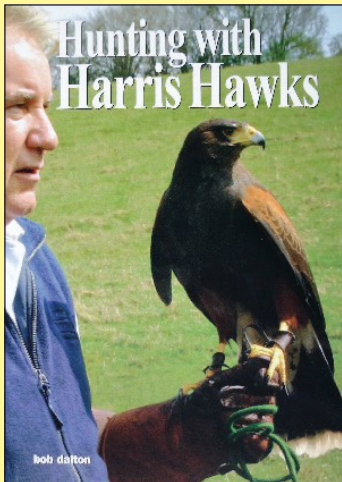
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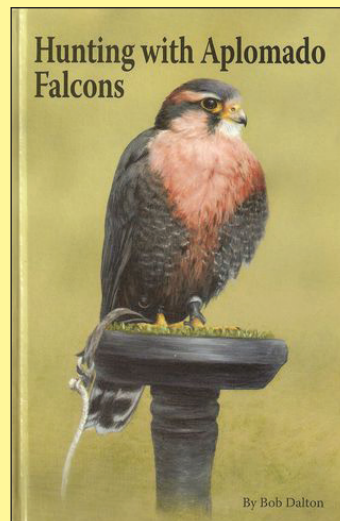
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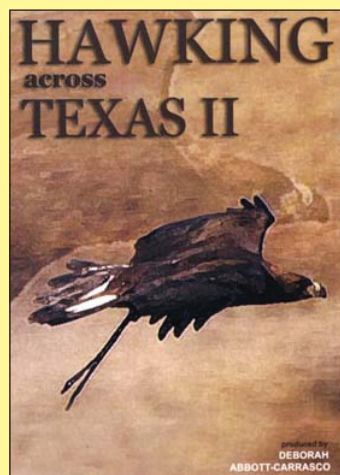
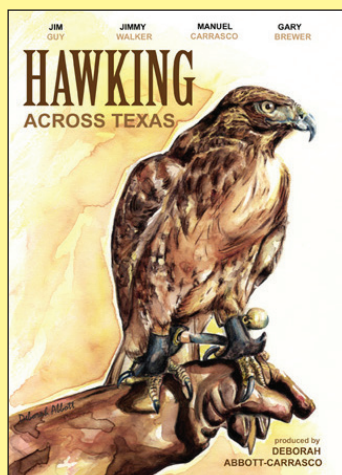
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