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WINGSPAN

BIRDS OF PREY TRUST

JOURNAL 2010 / Volume 14

Falconry in
New Zealand
New Zealand's
newest native
species
*Shot, hunted
and zapped*
Kaingaroa
Karearea
Falcon
Sightings
Trade Me Falcon
Whisper and Moon
Pedigrees
...plus more

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WINGSPAN
BIRDS OF PREY TRUST

*Established for the research,
captive management,
rehabilitation, and
public awareness of
New Zealand birds of prey.*

REGISTERED CHARITABLE TRUST
1992
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FOREWORD - Ruud Kleinpaste
The whole world is watching . . .

There's been a lot of talk about the Economy lately. We've just experienced a credit crunch, caused by credit starving. We are talking a lot about climate change (I prefer to call it 'Climate Disruption'), and we think we have enough evidence to point the finger at CO₂ emissions so that we now have to curtail our energy use. So what's our economic solution? Carbon Credits? Credit crunch... Carbon credits? Do we smell a rodent, or what?

This world, of biological origin, has been swirling around its axis now for some five billion years. It has heated and cooled, and heated and cooled thousands of times in its history, sometimes hotter, or more violently than today. Yet our planet has survived without a carbon credit in sight!

All this place needed in the past was a full complement of species; unimpacted biodiversity, in other words. This allowed a great power play of evolution, whereby species rose to the top, adapted to the conditions, and died out when things went the opposite way.

Take a deep breath for a moment.

Have you noticed how biodiversity is severely compromised these days? Species of fauna and flora (and fungi – the third, forgotten F!) are going down the gurgler with an increasing rapidity.

Some brave souls try to stop the trend by forming Trusts for falcons and kiwi and kākāpū and giant weta, polar bears, Siberian tigers as well as the Ross' Sea toothfish. Are they (are we) winning?

As long as we have serious people with serious brain diseases – yes, I am talking about economists here – and believe in that age-old (and totally out-of-date) concept of Gross Domestic Product, we will be in for a rough ride.

Economists are folk that lie awake at night worrying about whatever works in practice, also works in theory. Economists are people that believe in an economic system that was created when we were occupying an empty world with very few people and plenty of seemingly inexhaustible resources. That world is now full, and gets fuller every day.

Enter the hot topic of mining. Stealing from the future, selling it on today's market, and then selling it GDP. The constituent parts of Gross Domestic Product are private consumption, investment, government spending, and the resultant of 'Exports' minus 'Imports'. That same GDP has no measurement for quality of life, or happiness. It doesn't measure people's well-being, or environmental health either.

So how can we measure the warm glow we feel when we see a falcon wheeling through the air, or when we pick up a weta, or photograph a native orchid in the bush? More

importantly: how can we measure the value of each and every species in the greater scheme of things?



Some scientists introduced the concept of *ecological services*. All very well and good, but basically you are trapped into thinking like an economist, when you want to express those services in monetary value?

Perhaps there's nothing wrong with that. After all, two American scientists (Losey and Vaughan 2006) published a paper where they calculated the contribution of insects to the American economy within just four ecological services performed: pollination, pest control, dung removal and food for wildlife. Their total was some \$7 billion US dollars per year.



Have you noticed how biodiversity is severely compromised these days?

. . . we pollute the place, mine the soil, take forests away . . .



Kahu

Sounds impressive? Thirteen years ago, Robert Costanza calculated the total value of biodiversity at 33.3 trillion US dollars. That was back then, in 1997.

In today's money it's more like \$100 trillion – that's quite a few countries' GDP! Good old Paul Hawken came up with the brilliant line: "There comes a time that economists can no longer confuse the Quality of Life with the Quantity of Stuff..."

So, after taking the Mickey out of economists and economists, using terms like ecology and ecologists, it becomes quite clear that the two 'eco' words are actually closely related.



Barn Owl

Of course, both have their roots in the Greek word 'oikos' - meaning 'house'. Economy (oikonomia) would therefore mean: "the numerical management of the house", whereas ecology is "the study of the House".

When we study the rules of the "House" (our planet, our society, our habitat), we very quickly see that there are checks and balances. As soon as one species becomes too numerous, its predators and parasites increase too, then

take advantage of the numerous prey on offer. After all, isn't that what people always ask about on the gardening show on talk-back radio? Biological control is the *oikonomia* and ecological way to get rid of our pest species.

We, as *Homo sapiens*, have a Genus name and a species name too; we share 95% or more of our genes with the Bonobo, and if you think about it carefully, we are as biological as everything else on the Planet.

So – ever wondered why we suddenly get HIV, SARS, Bird flu, Ebola, Swine flu etc etc? I reckon some of these diseases (watch those viruses!!!) are merely practicing.

We pollute the place, mine the soil, take forests away, dilute our biodiversity by introducing exotic species, and generally do what we jolly well like and bugger the consequences.

We have become too numerous for our little planet, and we are not looking after it very well at all. Things are getting more and more out-of-kilter and we will literally have to pay more and more for the privilege of our lifestyles.



Scorpion



Lizard

. . . how are we going to pay . . . with carbon credits?

There's that word "pay" again!

How are we going to pay... with carbon credits?

You see, if we are to equip the planet with the best chance for survival, we need to restore as much biodiversity as we can. That way the Earth will keep on keeping on.

Of course it does not guarantee survival for *Homo sapiens*. We will have a heap of work to do before we stand a minute chance of surviving with the old planet. We need to stabilise the human population and eradicate poverty.

Remember that the World's resources are finite so we need to break our addiction to fossil fuels and overconsumption. I'd also like to think that "Nature's Goods and Services" (known in the economic trade as "Natural Capital") form the basis of healthy humans, future wealth, prosperity and quality of Life.

In other words, we need to re-learn the term 'oepoi' and put 'yo' back into economy. We need to look after the place, like we are meant to.

Grab a dictionary and look up the word "economy":
 Careful management of available resources
 A financial saving
 The cheapest class of rail or air travel
 Offering good value for money

Leiopelma ankehifery



Wāhanga!

Isn't it interesting that quite a few answers can be found in a simple dictionary? It all leads to prosperity: the ability to flourish as human beings within the ecological limits of a finite planet.

Now... what's the cost of a falcon, or a kahu, or a ruru?

I reckon it's priceless!



The yellow-eyed penguins are watching too!

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FALCONERS
E hui o nga kahu - A meeting of the Chiefs

by Neel Hyde

In the two days leading to the 2nd International Falconry Festival (9th-10th July 2009), I was honoured to attend as New Zealand delegate, the 40th Annual General Meeting of the International Association of Falconry (IAF). The meeting held at the Hotel 'De Vere Venues' in Wokingfield Park, Reading, Berkshire England.

The IAF is an international non-government organisation representing falconry worldwide, including 70 member organisations from 48 countries totalling some 30,000 members. The IAF remains the global voice for falconry that promotes and protects the culture and traditions of falconry and is an accredited advisory organisation to the UNESCO cultural heritage committee.

Supporting the protection of falconry in the context of sustainable use of natural resources, the IAF is also a member of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), and is continuously monitoring, influencing, co-creating national and international legislation, in order to provide the continuity of falconry as a living cultural heritage". The IAF participates in bird of prey conservation, ecological and veterinary projects worldwide. Delegates (officers and members) consist of experienced falconers, biologists, lawyers, vets, other scientists, and specialists.

Organisations the IAF collaborates with, or participates in, include the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation (CIC), the Federation of Associations for Hunting and Conservation of the EU (FACE), the Falconry Heritage Trust (FHT), the Archives of Falconry and Peregrine Fund (AFPF), and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES).

The first day of the meeting included reports from various working groups including the IAF/CIC/UNESCO Cultural Heritage submissions working group. This submission will have huge positive ramifications for falconry worldwide. There were also reports from delegates on the status of birds of prey, and falconry in their countries. It was within this section, I reported on the outcome of the 'Review of

the Level of Protection for Harris hawks', their current partial protected status, and the recommendation to move them from schedule 2 to schedule 3 of the Wildlife Act.

Essentially, this means in New Zealand that hawks will retain their partial protected status, allowing landowners to kill hawks on their land, if the birds are causing injury or damage to property (e.g. poultry, protected species), but also calling for 'conservation benefit'. No longer requiring a permit, this makes it easier for people to kill/call them. I reported within this environment, Wingspan believes there is a strong case (on ethical and sustainable grounds), to allow recreational falconry with hawks. A working group is being formed on the issue, to draft regulations and a permitting system for submission to the New Zealand Department of Conservation for consideration.



In the evening, a social and informal banquet was held, hosted by the British Falconers Club for members and their partners in the mansion house. This included fundraising events, raffles, a beautiful falconry art exhibition, and followed by a presentation of old Arab falconry by well-known British falconer, (historian and author) Roger Upton. The following day we heard discussions on the UNESCO nomination status, final presentations by the IAF President and Vice-president, before the election of officers and the meeting adjourned.

New Zealand's historical, first time attendance at the AGM was greatly appreciated by the IAF organizers, and there was much discussion and offers of assistance amongst the members present.



THE CASTLE - Debbie Stewart



Part of a further submission to UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific, Cultural Organisation) to recognise falconry as an 'intangible cultural heritage', submitted in the celebration of 4000 years worth of rich falconry history.

The second ever International Falconry Festival was held in July 2009 in the magnificent grounds of the Englefield Estate in Reading, England, the same place as the inaugural event held in 2007 and, without question, absolutely perfect as an venue.

A warm English summer with a backdrop including a 400 year old castle - a Tudor Elizabethan mansion made famous by artist John Constable in 1832, it has its own lake - with geese, swans and ducks, fallow deer roam the landscaped grounds and wild raptors fly overhead.

This was an event attended by 12,000 people from 52 countries. This was all about falconry, and enriched by the people, the history, and the culture.

Quoting the Australian movie of 1997 'The Castle' . . . "It was the vibe of the thing".

The first ever international festival was in 2007, and we didn't think we could attend another event of this standard. We were lucky enough the first time and we constantly counted our blessings to be able to be there again. But thanks to some key people, New Zealand was again represented on the World stage with Wingspan's Chairman Noel Hyde, staff Debbie Stewart and Andrew Thomas. It was the equivalent of the 'Falconers Olympics', and to be frank, basically we were like kids in a candy store.

The festival was described as a two day event, but we managed to stretch it out a whole week. Call us greedy, but we arrived days early, were some of the first to arrive, and without question some of the last to leave!

Our arrival was marked by the introduction of birds in training including an African charming goshawk and a martial eagle, and then a wild buzzard and a Red kite flew overhead. . . . all so we're damn good? We wanted to be everywhere at once, but there was work to do. Yurts (or gers) needed to be erected, firewood needed to be piled, the Japanese 'I louise' needed dressing, and we wanted to watch the raptors down and practised.

The Turkmenistan party we met at the previous festival, but on meeting again we were honoured by traditional songs sung by Ata (Annaman Movloman, an 84 year old falconer and teacher) and Turkmenistan's equivalent of Jimmy Hendrix playing a two stringed banjo 'sitar'. They showed us treasures like jewelled hoods

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Emirates Falconers Association
International Wildlife Consultants
UK Hawk Board
International Association of Falconers.

NEW ZEALAND

Tasman Bay Herbs
Don Green and Yoko de Housier
Ron and Joan Casselman
Hilary Prior
Shane McPherson and Mia Jessen
Chris and Margaret Thomas
Fiona Maguire
and Amy Stewart.



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. . . even Henry the Eighth roamed through the crowds . . .

for their brides that matched the jewelled hoods for their sakers. Traditions of thousands of years seemed to be contrasted by their laptops and the need of electricity for their hair straighteners.

Language might have had some problems but we lapped up animated conversations with the Mongolians and Russians, practised English with older Slovaks and younger Italians, and we quickly stepped in and worked as translators ourselves. At its worst, we had to share our marquee with an Australian - Paul Wilcock from Adelaide. This required translations Australian to English and vice versa. Paul was nothing but trouble - strange accent, kept boasting about his 'wedgies' and 24 species of raptors in Australia.

'Trans-Tasman rivalries aside, the formality of the occasion demanded there was so much more to prepare for. Even before the events opened officially for the public, there were some 500 schoolchildren due on the Friday, the Knights in shining armour needed to polish and buff (and be themselves down), and famous falconer mentors and peers casually walked past and were a constant distraction. Added to the programmatic was the New Zealand stall (and shop) to be set up, the official 40th Annual IAF meeting to attend, rehearsals for the Grand Parade of Nations (including the BBC live-to-air for the news), and to top it off it was the 500th anniversary of the Tudor period (even Henry the Eighth roamed through the crowds). The festival was to be honoured by guest appearances from Sheikh Taconoun of the Emirates Falconers Association, and Prince Andrew, Duke of York! No pressure huh? It was an understatement to suggest organisers had their hands full!

The Englefield grounds were filled with campsites and marquees from different cultures, and the international efforts for raptor conservation programmes. The Arab section was outstanding and included campsites with demonstration weaving, blue-eyed camels, and stunningly beautiful sakers. We were lucky to enjoy the hospitality of the Emirates Falconers Association and UAE Tourism Board - but maybe we shouldn't have had quite so much of the dates and coffee.

We were gobsmacked at products and information at the different stalls. We purchased items not available in New Zealand like cards and artwork, pewter styled hoods, leather hoods, gloves, sowels, a block perch, loop leashes, and dietary supplements for the birds back home. (The latter tripped us up at border control on our return; a month's wait to register and clear for aviary use, but added to the journey story).



Team New Zealand from left, Andrew Thomas, Noel Hyde and Debbie Stewart



Noel setting up our 'ger'



The Turkmenistan party setting up their 'ger'



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. . . the kiwi team was up to nine for the final parade . . .



The castle backdrop was spectacular. . .



We met the Uptons again! The mirror image of these twin brothers - one into Arab horses (indeed a NZ Patron by association) and his falconer brother Roger, President of the British Falconers Club. We have read all of Roger's books, and it was a real highlight to meet him again.



We caught up with Wingspan people - Life-members like Keith Hollingworth from Stoke-on-Trent, and the Darlingsons (Steve, Alison and Alex) from Stratford-upon-Avon (who remarkably organised a special visit for us to meet legendary falconer Stephen Frank of Scotland).



There was Jim Chick of the UK Hawkboard, and Nick Kester of IWC, Frank Bond (IAF President), people like Peruvian Aplomado falcon expert Oscar Beingsac, and Manny from the USA.

We met lots of new, but also old friends. The falconry culture was, and remains, mutually respectful and passionate. It was great to see again Paul Decroft along with the UK Heritage Trust, Ken Carnie and the team from the Archives of World Falconry, Alan Gates (eagle falconer), Jevgeni Shergalin, Estonia, and Janusz Sielicki of Poland. The Dutch like Tita Stapert, and Ian de Vries (an expert on Mollen hoods), the Italians (experts on 'grapa'), and other raptorphiles like Lubo Engler from Slovakia, Adrian Lombard of South Africa, Sung-Wook Chin Choi & Hyun-Kyung Lee of Korea, Japanese Grandmaster falconer of the Suwa School of Falconry Zenjiro Tagomori, the dynamic Christian de Coner of Belgium, and [of Harry Potter fame] there was Terry Large from Flintshire, UK.

Expat New Zealanders would recognise the high flying kiwi flag and visit the marquee from 'down-under'. Heads peering around the marquee with 'Kia Ora' were a giveaway, as much as wearing a NZ Music Week or 'Huffer' label T-shirt. We managed to drag extra Kiwis along for the Grand Parade of Nations, and proudly the kiwi team was up to nine members by the final parade.

Festival visitors clapped and cheered us, and New Zealand, indeed New Zealand falcons, had a high profile and gained much attention. Karacra



The kiwi team with our Kiwi flag in the final parade



A gallery of shots depicting the wide diversity of nationalities and cultures represented by the fifty-two countries attending the event.

. . . it was timeless with language, culture and history . . .

was represented at the Grand Parade, the Wingspan marquee, but also at the main sponsor exhibit from IWC (International Wildlife Consultants) endorsing New Zealand conservation efforts. Everyone seemed to know 'Spitty', more correctly 'Spittire' - a New Zealand falcon hybrid of noisiness.

The Celebration Medieval Banquet held during the festival was a real highlight. Imagine a recipe of 4000 years of history, overlaid with a huge marquee, near to a lake, back dropped with a castle, and then 1000 invited guests from all around the world. It was mixed thoroughly!

Food included roasted quail, venison, and chicken, vegetables and fruit, all presented on silver platters. No knives and forks, and plates were large half round loaves of bread. Backdrops included hawks and falcons on screen perches, interspersed with the activities of costumed jesters and jugglers, musicians and dancers. Guests mounted falcons and eagles on the glove at the tables, and young sparrow hawk chicks were attended to in makeshift nests. No-one seemed to worry about the rain (not the hail) of the English summer. In no particular order, we ate, we danced, we laughed, and we shared. The marquee simply hummed - it was timeless with language, culture, and history.

The events represented the collective international efforts like never before in history. Some 52 countries were represented, and with a whole lot of raptors going on. The world became a smaller place where political, geographical, and social differences were put to one side.

And at festival closure reluctantly preparing to leave, in amongst the display dismantling, tidying and cleaning, with last minute exchanges of addresses and e-mails, we were lucky to steal some quiet moments.

It epitomised why we were all there in the first place. Sharing our passion and respect of raptors, we were invited to hold large cages and falcons on the glove. And, it unashamedly brought us to tears.

This event, without question, was "straight to the pool room".



Noel with 6 lbs worth of 'hald eagle'



Royalty in attendance . . . King Henry the Eighth . . .



plus Prince Andrew with Jim Chick and Nick Fox



Turkmenistan Law Song



Festival photographs by Noel Hyde, Debbie Stewart and Andrew Thomas

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THE NEWEST NATIVE SPECIES IN NZ - Noel Hyde

To the delight of bird of prey enthusiasts, Barn Owls have been discovered breeding in Kaitiaki, Northland. This is the first record of wild Barn Owls establishing and breeding in New Zealand, and the ninth record of Barn Owls visiting our shores. Barn Owls are now New Zealand's newest native species.

The *Wingspan Journal 2009* (Volume 13) described the discovery of a young injured Barn Owl in Kaitiaki, Northland. This un-releasable female and can now be seen by visitors to the *Wingspan Birds of Prey Centre*, and remains the only captive Barn Owl in New Zealand. Now four years old, it's *Wingspan's* hope that we can get a mate for Tahī, to restart a new captive population.

Apply named Tahī (the only one), this bird is proudly sponsored by Ian and Libby Mackenzie of Central City Vets,Rotorua, (who spent seven long months trying to save her broken left wing), and sponsor contributors from Northland, *Wingspan* Lifemembers Gary and Annette Hill of Waiuku.

Tahī was found in the company of two adult owls, and is thought to be their progeny from an earlier nesting attempt that had gone unnoticed, and therefore could be the first wild bred Barn Owl in New Zealand.

In August 2008 the nest tree of the wild pair was found, and then climbed, to determine their breeding status. Sadly, two dead Barn Owl chicks were found and removed from deep within the tall (largely hollow) old Puriri tree. Along with regurgitated pellets and prey remains, these specimens and samples are now held within the *Wingspan* centre research collections.

In July 2009, during evening observations at the nest tree by Mark and Jo Thompson, Shane McPherson and Mia Jesen, the presence of three Barn Owl fledglings was confirmed. Estimated to be about eight weeks old and being fed by the parents, they were photographed by Shane, as they peered out from high in the tree. Two of the three Barn Owl chicks have now established themselves about two kilometres away from their parents.

Having a strong interest in their conservation and probably being New Zealand's, newest, rarest, and most endangered native species, *Wingspan* has come across two schools of thought.

Some people think they should just be left alone. Others, like us, believe this school of thought always confines itself to a limited scope. The farmland owls are on is not left alone, it is managed habitat, having replaced and destroyed the whole ecosystem that was there before. It seems a bit late now to not offer help when the owls come along. Some see them as a curious phenomenon, not caring whether they live or die, merely as an example of self-introduction.

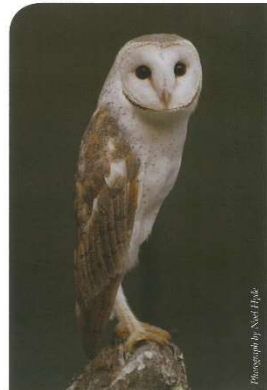
Being one of the most studied owls in the world, their biology is very well understood. Their clutch size is directly related to food supply, and they can be prolific breeders. Supplementary feeding, as a successful conservation strategy widely used overseas to increase their numbers when low, (especially in the winter months) has not been met with any support.

Wingspan believes these wonderful birds have a real claim to New Zealand and will support any efforts to assist them. One nest box has been installed, with plans to install others. Some pest control has also been undertaken and the ever-present cats, both domestic and feral, possums, mustelids and even magpies have been known to kill them

in Australia. Unfortunately, all of these are found in the immediate vicinity.

Moreporks share the area with the Barn Owls, but to date no interactions have been observed between them. The Barn Owls prefer the more open habitat, and are more mammal orientated in their prey than Moreporks, and both species co-exist side by side in Australia.

However, this pair of Barn Owls in Kaitiaki, have now been hanging on since 2008, and locals report them doing well. So it appears that sometimes against all odds, these presumed, windblown vagrants can establish themselves, and we are witness to the colonisation of a stunningly beautiful, and benign, spectacular addition to New Zealand's raptor avifauna.



It is *Wingspan's* hope to get a mate for Tahī.

Photograph by Shane McPherson

A NEW BIRD FOR A NEW HABITAT - Shane McPherson

We like to think of NZ as the land of birds and reptiles. In all of prehistory mammals played a small role (bats) in the ecosystems. However, the first immigrant mammal to arrive – kōre – was alone responsible for possibly the greatest extinction event on the landmass for millions of years – the moa that consumed all the forest insectivores: several species of flightless wren, native frogs, skink, and geckos, as well as many of the insects themselves. Followed soon after by the second most destructive mammalian mouth, humans consumed 11 species of moa, flightless greys, ducks, rails and so on. The arrival of the human as apex predator was also, by eliminating their prey, responsible for the demise of two endemic apex predators: the giant eagle and Forbes harrier.

Several hundred years later another wave of mammals, more expert than the previous lot opened their mouths wide to life in the forests: deer, goats, possums, and rabbits proved expert defoliators; mice, black and brown rats, muskelds, cats, and pigs eating everything from seeds and insects to kakapo and tuatara. Humans brought with them iron teeth to consume whole trees – I now live in Northland and I'm in awe at the astounding speed at which much of the great kauri forests were devoured, turned into ships, furniture, and money.

Much of the north island lowlands were torched, milked, and drained. Fires burned up the dry hillsides of the eastern south island. Vast areas of new habitat appeared; grassland; pastures and shelterbelts, scrubby high country, and drained swamps and then the sheep and cattle multiplied. Fireweed laughing owl.

Out of great ecological disruptions comes opportunity. Such a large area of new open country, a habitat less than 1,000 years old in NZ, is diversity poor. While the mammals run riot, only a few endemics (like paradise shelduck, pied oystercatcher) were able to benefit. But, (in addition to European introductions) a long list of birds of Australian origin naturalised within the spin of human habitation including fantail, grey warbler, black swan, whitefaced heron, pukeko, morepork, and harrier. In recent decades silvereye, welcome swallow, and spurs-winged plover have colonised, their success obvious.

It would now seem we have an opportunity to see the inclusion of Barn Owls to our mammalised farmland fauna. And from what I've heard, this could well be one of those rare kinds - an ecosystem enhancing species.

To read about Barn Owls is not a taxing task, they are one of the most studied birds in the world. This is the



Three Barn Owl fledglings, Kaitiaki. Photograph by Shane McPherson.

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... their ability to find new land is remarkable ...

crucial difference between the wholesale releases of the acclimatization era, and today's argument for studying the owls and assisting their establishment.

Barn Owls are by no means a rare or unusual occurrence – distribution is virtually worldwide, and their ability to find new land is remarkable. Sub-fossil remains have been found of a (now extinct) Easter Island population.

As a small mammal specialist they use particularly acute hearing, as well as vision to locate small resting animals even in absolute darkness. They strike with a silent approach – long legs and a wide footspan are ideally suited for snaring prey in grass.

Silent flight and acute hearing are weapons to take to a twitchy-nosed mammal, and extensive diet studies in populations from all around the world show that the Barn Owl is only successful where small mammals, voles, mice, shrews and so forth, occur. Where any one of these species occurs in large numbers, Barn Owls become virtually entirely focused on that prey.

Their breeding behavior is so tuned to rodent abundance that their populations can fluctuate as rapidly as that of rodents. In one case 22 eggs were laid and the chicks fledged in single succession – the adult female laid an egg every second day! Barn Owls are prolific breeders, and can have three clutches a year if there is a consistently high food source.

Following the collapse of the rodents, the juveniles have a very poor survival rate, and often disperse great distances looking for food. It is in these times that barn owls have a more diverse diet, and must search hard for less obvious prey. Breeding success is very low in these years.

They are particularly fond of forest edge, parkland, and open areas, and in Australia do not occur in damp forests. This is encouraging that they are likely to avoid New Zealand's most sensitive forest habitats. Meanwhile vast areas of little conservation attention benefit greatly.

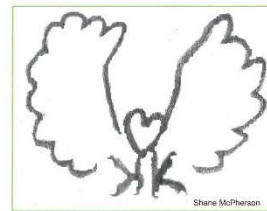
Barn Owls can be encouraged to nest in agricultural areas. In America and Europe, businesses sell fabricated nesting boxes and hunting perches to landowners to place around their cereal crops and storehouses.

Their calls are quite variable, variously described as rasping hiss, shrill, hoarse squeal or rattling shriek.

If you think you've heard, or possibly seen a Barn Owl, *Wingspan* would gratefully receive sightings. Please email any information to: wingspan@xtra.co.nz.

Reference: *First Record of Barn owls Breeding in the Wild in New Zealand* by N. Hyde et al, *Notornis* 2009 Vol 56 169-173 for further details on their discovery, behaviour, breeding and diet.

Acknowledgement: Todd Mc Support Services



Talons forward... an owl strikes!

Shane McPherson



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THREATS FOR NEW ZEALAND FALCONS

During the first major study on New Zealand Falcons back in the late 1970's, Dr Nick Fox estimated from reports of killed falcons, that at least 100 falcons were shot in the South Island each year, and a similar figure for the North Island. He reported it conceivable that this figure could be as high as 200-300 in each island, with reports of some people killing 6-20 falcons annually. Even in these enlightened times, reports of falcon persecution continue, and *Wingspan* believes these figures still hold true today.

The following report compiled by Colin Wynn, New Zealand Manager for International Wildlife Consultants in Marlborough, provides a sad reflection of mixed intolerance.

Some people put a higher value on a chicken or a domestic pigeon, that they do on the threatened New Zealand falcon, and so they shoot them. The usual excuse is, "I thought it was a harrier."

In Motueka I had contact with a guy who shoots any visiting falcons with a high-powered air rifle, because he has doves.

We had a volunteer from Nelson who helped us in our first season and he took up pigeon racing but was told by a club member there to get an air gun and to "shoot any sparrowshaws that turned up".

Falcons are shot in the Maruia Valley because they have been seen attacking native pigeons. And a farmer in the same valley shot a nesting pair of falcons two years ago because they started to prey on his wife's doves (possibly they had been shot at the nest when this happened).

A taxidermist here in Marlborough had a client attempt to have two falcons mounted.

As a wildlife owner, also in Marlborough shot at least one falcon attacking his pigeons (and was subsequently prosecuted by DOC). A vineyard owner shot a falcon that had killed his wife's pigeon. He admitted it to me, gave me the evidence in front of a witness, then admitted to a DOC officer, and was NOT prosecuted. (DOC, for some reason, decided not to take this further).



There have been falcons hanging about Beaufon (we have a volunteer there), and at least one of these has been shot. Farmers and landowners in the Mairā/Murchison area regularly shoot falcons.

A farmer in Pahi Pahi, Kaikoura, shot two falcons attacking his wife's doves.

A falcon was shot at Speeds Road because it was a 'sparrowshawk'.

A farmer in our study area has killed (and kills) falcons because he is trying to establish pheasants. Another farmer kills falcons because they attack his dogs on the hill. Another, because they prey on domestic fowls. A hunter shot one because it dove-bombed him.

A poultry farm in Nelson has had trouble with falcons in a free-range establishment. I'm uncertain what they have done about this, but I fear the worst.

We think we have had at least one of our project (Falcons For Grapes) falcons deliberately killed.

I regularly get info about people killing falcons. I am pretty sure that in winter especially when juveniles are short of food, many end up killed at a farm, chicken pen or lifestyle block with fancy pigeons (which lots of them seem to have).

I am also convinced that most people who keep pigeons or doves here in the South Island end up shooting/killing falcons. It's a worry with lifestyle blocks spreading like wildfire here.

Our project makes falcons sometimes hunt the small birds that hang around chicken pens and I wonder how many males have been shot when they have only been there to try to catch a sparrow.

This is a sad list really but I hope that more people get to know and understand our falcons a little bit better through our project here.

I think education is the key.

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NEW ZEALAND FALCONS ZAPPED - Dr Nick Fox

Although wild birds have been electrocuted on installations in New Zealand for many years, the extent of the problem has not yet been fully investigated. Low voltage power installations are not required to undergo 'Environmental Risk Assessment', or comply with any specific wildlife safety regulations as far as we can ascertain.

There is a very extensive literature from other countries on research into bird electrocution and on designs to reduce the hazard. Power transmission lines have been estimated to kill an average of 8 birds/year/km (Fleider 1980, in Ivanov and Sedomova 1993). And, if the transmission lines run through forest the estimate rises as high as 400 per km (Horschelmann *et al.* 1988, in Ivanov and Sedomova 1993). If transmission lines run along a sea coast, estimates reach 1200 a year/km. Power lines cause far more deaths than wind turbines (Winkelmann 1995).

New Zealand is behind in this, both in practical terms and in its legal structure dealing with it. As far as we can ascertain, power line companies do not require Resource Consent, nor are they required to make an Environmental Impact Assessment, nor to use designs that are wildlife friendly. The policy of Marlborough Lines (Brian Tapp pers comm.) is that, provided that there is no power outage, ML is not concerned about bird deaths caused by their installations. As a result ML is inviting private land-owners to pay for ML poles to be retro-fitted with adequate insulation. This should not be the responsibility of private citizens. Ownership and responsibility for power installations rests in entirety with the power line companies erecting them.

As well as causing the death of the bird, it can happen that the bird is one thrown clear of the pole by the jolt of the shock but remains in place, shorting the connections. It may then catch fire and the burning carcass fall to the ground, leading to a fire risk.

Species involved in New Zealand

The current designs of poles and in particular, transformers, are lethal to perching birds from the size of magpies upwards. The bird is large enough to short electricity from wire to cross-arm, or between wires or connections. Species affected in New Zealand include the New Zealand Falcon *Falco novaezealandiae*, Harrier *Circus apponinensis*, Kea *Nestor notabilis*, Native Pigeon *Hemiphysalis novaezealandiae*, Australasian Magpie *Cymochorea nigra*, and others. Smaller passerines, such as Starlings *Sturnus vulgaris*, tend to be too small to cause a short, but despite this, large numbers are also killed. For the same reason, male New Zealand Falcons, being smaller than females, are less at risk.

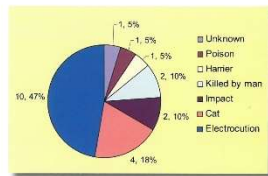
The evidence

Normally, when a bird is electrocuted, it falls to the ground without causing a power cut. It is quickly removed by scavengers, thus these deaths are seldom recorded. In our five year study of falcons in Marlborough, we fitted the falcons with back pack radio transmitters. This meant that when they were electrocuted, we found them.

Of 21 falcons in our study known to have died from a variety of causes 10 (47%) were electrocuted. A further nine were killed by man-made hazards such as road accidents, shooting, and cats. Only one (5%) died 'natural' deaths. It is not surprising therefore that there is an inverse correlation between the distribution of falcons and the distribution of

... the species is unable to keep up its population ...

man in New Zealand. Faced with this level of man-made mortality the species is unable to keep up its population in man-managed environments. However, it is possible to reduce the electrocution risk to almost zero by the use of safe designs.



Causes of death in falcons known to be dead 2005-2010

Of the ten falcons electrocuted, seven were juvenile females, one was an adult female, one a juvenile male, and one was an adult male. An additional falcon photographed by Graeme Kates at Arahauri Pass was adult female. Eight of the eleven poles involved transformers.

Comment has been made in the Press that Falcons do not 'belong' on the Wairau Plain. Actually wild falcons live both on, and around, the Wairau Plain and have paired up with the released falcons. Also, in other parts of New Zealand, falcons breed right down to sea level, including islands. Also, in other parts of New Zealand, falcons are using power poles, but they are seldom found because nobody is looking for them.

Of a pair of falcons flown in vineyards near Hastings by Rob Wheelson, the female was electrocuted. During five years at Waiheke, Ronoma, two trained falcons have been electrocuted but recovered, and a further Falcon, being rehabilitated by Dean Thomas at Wanaka, was electrocuted but recovered later (Noel Hyde pers comm.).



... power installations a major factor in bird mortality ...

Providing safe installations

The problem of electrocution and collisions caused by power installations is very well recognised and documented internationally. In some areas, power installations have been a major factor in bird mortality. It has been the subject of international treaties including CMS of Wild Animals, Resolution 7.4, the African-Eurasian Water Bird Agreement and the CMS on African-Eurasian Migratory Raptors (in prep). It has been very extensively researched (Ferrer and Janss 1999, Lehman *et al.* 2007) and certainly in North America and in Europe technical standards have been agreed and recommended and necessary amendments to national and international legislation have been made.

There is no need to reinvent the wheel in New Zealand. Experience in other countries has shown that voluntary agreements with power companies do not work. What is needed is to examine technical standards already developed elsewhere and fine-tune them for New Zealand requirements. Those New Zealand Standards need to be built into legislation and become part of the planning regulations and specifications for new structures.

Existing structures can be retro-fitted with insulators, while new and replacement structures can be erected with safety as an integral part of the design.

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HUNTED

The New Zealand falcon evolved in this country without any natural predators or competitors. This worked well for a few million years, and behaviour like nesting on the ground didn't cause too many problems.

But then, man arrived and introduced the 'naatives', predators like rats, cats, dogs, ferrets, weasels, stoats, possums, and pigs.

These introduced predators are a major problem for our New Zealand fauna. Being an island habitat means our native birds are ecologically and biologically at risk exhibiting behavioural traits such as predatory naivety, and ground nesting vulnerability.

Karearea are no exception. Often ground nesting, the effects of introduced predators are alarming. Falcon eggs, their chicks, and sometimes the adults too, are extremely vulnerable to predation.

New Zealand falcons today live in a very hostile environment, also trying to survive things like toxic substances, cats, deliberate shooting, and electrocution.

Cats are a major impact. According to Biosecurity NZ there are more than a million cats kept as pets in New Zealand, nearly 30% of households own at least one cat, and this does not include the unknown hundreds of thousands of stray or feral cats.

Cats have played a leading role in the threat and extinction of many birds in New Zealand, including species like the Kakapo, Poppo, and the most extreme example, - the flightless Stephen Island Wren.

Sadly, the recent monitoring of New Zealand falcons in Marlborough, identified almost 20% of their radio tracked falcons were killed by cats.

These images were recorded during camera monitoring of a falcon nest in Waitohi, Marlborough.

Filmed by Sara Cross (as part of a PhD study on nesting falcons), the footage makes disturbing viewing.

Short video clips were shown on TVNZ's 'Country Calendar' in 2009 (refer TVNZ On Demand), or, can be currently viewed on the website of the Department of Conservation (search: nz-falcon-karearea/threats/videos-of-cat-attack).

"51% of households have at least one resident cat. No other country comes close."
-North and South Magazine, March 2008 NZ's Obsession with Cats.



KAINGAROA KAREAREA - Andrew Thomas

Stretching the Central North Island plateau, Kaingaroa remains the largest man-made forest in the Southern Hemisphere. But in the last twenty years it has also become famous for another reason; recognised for the Karoroa falcons that breed there.

New Zealand falcons breeding within Kaingaroa Forest were first reported by Wingspan in the early 1990's, and these wild populations continue to draw interest and attention. Monitoring of the falcons within the estate has continued, and in a combined effort by Wingspan, Kaingaroa Timberlands Ltd, Massey University, and the Raptor Association of New Zealand (RANZ), further surveys and annual monitoring have been established.

The aim of the annual field trip is to monitor the wild falcon population within the exotic pine plantation – it remains a suitable area for falcon surveys. The habitat consists primarily of a monoculture of radiata pine (*Pinus radiata*) and it attracts an abundance of prey for New Zealand falcon, much higher when compared to native forest habitat.

The majority of prey taken includes introduced species such as chaffinches, greenfinches, yellowhammer, blackbirds, song thrush, alongside rabbits, quail and pheasant. High prey abundance and availability, along with suitable nesting habitat, allow falcon densities in this forest, to exceed any other known falcon in New Zealand.



Above: The team of volunteers on site at Kaingaroa Forest. Left: Janice Crowe takes beak measurements while Lydia Lowe holds a young falcon chick.

The exotic forest is dissected by an extensive network of roads for access; however Kaingaroa roads are not made for the faint hearted. Forest roads are built for huge logging trucks and four-wheeled drive vehicles. They are unforgiving to any unsuspecting city vehicles. Even so, our spirits were high as we started our annual survey of the forest compartments in early December 2009.

Throughout the trip we had more than our fair share of rain - it poured down on us the first morning giving everyone the drowned rat appearance, but we still managed to cover an extensive area of the forest. The results for all this searching were disappointing. We managed to locate only five active falcon nests, and just one single chick old enough for banding (later named 'Finn'). Two other old nests were found, and indicated the presence of recently fledged juvenile birds.

Disappointingly, all nests at hatch had only one surviving chick, and one chick appeared malnourished, but fledglings were seen only singularly compared with a normal average of about three chicks per clutch. Overall, we considered the 2009/10 season was tough breeding for the wild falcon pairs.

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FALCON SIGHTINGS

Falcon sightings are reported to Wingspan throughout the year, with the most common reports during the spring and summer when the falcons are nesting. Falcon sightings in your area can be registered online on the website or by sending the information directly to the Wingspan Office. The required details include date, location (with a map reference or GPS reading), number of birds seen, and a brief description of the activity observed.

Wingspan acknowledges the mapping provided by Connors Hawley, and AMG Web Designers for the website update.

Sightings of falcons are reported by recreational hunters and trappers, landowners, or from forest estate managers and contractors such as Kaingaroa Timberlands and P F Olsen Ltd. Some falcons even in the backyard! But often we receive correspondence a little more out of the ordinary, or about other birds of prey seen in New Zealand.



September 2009

Lately my property has had regular visits by falcons. Most of the time (at least four times a year) I find only some feathers from what is left of my doves. But yesterday morning at 6:30 am, I had two falcons, probably a pair, chasing my doves. Luckily they all could hide in their nesting home. Only one dove was chased by both falcons but could escape because I did find him outside the housing in the evening. It was a very spectacular site, but I love my doves also so I tried to scare the falcons away by clapping my hands and even blowing on a trumpet. The falcons were not very impressed because they were just sitting in eyeshot in the trees. Even the Harrier who lives nearby over the hill came flying over, probably to see if there were any kites.

Activity of birds? Chasing my doves (still have 14)
-Tias Hejlskov, Wainuiomata

September 2009

On Tuesday evening of this week there was a terrible cacophony of noise from the birds at about 5pm. I rushed outside and Tias, Blackbirds etc were going all over the place. Just as I reached the garden the Falcon swooped over our single story roof. I don't know who had the biggest fright. It was so low. I have been watching it this afternoon at a more comfortable distance over Battle Hill.

-Alison Benson, Porirua

...Was just sitting on the fence post keeping sightseers amused ...
-Brian Milderhall

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... we found the nest below a large log ...

In early November 2009 Wingspan received a call from Kaingaroa Timberlands reporting a breeding falcon pair located in the middle of forestry operations. Guided into the forest compartment by contractor Rex King to locate the falcon nest, Andrew Thomas detailed the following report...

"Once we had reached the forest compartment, no sooner had we left the vehicle when the adult female flew up from nearby the nest area, vocalising with the signature 'lekking' alarm call as she flew to the mature pines alongside the access road.

I realised we were already well within this wild falcon's territory, and we needed to move quickly before the female left her eggs for too long.

Without delay, equipment was hauled from the truck ready for recording information, photographing the nest, and banding of any discovered chicks.

Rex and I then entered the clearcut compartment in the direction that the female falcon was seen coming from.

By the time we reached halfway, an aerial bombardment from the falcons ensued. We split in different directions to determine who might be closer to the nest - the person getting the most aggressive aerial attacks was closest!

Not long afterwards we found the nest below a large log, and I could see a single (old) egg, plenty of chick down feathers, and food remains scattered around the scrape area. Further searching around the nest log resulted in locating one falcon chick, hiding deep amongst some pine branches.

The chick was carefully extracted from its bunker, checked, and banded. Then returned to its hiding place, and released."

Wingspan acknowledges the following for their support and assistance, including:

Central North Island Jui Collective, Kaingaroa Timberlands Ltd, P F Olsen Ltd, Raptor Association of New Zealand, Massey University (Ecology, Palmerston North), Department of Conservation (Manuparu/Rangitiki) ... and all those great people who helped us search for falcons in the forest.



KAINGAROA
TIMBERLANDS



Simon, male NZ falcon privately sponsored by Ian and Masako Niemeyer, from Finns.



Finns, male NZ falcon gift sponsored by Finn Bonmark, of Wellington.

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... falcons were revered as the God of the Skies ...

December 2009

In early December 2009 I was invited to photograph a nesting pair of eastern falcons. As a lover of falcons and a passionate photographer, having remarkably easy access to a falcon nest was an opportunity of a lifetime. Consequently I visited them almost daily from when the chicks were 11 days old until they fledged.

As a photographer I was spellbound by the daily spectacle and drama that unfolded before me. I was treated to the ultimate in 'warbird' aerobatics and aerial mastery as I made my way to the scrape. Although there was sparse vegetation, it hardly amounted to 'cover' given it consisted of 2-3 foot high moutgouri and the occasional 4 foot high single-stemmed rowan sapling. My only real protection was a bike helmet and my camera. Remarkably I wasn't struck for the first three visits to the scrape, and overall was only struck 8 times, all of which were by the female. As is typical in this region, the scrape was located on the ground in a natural rock bivvy.

Whereas the male is a master shape shifter, the female was the more lethal when in attack mode. She would contour the just above vegetation height, always aiming for the eyes. The male on the other hand would execute stunningly technical attacks. He'd go into moderately-angled stoops often positioning himself with the sun behind him, thereby blinding me.

Further information included him rocking from side to side in these dives. The ultimate however would be when he'd come from altitude going into a free-fall dive, hyper-streamlining his body to reduce drag, with wings tucked in and plummeting vertically straight down onto me. At the last moment he would pull into a barrel roll and peel off. Needless to say, photographing such a missile was next to impossible. Photographically his most spectacular attack flying involved loss of fancy flared wings and hovering overhead at the bottom of his low-angle stoop.

The three chicks (all female) were fascinating to observe and visibly changed each day. They were well fed on a diet of rabbits, small birds, dragon flies, and chukar partridge. As they became mobile they would jump around the scrape, and on hot days be found out in the grass away from the outcrop. They soon developed into very fast runners and when disturbed, they would sometimes take off and hide. After running away from me, they would often come back and check me out - they were very curious young things. I am still completely humbled as to how one of them ran down into a very steep gully beside the scrape and yet she was back up at the scrape the next morning. One of the chicks in particular was happy to have me sitting right beside her right until fledging.

The chicks fledged at 35-38 days old but didn't decamp from the scrape until the last chick fledged. During a hot spell they relocated down to the Teremohi homestead where their shepherds knew no bounds. They terrorised the chooks, stalked the cat and made dawn wake-up calls on the homestead roof.

To cap it all off when I'd arrive they'd hide in the trees and not utter a peep, only to fly circuits around the car as I drove off!

In ancient times falcons were revered as the God of the Skies, and from my observations, this is deservedly so. Through my photography of these majestic birds, I wish to raise awareness of the eastern falcon which inhabits the high country of Canterbury and Otago.

It is my aim to establish a trust for the purpose of furthering research into the eastern falcon and promoting their conservation.

Check out my website (www.mas-kentoniemeyer.net.nz) to see many more falcon images and stories from my sojourns to the scrape.

-Danna Falcover



Our 'mate' was back yesterday. She is the best hunter we have had here in the 4-5 years that we have had raptor visitors.

She has depleted my "Falcon food" stock from 10 to 4 in under a month.

-Bill Wycherley, Whakatane

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REFLECTIONS . . .

Man's reverence for the Peregrine

"The Peregrine Falcon is, perhaps the most highly specialized and superlatively well developed flying organism on our planet today, combining in a marvelous degree the highest powers of speed and aerial adroitness with massive, warlike strength. A powerful, wild, majestic, independent bird, living on the choicest of clean, carnal food, plucked fresh from the air or surface of the waters, rearing its young in the nooks of dangerous mountain cliffs, claiming all the atmosphere as its domain and fearing neither beast that walks nor bird that flies, it is the very embodiment of noble rapacity and lonely freedom. It has its legitimate and important place in the great scheme of things, and by its extinction, if that should ever come, the whole world would be impoverished and dulled."

-G.H. Thayer, 1904.

A courting Peregrine at an eyrie, (Massachusetts)

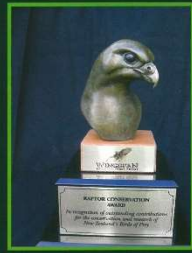
"The culmination of these flight displays depends much on the weather, but eventually the patient watcher will see an exhibition of flying that is literally breathtaking. I have seen it at many nest sites, but never to better advantage than one beautiful spring morning at Black Rock when a rising southerly gale was whipping along the flanks of Mt. Everett. We were hidden in the woods below the south end of the cliff and the peregrines were quite unconscious of our presence at the time; again and again they circled well to leeward and coming along the cliff against the wind, diving, plunging, saw-toothing, rolling over and over, darting hither and you like an autumn leaf, until finally he would swoop up into the full current of the air and be borne off on the gale to do it all over again. As length he tired of this, and soaring in narrow circles without any movement of his wings other than a constant small adjustment to their planes, he rose to a position 500 or 600 feet above the mountain and north of the cliff. Nosing over suddenly, he flicked his wings rapidly 15 or 20 times and fell like a thunderbolt.

Wings half closed now, he shot down past the north end of the cliff, described three successive vertical loop-the-loops across its face, turning completely upside down at the top of each loop, and reared out over our heads with the wind rushing through his wings like ripping canvas. Against the background of the cliff his terrific speed was much more apparent than it would have been in the open sky. The sheer extent of watching such a performance was tremendous; we felt a strong impulse to stand and cheer."

Joseph A. Tager, 1935.

"Man has emerged from the shadows of antiquity with a peregrine on his wrist. Its dispassionate brown eyes, more than those of any other bird, have been witness to man's struggle for civilization. From the squalid tents on the steppes of Asia, thousands of years ago, to the marbled halls of European kings in the seventeenth century".

-Roger Tory Peterson, 1948.



The Wingspan Raptor Award was first established in 2006 to recognise individuals, groups, and/or organisations for outstanding efforts and contributions towards the birds of prey of New Zealand.

Nomination categories are aligned with the Wingspan objectives and include research, captive management, public awareness (education) and rehabilitation of birds of prey in New Zealand. The prize includes an original solid bronze trophy (made and designed by New Zealand artist Mike Nunn), a framed certificate, and special grant of \$2000.

In a surprise announcement in Rotorua, Blenheim - the winner of the 2009 Award was awarded to Colin Wynn of Marlborough.

WINGSPAN BIRDS OF PREY CENTRE

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Website www.wingspan.co.nz
Email wingspan@xtra.co.nz

The Award trophy remains the property of Wingspan Birds of Prey Trust, and is to be returned to the Wingspan office by 30th July of each year.
As Judges, the decision of the Board of Trustees is final.

WINGSPAN
BIRDS OF PREY TRUST
ANNUAL RAPTOR AWARD
A WYNN-WIN SITUATION!

Colin Wynn, foundation member of the Raptor Association of New Zealand (from the 1976 inaugural meeting in the Waitohi with Dr Nick Fox), has shown a lifelong interest in birds of prey - more than 30 years experience working with, and monitoring New Zealand falcons.

Employed by the Environmental Division of the New Zealand Forest Service as a hunter working on TB control, and later as an illustrating artist, Colin was appointed official artist to the Royal New Zealand Navy in 1993. And, without question, he has spent a lot of time outdoors!

In 2005 Colin completed three months intensive training for the Falcons for Grapes Project in the UK, including data basing, mapping and GPS software, radio tracking, raptor banding protocols, incubation and rearing. He also completed fieldwork on Saker Falcons in Mongolia, including the International Wildlife Consultants artificial nest project there.

After a meeting with Dr Nick Fox in 2004, Colin and Nick founded 'Falcons for Grapes', and Colin was appointed the New Zealand Manager of the project.

Colin's work has attracted much media interest, including at the end of 2009, national television appearances on 'Country Calendar' and the Jeremy Wells 'Birdlands' series on TVNZ.

Colin advocates the important role of falcons within New Zealand's biodiversity to both adults and schoolchildren, but in addition, from February to November each year, Colin single-handedly monitors the fortunes of radio tracked falcons within the vineyards of Marlborough. He has provided a vital link and interface between the public, conservation community and commercial interests within the region.

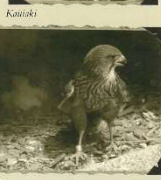
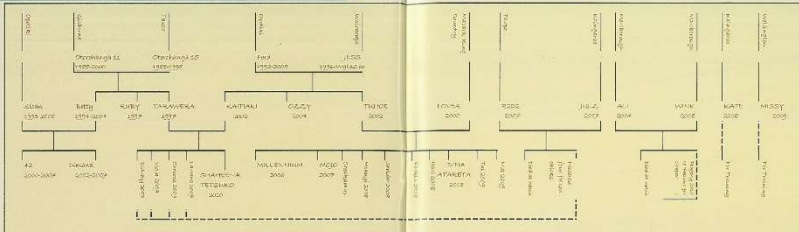
His work, his passion, and experience with Katerera - New Zealand falcon, has been nationally significant, recognised and... appreciated.



Wingspan Sponsors from Lake Okatipo Wine (Marlborough), International Wildlife Consultants (UK), and Teatua Bay Herbs (Monkton) provided a surprise luncheon and award for Colin. Photos from left Paul and Sue Binnie, Bobbin and Nick Fox, Colin Wynn, and Don Green.



IN THE MEWS



Ali

Talow

Fovea

Kaitaki

Kate

Millie

Talow and Fovea

Talow and Fovea

Talow and Fovea

Shabana

Kaitaki

Ruby

Ali ♂
From Nelson, Ali has permanent injuries after being deliberately shot. Important for the Wingspan breeding programme, he has fostered eggs and chicks, and is now paired with Wink. **Sponsor Absolute: Noel and Alison Lamberton Villa Productions (Rotorua).**

Atareta (Dina) ♀
The 'entertainer'. Five the past year trained by Andrew Thottas and featured in the flying displays at Wingspan, visitors 'wowed' by her fast flight, lure work and manoeuvres on the wing. **Gold: Andrew Christie (Auckland); Silver: Iai Mitchell (Rotorua). Contributing sponsor: Scrippist International (Rotorua).**

Fovea ♀
A successful breeding female, and remains respected by Staff as one of the most territorial and aggressive falcons during the breeding season! **Gold: Rob & Julie Kerridge (England); Contributing: Mark McKenna (Rotorua), Celtic River Trust (Ulrenni), Bill and Debbie Hart Country Oaks Bed & Breakfast (Rotorua).**

Juliz ♀
Originally from Kangaroo (2008), found after breaking her wing hitting a deer fence. At just one year of age, she laid her first eggs, and successfully fostered another three young chicks. **Gold: Chris, Eshkajargal, & Rian Morgan (Waikato); Contributing: Vicky Ellis (Wellington), Francis & Abby Moagher (Wellford), Andrea Parkin (Tapano).**

Kaitaki ♀
Kaitaki is a real treasure. In 2009 she surprised everyone by laying three clutches, a total of 10 consecutive eggs! **Gold: Edward & Heidi Goodwin (Tauranga); Contributing: Brett & Connor Holak (Auckland), David & Liz Jones-Parry (Cambridge), Sheraz Tidwell (Masterton).**

Kate ♀
Rescued as an egg from Kangaroo forest, with shared attention between people and falcons. Artificially incubated and then reared by Staff in eight days old, then fostered by Ali until fledged. **Sponsor Absolute: Rupert Steinbeis & Catherine Dierard (Hamilton).**

Millie (Millennium Falcon) ♀
Captive-bred, Millie featured on the falcon growth posters (flip corners of this Journal) and, currently trained by Ineke Smers. Considered the best 'swimmer' (seven lengths of the water troughs). **Sponsor Absolute: Millennium Hotel (Rotorua).**

Mojo ♂
Captive bred at Wingspan (2007), but rescued at one day of age after being almost killed by the parent birds. **Gold: Noel Davies (Auckland).**

Ozzy ♀
The 'falcon ambassador'. Trained by Debbie Stewart, he features during the daily displays and remains popular with visitors with his fast flight, hunting antics, and 'feather extensions'. **Gold: Ross and Julie Betley, Manawatu Jewellers (Palmerston North); Silver: Derek & Helen Binnie (Ashburton); Contributing: Poa Families and Majacraft (Tauranga), Jess Shepper (Australia).**

RED2 ♂
Originally from 'Tupo, arriving at Wingspan (2008) from Massey Vets (Palmerston North) with a broken wing. Subsequently paired with Juliz, in 2009 they produced one chick of their own and fostered another three chicks. **Gold: Chris, Eshkajargal, & Rian Morgan (Waikato); Contributing: Craig Irving (Palmerston North)**

Ra (Missy) ♀
From Paekakariki, this young falcon arrived at Wingspan in 2009 with a wing injury broken/missing feathers, and a split beak. **Gold: Brian Jennings (Tapano); Contributing: Ian Fovsler (Raetihi), Tony & Lydia Howe (Wales).**

Ruby ♀
The 'Diva'. Trained by Noel Hyde, Ruby is the oldest female at the Centre and during her 'career' has featured on special edition coins, books, magazines, and national television. **Gold: Dylan Rajasingham & Louise Mayclair and Harte Family (Sydney, Australia); Contributing: Ilse-Marie Erl (Auckland), Peter & Sue Hyde (Napier), Steve & Lindy Robinson (Waikato Island), Wendy Stephens (Auckland).**

TARAWERA ♂
Tarawera is the oldest male held by Wingspan (brother of Ruby), and paired with Kaitaki in 2005 for the falcon breeding programme. **Gold: Mi Tarawera Ltd (Rotorua); Contributing: Myles & Annette Andrews (Hamilton), Blanche & Graham Lushock (Te Puke).**

Talose ♂
Brother to Ozzy and Kaitaki, hatched December 2002. Talow is paired with Fovea and part of the breeding programme since 2005. **Gold: Malcolm and Janet Macrae (Wellington); Contributing: Garry & Erin Burt (Te Puke), Michael Danesh-Meyer (Auckland).**

Wink ♂
Found in Waitohi, blinded by a stick in his eye and remains partially sighted. Paired with Ali, their progeny earmarked for release into Marlborough in the future. **Gold: Brian and Les Turner (Auckland); Silver: Brian Mansel (North Shore City); Contributing: Lindsay & Alison Moore (Auckland), Paul O'Shea (Auckland).**

LOGGING ON FOR FALCONS



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... Karearea - they are even rarer than kiwi ...

This is a New Zealand falcon - Karearea. Found nowhere else in the world - completely endemic to this country, and there aren't many left. Last estimates numbered just 4000 pairs remaining in the wild - they are even rarer than kiwi!

Wingspan Birds of Prey Centre in Rotorua is a charitable trust with a particular focus for the falcons of New Zealand, check it out! www.wingspan.co.nz. Wingspan, for this Trade Me auction is offering a unique opportunity to share the journey of one special female falcon, with the sole sponsorship of this threatened New Zealand bird.

Background: In 2008 two New Zealand falcons at the Centre (both unable to be released) were paired together, with any chicks they produced, intended to be released into the wild. As first time parents, they produced eggs in late 2009, but just two were fertile. Unfortunately the female killed the first chick, so the remaining egg was rescued by Wingspan staff and removed for artificial incubation.

After taking three days to chip around its shell, this falcon chick hatched successfully on the 11th Jan 2010 weighing just 22 grams. Her first week of life critical, with three-hourly feeds and round the clock monitoring.

The growth rate of young falcons is staggering. By seven days old she weighed 65 grams, and by 14 days old she weighed 240 grams. At 33 days she will be full adult weight of 500 grams and flying - striding the skies!

The sponsorship of this falcon is a tax-deductible donation, and includes naming the falcon, membership to Wingspan, colour photograph and annual update.

It also includes complimentary admission to the Wingspan Centre to meet your falcon, including special behind-the-scenes hosted tour with Wingspan falconers, additional

media promotion and corporate branding opportunities. Most of all, this auction is about being part of a unique community effort helping our New Zealand raptors ... and one special female falcon.

Questions and Answers

Q: Seller Comment: Today the falcon chick is 21 days old. She is growing fast - and has just been weighed in at 445 grams. She has started to walk a few heavy steps, and yesterday she gingerly took her first 'launch' (albeit her landing somewhat ungracefully for a falcon!). Her new feathers are coming through the very thick grey down, and her wing feathers about half-way grown and starting to unfurl. **9:29 pm, Mon 1 Feb**

Q: Seller Comment: Seller added one photo **9:31 pm, Mon 1 Feb**. TradeMe CEO **Jon MacDonald** discussed this auction on Radio LIVE with **Marcus Lush** this morning. You can listen to the audio here: <http://trnfm.co> **3:25 pm, Tue 2 Feb**

Q: Seller Comment: Seller added 2 photos **12:23 pm, Thu 4 Feb**

Q: Seller Comment: Today the falcon chick is 26 days old, she weighs in at 510 grams, is able to stand for longer periods, and can now hold her own food and feed herself! Her wing and tail feathers are unfurling and she is practicing her wing 'flapping'. Hard to believe in a week's time she'll be flying! **11:08 am, Sat 6 Feb**

Q: Seller Comment: Inge thanks for the support and the promotion by **Rund Kleinpaste** on NewsTalk ZB on his radio show this morning! This is a very unique auction, but important as well for increasing the public awareness of these dynamic New Zealand birds, just check out the page views - many seeing Karearea as a first time exposure! **2:43 pm, Sun 7 Feb**

Bidding for this Trade Me auction was action-packed right down to the closing minutes. And it was noted (and appreciated) by the number of Wingspan members, [who remain shameless!] who supported the bidding promotion throughout the ten day auction.

Ultimately, the auction bidding was won by Wingspan Life Members, and we congratulate **Dilan Rajasingham and Louise Mayclair** a couple of kiwis, passionate about Karearea, and bidding from Australia.

Naming of this bird was not without pressure; after all, this is a New Zealand falcon, a threatened species, and a rare special falcon at the Wingspan Centre. They proudly named her ...

'SHAHEENA TETSUKO'

Shaheena is an Arabic derivative of a female falcon, and Tetsuko is a Japanese word meaning 'Lady of Steel' directly from the 'Shogun', book and 1980s television series written by James Clavell.

As this 2010 Wingspan Journal goes to print she lives up to her name, and is indeed striding the skies.

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WHISPER AND MOON - Breeding and Rearing



'Whisper' is a female morepork owl, 'Ruru' (with the long latin name of *Ninox novaezelandiae*). Originally she was introduced to Wingspan as a rescued egg from Kawango Forest in 2007. She was artificially incubated, and hatched on 23rd November 2007.

Successfully reared through to maturity, Whisper's first nesting attempt was in November 2008 with two eggs laid (refer Wingspan Journal Volume 13). As a single bird within her aviary, any eggs laid by Whisper would be infertile and would not hatch. So, in the Spring of 2009, when Whisper laid another two eggs (10th and 12th October), they were replaced by one fertile egg from the morepork pair at the Wingspan Centre ('Wairuna and Nestor').

Closely monitored by staff, Whisper became a first time foster mother. She continued the incubation and the egg was regularly weighed, measured and pulse rate checked.

Despite suspicious cracks in the egg shell (most likely caused by bruising on the sharp gravel substrate), after a further ten days of staff anticipation, Whisper hatched her egg on 29th October 2009.

The chick's first appearance was as a white ball of fluff, the size of a ping pong ball. Weighing just 11 grams on the first day, the chick was framed beneath Whisper's feathers like theatre drapes, and would be able to sit comfortably on a teaspoon. We called Whisper's chick 'Moon'.



Whisper, a special ruru (acclimatised and very comfortable with staff activity) allowed a unique opportunity for the incubation, hatching, and rearing to be closely photographed and filmed. Daily diaries were maintained, notes penned and sound recordings taken. Whisper and Moon revealed to us the intimate moments of maternal care and chick development; their behaviours and, their language.

We discovered some little known aspects of their breeding biology. We recorded notes that reported Whisper to become very food selective; they were very tactile and vocal to one another and, on a lighter note, incredibly loud at housekeeping!

Comparatively to other raptors, we have found owls to be messy at household 'chores'. We are familiar with falcons (wild and captive) that routinely remove food scraps and prey remains, and their 'mutes' (or faecal matter) are directed outside of the nest. But moreporks we found to be different. Whisper's nest (consistent with the captive pair held, and nests we have seen in the wild) was decidedly disorganised and smelly; prey remains, bones, feathers, and the owls' mutes would remain within the nest depression. On many occasions, scraps and food remains removed from the nest by staff, would be reclaimed and then replaced by a disgruntled Whisper. We surmised food accumulation might better attract invertebrates like beetles, weta, and huhu to the nest.

Special chick food was prepared by staff for Whisper to feed Moon. But staff also collected additional food, and at night we collected more natural food items like moths, crickets



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and hulu beetles. Rund Kleinpaste sent through weta 'hotels' - basically bamboo tubes that were hung within the aviary.

Staff noted early after hatching, that Whisper would position herself over the chick for feeding, providing physical support. The second day we witnessed Whisper secreting fluid from her nares (nostrils), which would drip over the food for Moon. Nasal secretions are well reported within falcon rearing, however not (to our knowledge) reported previously for ruru. We suspected it to be the 'colostrum' of the bird world - most likely enzyme or maybe calcium enriched. We collected samples of the secretions with droppers gathered onto a Petri dish. These samples, subsequently frozen, await analysis and interpretation by biochemists.

The language between the two would vary during rearing and Moon's development. Whisper would stimulate or 'announce' feeding with soft growling, and once satiated both Whisper and Moon would 'purr' to one another. Whisper, when off the nest, would constantly check Moon; she would be very attentive and make vibrating 'shrills' and subdued 'coos' to communicate.

Moon's physical development was intimately recorded; his eyes opened by Day 6, and he was able to stand at 11 days of age. By Day 12, we witnessed a whole new meaning to the term 'moonwalking'.

Moon hatched weighing just 11 grams, and by the time he reached the first month milestone, he was almost adult weight of 164 grams. He would walk some two metres from the nest, and just five days later he could fly.

Moon is named in special honour of the late **Geoff Moon O.B.E.**, naturalist, photographer, author, and Patron of Wingspan 1992 - 2009.

The nocturnal Ruru he regarded as a favourite of the birds he studied, photographed, and respected.

Whisper Gold gift sponsored for **Andrew and Johnny Mohi, Auckland**, Silver sponsored by the **Kessels Family of Hamilton**, Contributing sponsor **Murray Horler of Lower Hut.**

Moon Absolute sponsors: **Edward and Wendy Goodwin Tannango**



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ONE HARRIER AND A FAMILY OF OWLS

AVIARY & DISPLAY GARDENS

FRAN

In March 2010, an adult harrier hawk was found in Morrinsville. About five years of age, she arrived at Wingspan, starving, low weight, and unable to fly. Nursed back to health, her malleable nature made her perfect for training, and with a purpose for education and advocacy, she can now be seen in the daily flying displays at Wingspan.

Fran is named in memory of well-known raptor biologist, falconer and author, Dr Francis Hamnerstrom (USA). Noel Hyde had the pleasure of meeting and staying with Fran and husband Fred, on several trips to their home in Plainfield, Wisconsin.

Fran was the only woman to gain a Graduate Degree under famous American Ecologist Aldo Leopold, who founded the science of wildlife management. Fran is especially remembered for her love of Nature, her published studies, work with Peregrine falcons, Golden eagles, Prairie chickens, and twenty five years studying Northern harrier hawks.

Fran and biologist husband Fred, worked as a team for fifty years. Recognised with numerous awards for conservation - their lives are a source of constant inspiration. Fran sadly passed away in 1998 aged 91 years.

Fran, Australasian harrier, Circus approximans, ♀ five years old. Absolute Sponsor: Mary Staal (Rotorua)



NESTOR ♂

Nestor was rescued as a young chick in 2002. Originally, nursed by Dennis Fordham in Akarua, and Justice Chris Gay in Waimiomata, then two years later transferred to Wingspan. Successfully paired with Wairuru - they are the only breeding pair of moreporks held at the Centre.

Absolute Sponsor: Mary Staal (Rotorua)



A "darkroom" of Owls. Morepork adults between their ground parents; from left is Nestor (that's Dad!), Smart (the oldest), Smart, and (always the alert Mami) Huiwon (Screowl).
Hatched 7-12-09, fledged 8-1-10, released 1-4-10.

WAIRURU ♀

In 2005 Wairuru arrived with broken wings, and unable to be released. Paired with Nestor, she produced her first chick in 2007, two chicks in 2008, and this last season laid three fertile eggs that hatched; better known as 'Smart', and 'Screwl', (and the biological mother of 'Moon').

Gold Sponsors:
Laurie & Bev Richardson (Auckland);
contributing sponsors:
Maxine Powick (Dargaville),
and Kirsty Christian (Oparau).

Absolute sponsor: Patrick Ward (Te Awamutu)

Smart
Hatched 8-12-09, fledged 13-1-10, released 1-4-10.

Absolute sponsors: Coren Betty Boeye (Netherlands)

HACKING IT

Wingspan attempts to return injured raptors back to where they were originally found. Unfortunately, many falcons are permanently injured and these birds would not survive if they were released back into the wild. As a proactive approach, these unreleaseable falcons are paired together, and when successful during the breeding season, any chicks reared are released. Wingspan is proud of breeding successes to date, and since 1996 has bred and released falcons.

During the 2009-2010 breeding season, there were seven falcon chicks successfully reared at the Centre. During November and December 2009, in a collective effort with Laurie and Jan Howard at Kakepuku Reserve Te Awamutu, six young falcons were released into the wild. Coincidentally, all of them were females.



Tai
Banded: (left) Light Green over Metal [S-80396]; (right) No Band
Parents: Taboo ♂ and Fovea ♀
Sponsored by Phillip and Julia Robertson, Blue Ridge Red and Breakfast, Te Anau.



Nui
Banded: (left) Blue over Metal [S-80397]; (right) No Band
Parents: Taboo ♂ and Fovea ♀
Sponsored by Steve Wilks, Taupo.

Viola

Banded: (left) No Band; (right) Orange over Metal [K-12164]
Parents: Tarawera ♂ and Kaiako ♀
Sponsored by Murray and Vi Forster, Rotorua.

Crystal

Banded: (left) Black over Metal [K-12163]; (right) No Band
Parents: Tarawera ♂ and Kaiako ♀
Gift sponsored by Colleen Christie, Auckland

Laurens

Banded: (left) No Band; (right) Red over Metal [K-12161]
Parents: R2D2 ♂ and Julie ♀
Sponsored by Mary Staal, Rotorua.

Stollery

Banded: (left) No Band; (right) Yellow over Metal [K-12162]
Parents: Tarawera ♂ and Kaiako ♀
Sponsored by Keith & Dawn Stollery, Tauranga.



Viola

Crystal

Laurens

Stollery

BEHIND THE SCENES - Wingspan Volunteers

Volunteers are a vital and integral part of the Wingspan programme. The Centre would simply not survive, or be the success it is now, without the immense efforts, hours, and dedication of individuals, members and community groups.

Current opportunities of voluntary work include:

- Visitor Support - Shop, ticket sales, refreshments, cleaning, enquiries, guiding, hosting,
- Display Maintenance - Garden watering, weeding, sweeping, cleaning
- Museum Care - display windows, cleaning, dusting, display signage, framing, cataloguing
- Grounds Maintenance - lawn mowing, pruning, weeding, painting
- Pest Control - onsite trap maintenance, resets
- Feed regimes - Food preparation, storage, ordering, pick-ups, supply of prey items
- Administration - Journal and newsletter mail outs, members updates, volunteer co-ordination
- Research - nest monitoring (captive/wild), data entries, database constructions, volunteer co-ordinators, writing and publishing

If you would like to help out, Wingspan welcomes any enquiries or volunteer initiatives - as Wingspan moves into the future, new opportunities will evolve to meet the conservation needs of the programme.

For further information, or to apply to become a Wingspan Volunteer, please contact the Wingspan office.

A big thank you to volunteer regulars like members Mary Staal of Rotorua (from house and retail in the weekends), and Anita Hereford of Rotorua (falcon sightings data base entries) during the year. Thank you also to those who helped with weeding plans, and weeding and gardening - people like Raewyn Tetenburg of Rotorua, Dustin Barber from Palmerston North, and James Crowe from Palmerston North.

During the past few months, the Wingspan Centre also hosted work experience volunteers from faraway places, including Mathieu Aragnout from France, and Raven Aqua Dakota from USA (via Australia), and closer places like Meikes Timmerman from Wellington Zoo.

A special thank you is also extended to temporary staff member Fiona Maguire from Department of Conservation, Tairāngi. Fiona held the Wingspan 'fort' while staff attended the International Falconers Festival, July 2009.



Iessa

Mathieu

Raven

Fiona Maguire from DOC, Tairāngi

Brochure drops of the Wingspan rack cards (and annual journals) are a huge part of marketing for Wingspan. Most organisations and tourist attractions pay for display availability within their sites, but Wingspan is different - as a charitable organisation, the Trust simply does not have the budget.

The Centre is dependent on members like Stephen White of Rotorua to spread the word. He distributes Wingspan cards throughout the year to local visitor centres and accommodation places, along with members like Brita Jacobson of Hamilton, sponsors Millennium Hotel Rotorua, local supporters like Rotorua Tourism, and i-site information centres in Rotorua, Te Awamutu, Tairāngi, Tauranga.

The Wingspan programme has a limited budget for promotion, marketing, and advertising. Without question, 'Word-of-Mouth' remains hugely important to the survival of Wingspan. If you enjoy your membership, support the programme, and have enjoyed your visit(s) - your challenge is to tell two more people!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Raptors, or birds of prey, only eat meat. And they need feathers, bone, and fur as well. Essentially, they need a wide range of natural food items to be able to survive and to keep them in top condition.

At Wingspan, there are special needs for feeding the raptors in care, whether part of the breeding programme, young chicks, sick raptors, or birds in training. More often than not, they cannot hunt for themselves. At Wingspan more than half of the prey items fed to the raptors are donated to the conservation program - it's about 'recycling'.

Birds (like feral pigeons, sparrows, ducks etc) are a constant problem around places like cereal grain stores, restaurants, waterfronts, school yards, horticultural blocks, and parks. These introduced birds are often inner city scavengers and countryside free-loaders. Rabbits, hares, rats and mice equally have impact.

They can all cause problems with 'people' health and hygiene, and have economical impacts of crop damage and disease. These birds and mammals can be shot, trapped, netted or poisoned. But, they can also be recycled. Wingspan acknowledges donations of these sustainable prey items for the raptors in care.

In particular, Wingspan gives a big thanks to Cliff Banker of 'Ecolab' (Auckland) for the supply of feral pigeons, and the efforts from members like Ron and Rebecca Watts to deliver their door-to-door (plus collecting in the early hours, then packing, then freezing, then into chilly bins before driving for a number of hours Auckland to Rotorua return).

Another favourite amongst the raptors are the pheasants, ducks, and quail. Wingspan is grateful for the regular contributions by Scott and Bev Thomson (Rotorua), John Read (Rotorua), Ian Phillips (Environment BOP), and right next door, Fish and Game (Eastern Region).

There are the 'rabbit and hare' donators - Rotorua people like Dave Hatchings, Mike Martin, Rachel Long, Shane (from Off Road NZ), Tony Todd, and Hilary Prior from Lake Rotoua, and out of town people like the Thomas family of Morrinsville.

Domestic chooks (in particular surplus roosters) donated by Desraan Smith, also 'down the road' by Mike Martin, and surplus mice from people like Dianne Snowden, Mark Woods, Sue Herbert, and Jerry Ernera.

Goods and equipment, products and services

Other donations are varied in application and always well received!

Wingspan acknowledges other contributions like the ONSZ raptor distribution maps for display organised by Chris Robertson, as well as the digital cameras from Alex Whisman and Carol Ryan (Auckland), and Al McGillivray (Auckland). Incubation and chick rearing equipment from Auckland Zoo, a digital sound recorder from Jolinty Kendrick (Waipu Cove), a new office printer, toners and papers from Richard Scaton and Fleat Masey's (Palmerston North), plus the 'flash' new library display cabinets and new reception desk from Mary Staal, (Rotorua).

Visitor comfort hasn't escaped attention either, and Wingspan gives a round of applause to the 'EcoLine' Trust (Waikanae) for the wooden outdoor seating for visitors, also John and Linda Farquharson (Rotorua) who donated two new large sun umbrellas for the summer, and Lockwood Homes Ltd, (Rotorua) who donated firewood for those frosty mornings and cold winter afternoons.

Thank you.



New eye-catching roadside banners flag the Wingspan entrance. The 'smokey' signs include an image of 'Ruby' in flight (by Diane Riggington) - possible by the enthusiastic support of Gary and Annita Hall (Waikato) and Orono Chills 'n' Pipers (Napier).

ABOUT PEOPLE - ABOUT RAPTORS The 2010 Raptor Training Course - Andrew Thomas

The course was hosted at the Wingspan Centre in Roloma and proved to be an excellent venue and an intensive immersion into the world of raptors.

The purpose of the course was to further develop the skills of those attending, and for some, will serve as a stepping stone towards training and rehabilitating hawks.

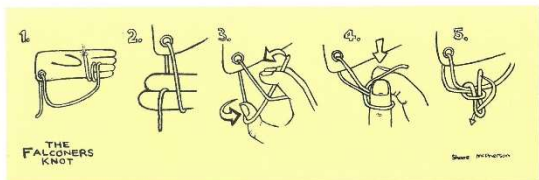
The course was a good blend of theory and practical components from a wide range of different topics. Discussions included raptor biology, anatomy, rehabilitation, basic training, nutrition, and first aid.

Practical components included 'lapping' wing and tail feathers of hawks, tying a falconer's knot and making falconry equipment with leather. The falconer's knot for many on the course proved a considerable challenge.

However, by the completion of the course all those attending had mastered the technique.

The training course was a resounding success, and the RANZ Committee is planning on running another in 2012.

A huge thank you to those who tirelessly wrote and edited the material for the course guidelines, but also to Susie Curry, James Crowe, Noel Hyde, DeLise Stewart, Sara Kross, and Rodney Owen for organising, course content, running, and for presentations during the workshops.



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A BIG YEAR FOR MFCT - Sara Cross

Most of the people that we met when the Marlborough Falcon Conservation Trust was launched at the Marlborough Wine and Food Festival in February 2009 had never seen a falcon before.

We fielded a number of questions from the festival-goers along the lines of: 'what kind of eagle is that?' and 'did you bring that bird over from the UK?' While these may seem like silly questions to the raptor enthusiasts amongst us, they were genuine, and a reminder of just how much work would need to be done to encourage 'raptor awareness' among the general population.

The main goals of the Marlborough Falcon Conservation Trust are to increase awareness of the falcons through education and scientific research, to work within the community to help progress the conservation of falcons, and to raise money to assist in funding fieldwork and rehabilitation activities such as the Falcon Conservation Project run by Dr. Nick Fox.

In our first year, we have begun to make progress working towards those goals. Last winter, working with the Department of Conservation, we visited over 500 year 5 and 6 students with a specially designed 'Falcon Education Programme' that included a visit from Colin Wynn and Wilson, a trained education falcon.

This year, we have visited over 700 students with a similar programme. We are also working with the local lines company and a number of interested parties to begin mitigation of the electrocution problem for falcons within the valleys of Marlborough.

And finally, we have been fortunate to have been granted the support of Montana Wines, who will be donating \$1 of every bottle of their new 'Living Land Series' to the work of the trust, which adds to a number of small sponsorships from local wineries and vineyards.

All in all, it has been a busy year. But we are beginning to see the fruits of our labours. At this year's wine festival, we had large crowds around our tent for most of the day with people out to see the falcons they had heard so much about in the past year.

Colin has reported that because of the school visits he has had more falcon sightings reported than ever before.



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RAPTOR ART FOR WINGSPAN - Susan Brauchli

Creating wildlife in bronze has become a passion, almost an obsession for me. My last visit to Wingspan in October 2009 was even a greater thrill than the first time some years before.



One of Susan's Morepork Bronzes

It was a glorious day, and my family, packed with cameras in true paparazzi style, the six of us (three of whom are full time) snapped the day away. Talula is the oldest, and gains in watercolour. Her paintings feature unique NZ flora and fauna, juxtaposed with raised antique Kiviana. Matthew is a full time bronze artist, and heavily into photography. Younger children Beth, and Jonathan, are still in school, but show strong photographic and artistic interests. My husband Chris is an Architect, and was in on the whole camera thing.

We were in our element, and again marvelled at the amazing opportunity to observe first hand these amazing birds and the excellent presentation at Galacary by Debbie and Ozzie, and Noel and Ruby. Four DSLR cameras and a Hi-Def Video going all at once may have been a bit overwhelming for some people, but Ozzie and Ruby performed like stars. This was such a unique opportunity for us, as artists. We were in a time lock, standing still, hopping it all up, our brains going into a state of absolute delight, every part of us observing, taking in as much as we could, making conscious and subconscious references, that come to effect so strongly in our work later.

We left the centre full of excitement and inspiration, souvenirs, and gagabags of references. We also bought one of those irretrievably precious 'Whisper' the morepork chick, growing up, in all her different poses, like a prima donna model.

Well she just kept looking at me with those eyes, over the next couple of months, sitting in her little poses. I had just

finished a long two year installation, a bronze of a morepork family, and I was planning a break. But I could resist no longer, with those eyes, and that face, I just had to make her in wax. This would be her second birth into the world, where, in time, she would be immortalized into bronze.



Her re-creation had begun.



Sometimes a trick of the imagination.

I had done several bronzes of morepork fledglings over the years, on posts and branches, but I was now inspired to create a new range, just on their own, free-standing. What intrigued and delighted me, was the range of poses Whisper had. So I decided to capture her in a few different stances.

Sometimes when I am creating these little creatures in bronze, I feel like a tug of war is going on, wrestling with it for its true character to come out. Sometimes it's like they

... there is an absolute need for places like Wingspan ...



Matthew Brauchli is excited about the prospect of being a falcon in bronze.

stubbornly refuse to let me create them, and other times a trick of the imagination seems to make them come alive. This is truly my aim. To make it as real as I can. I get a bit nervous about it, I want it to be just as if you were holding the real thing in your hands, or it is sitting there, as real as life in your living room, or, (as in one of my editorials of a Kakapo walking along on the forest floor) I want people to feel like they've just come across it in a forest bushwalk.

I'm not the only one who was hit with the delirium of inspiration that day. Matthew has, for a few years, been excited about the prospect of using a falcon in bronze, and a future of sketches and concept art for bronze has been flowing out.

Something that really was impressed upon us that day was the absolute need for places like Wingspan. Not only are they important for their primary purpose, to help raptors, but also to act as ambassadors of the animal kingdom. It isn't just enough to say, 'New Zealand has amazing fauna', to people, 'we should protect it'. They are physical creatures, and must be experienced through physical interaction. It isn't until you look directly into the eyes of these birds, that you realize your world is shared with fascinating creatures, which have private lives of their own. This, I believe, is one of the strongest bastions of preservation; specifically, the generating of interest and concern, by direct contact.

For those of us who are artists, this experience is invaluable. It presents the opportunity to get close enough to really observe the fascinating detail, and experience first-hand the unique characteristics, attitudes, movements, and physiology of the birds, and learn from the experts; something that would not be possible in the wild.

For many artists, their work is a reflection of their experiences. Finding experiences like this is hard indeed. Wingspan not only provides such an experience, but also champions the cause of raptors in New Zealand. We hope, in some small way, that our artwork will also champion the cause of all creation, for generations to come.

For Susan Brauchli's 'Whisper' series of owls, 5% of the total purchase price will be donated to Wingspan.

Susan is also offering Wingspan members a discount of 10%. Whisper will be part of a series of artworks, comprising different poses, and each pose will be an edition of 20.

You can visit the Brauchli's website, at www.wildbronzes.com for Photos, Concept Art and News of Recent Editions.

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HERE AND THERE



New Staff at Wingspan!

With a background in ecology from Massey University (Palmerston North), and previously employed by AgResearch (I Lamilton), Ineke Smets is the newest staff member to join the team.

Her new role is to be looking after both Wingspan raptors and Wingspan people. She reckons in the last six months, she has made remarkable leaps of the food chain – from grass roots to birds of prey!

Starting earlier in the year (on contract) is Max a Million, courtesy of Ron and Rebecca Watts of Auckland (i.e. temporary loan from Ron, permanent loan from Rebecca).

With a background in fibreglass, and [possibly] security, his work experience has previously included supermarket promotional displays as the 'Black Knight' (of liquorice fame).

Max remains as the onsite 'Knight in Shining Armour', and photo opportunities with Wingspan members are invited!

Assembly Point

A New Zealand falcon - understanding the finer points of direction.

Colin Wynn captured this image in Marlborough.



Don't forget to get your pet blessed . . .

Every year a Church in Auckland, St Matthew-in-the-City, promotes 'pet blessing day' for their Congregation. Promoting the annual event in 2009 this large billboard may have caught the attention of Auckland Wingspan members. This sign featured one of Wingspan's falcons 'Ruby', and (unintended) guinea pig photographed by Rob Sutted.



[Editor's note: guinea pig photographed separately, and not hurt during the making of this billboard]

VISITORS PHOTO GALLERY



Ever Gilmore



The Owl Meritans



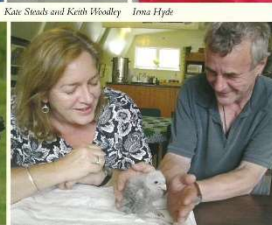
Rob Fenwick



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Wingspan is a registered charitable trust; it does not receive Government, or local body funding in support of the raptor conservation programme. Essentially, Wingspan is a project about birds of prey and people - it's a conservation buy-in for us all, and collectively we all make a difference for the raptors of New Zealand.



Donations to the programme are always welcomed, and it's easier than ever before! You can write or e-mail directly, or give us a call. Some members have organised regular donations, bequests and memorials, or direct credits; even small regular payments help too (and saves reminders for renewals). Most recently, New Zealand IRD have a new payroll donation system for PAYE employees...and it's all tax deductible.



Contact Wingspan directly, we'd be thrilled to hear from you!



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SHOP WINGSPAN



Some new fund-raising initiatives are now being promoted at the Wingspan Centre, and sales of these products contribute directly to the raptor programme. The following items will be of interest.

A first to ever be produced in New Zealand, and the first of their type featuring the growth development of ruru (morepork owl) (Whiwhi) and karearea (New Zealand falcon) (Milkemian). Reproduced as laminated posters, with high resolution images captured from egg to first flight. This is a quality production with photo images by Andrew Warner and graphic artwork by Jane Reed of SeeReed Visual Communication. Worthy of framing. - just \$25.00 each.



Presentation folders, including photographs of Wingspan's raptors at the Centre. - \$10.00 each.



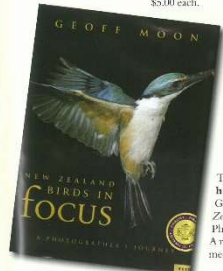
Greeting cards featuring the raptors at Wingspan by artist Wendy Goodwin - with envelopes. \$5.00 each.

The World's Biggest Baddest Bugs A special and sensational DVD hosted by Randi Kitepape is now available at Wingspan. Just \$29.95 per copy (special autographed copies also available).

Embroidered Wingspan Caps and Rugby Shirts now available! Caps just \$25, Mens Rugby Shirts \$90.00 ea, Womens Rugby shirts \$80.00 (N.B. I have not for sale). Embroidered 'Beanes' arriving for the Winter!



The award-winning hard-cover book by Geoff Moon - 'New Zealand Birds in Focus - a Photographer's Journey'. A must for Wingspan members! \$30.00



Souvenir matchboxes featuring Buller's prints of New Zealand's birds, donated by Phil Fry. Collect a set! Only \$1.00 per box.

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Alexander Darlington 2008

John Eliot 2010

Dr Nick & Barbro Fox 2004

Keith Hollingworth 2008

Tony & Lydia Howe 2010

Mr & Mrs James 2009

Rob & Julie Kerridge 2009

Terry Mitcham 2007

Tony & Jennifer OrNSTein 2005

Martin Saddington 2010

Phil & Joyce Scaron 2008

USA

Kenneth Archambault 2008

David Aschebeck 2009

George Bristol 2009

James & Sonya Brockman 2010

Matthew Clement 2005

Charles & Karen Goetz 2004

Paul Johnson 2004

Charley & Cece Schoettlin 2004

David Snetman 2010

Dick Stuchliffe 2007

Ken Wolfe 2007



The Wingspan Birds of Prey Centre offers unique, once-in-a-lifetime raptor interactive opportunities. Don't forget your camera!

RAPTOR EXPERIENCE

A one hour hosted tour of the breeding, research and display facility with a Wingspan falconer, including flying demonstration and unique interactive experience with trained New Zealand birds of prey - by appointment only \$80.00 per group (plus admission per person)

SCHOOL VISITS

Wingspan offers a unique education resource for students at just \$5.00 admission per person with Raptor Experience guided tours.

DONATIONS

If you wish to contribute towards the Wingspan programme, donations are welcomed. Donations of \$5.00 or more are tax deductible within New Zealand.

WINGSPAN INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS

Subscribe to the annual journal, receive your special Wingspan members pin on joining, plus year round complimentary admission to the Wingspan Bird of Prey Centre. \$35.00 per annum

WINGSPAN FAMILY MEMBERSHIP

Great for couples and families residing at the same address. Subscribe to the annual journal, receive one special Wingspan members pin on joining, plus year round complimentary admission to the Wingspan Bird of Prey Centre. \$60.00 per annum

SPONSOR A NEW ZEALAND RAPTOR AT WINGSPAN

Name the bird: receive an annual update, colour photograph, free admission to the Wingspan Bird of Prey Centre, and special acknowledgement on aviary sponsor board. Absolute Sponsor: \$1,000, or Gold \$500; Silver \$300; Contributing sponsors \$100.

SPONSOR A WILD NEW ZEALAND FALCON

Name the wild bird, receive information on band numbers and combinations, a colour photograph, and updated summary when your falcon has been located, plus free admission to the Wingspan Birds of Prey Centre. Wild bird sponsorship assigned March/April each year. \$100.00 per falcon

LIFETIME SUPPORTER

Includes the benefits as a Wingspan member and supporter, including lifetime subscription to the annual newsletter, special Wingspan pin and complimentary admission. \$1000.00

SPONSOR AN AVIARY/CORPORATE SPONSORSHIP

Sponsorship is welcomed for specific raptor research projects, resuscitated birds, breeding pairs, including naming rights. Formal registration and signage within the aviary facilities with logo branding. Specific project costs on application. Limited availability. From \$5000.00 per annum

GIFT MEMBERSHIPS WELCOMED!

BEQUESTS AND SPECIAL MEMORIALS, BY ARRANGEMENT. PLEASE CONTACT THE WINGSPAN OFFICE.

WINGSPAN BIRD OF PREY CENTRE

Open daily 9.00am-3.00pm
Best time 1.30 pm ready for 2.00 pm Flying & Training Displays
1164 Paradise Valley Rd, Rotorua
Visitors Welcome, Tours by appointment
Adults \$25.00, Children \$8.00



The Wingspan Board of Trustees would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your support of Wingspan Birds of Prey Trust over the past year.

As a volunteer organisation and charitable trust, your contributions are welcomed and important for the ongoing life of the Trust.

Donations of \$5.00 or more are tax deductible within New Zealand. Donations can be processed through e-shop at the Wingspan website www.wingspan.co.nz, or sent directly to:

WINGSPAN BIRDS OF PREY TRUST
P.O. Box 993
ROTORUA

Yes, please renew my membership

Member#

Name

Address

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PAYMENT ENCLOSED

VISITOR ADMISSIONS

Adults \$25.00 \$.....

Children \$ 8.00 \$.....

MEMBERSHIP DONATIONS

Individual \$35.00 \$.....

Family \$60.00 \$.....

Lifetime* \$1,000.00 \$.....

SPONSORS/IIIIP SUPPORT

Wild Bird sponsor \$100.00 \$.....

Bird sponsor \$500.00 \$.....

Aviary sponsor \$5000.00 \$.....

Purchases (please specify)

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Donation

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Total \$.....

FOUR EASY DONATION OPTIONS

SEND CHEQUE to Wingspan Bird of Prey Centre, by post to