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Issue 79

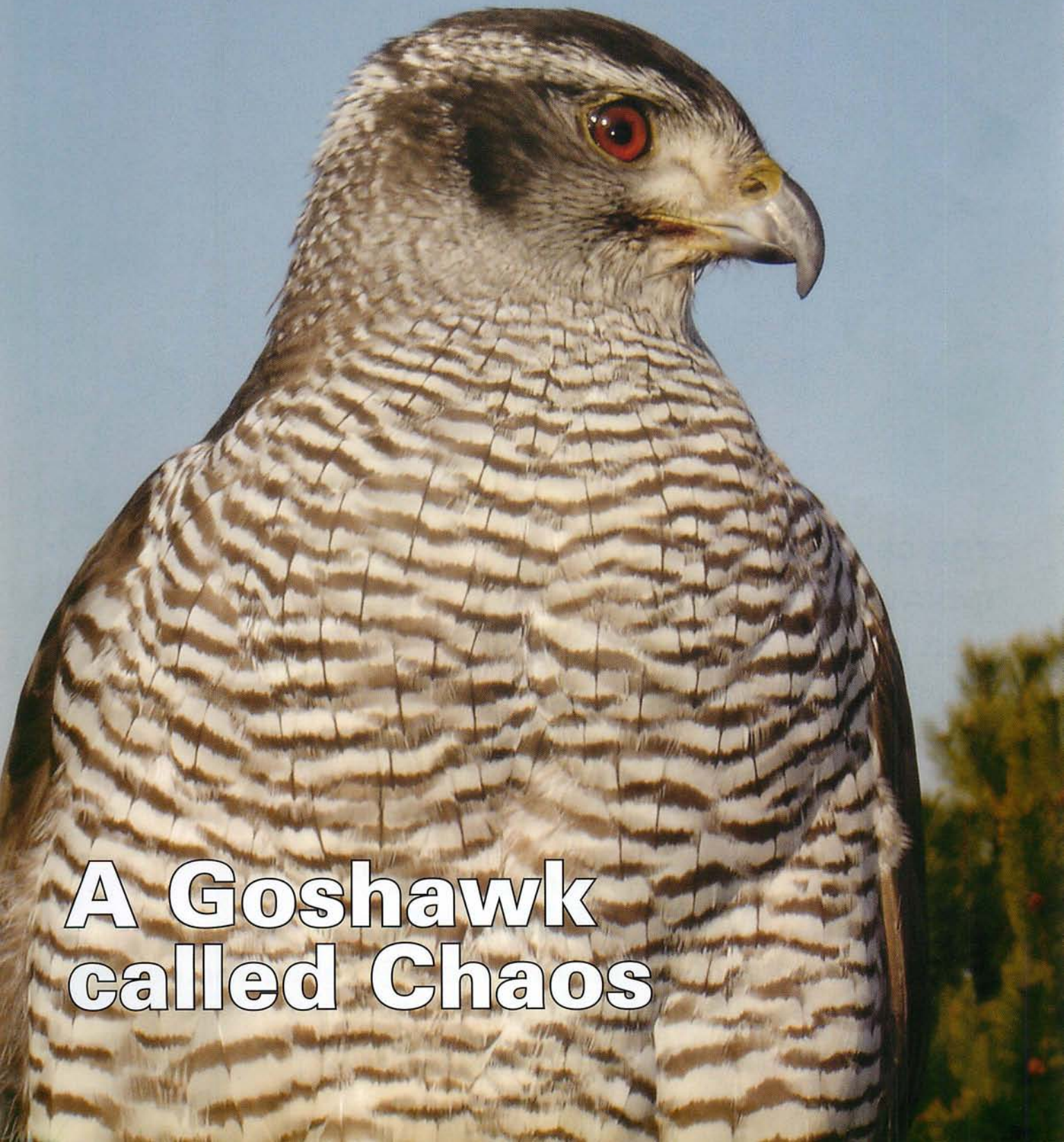
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& Raptor Conservation Magazine



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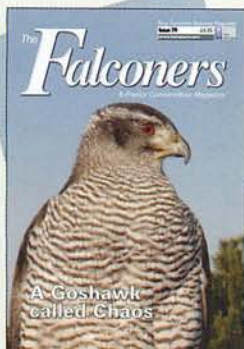
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We are now into the flying season once again (where does the time go?) and it seems as if the 2nd Festival of Falconry was in another age. But just to remind you what it was like, there is an article from David Glynne Fox on page 8 of this issue to remind us what it was like to have been there. Many thanks, David.

Also, in this issue is an article from Animal Health concerning the licensing and registration of birds. This is an important issue for those falconers who have schedule 4 birds, or who have concerns over what the CITES changes are and just in case you didn't know, there is a list of Annex A birds of prey. One issue that has come up recently is that falconers are not that great in keeping their paperwork up-to-date, especially when it comes to article 10s certificates. Please remember to check all your papers.

Lastly, I hope you will join me in wishing Neil Fowler of the IBR a speedy recovery after falling ill during a holiday he took in North Africa. At the time of writing Neil has just come out of hospital (for the 2nd time) and is recovering at home. All the best Neil.

In the meantime, have a good read.



editorial

news & products

a review of what's new in our sport Send all your news and product information to peter.eldrett@tiscali.co.uk

Eagle Road Trip

A DVD by CorJo Wildlife Productions

Reviewed by Peter Eldrett

Anyone who enjoys watching golden eagles flying from the fist at rabbit, including the occasional kills, will enjoy this DVD. It features footage of Joe Atkinson's eagles, Jackhammer and Mini-Me, taking on black tail jack rabbits in Kansas, Oregon and Texas. The viewer is given a rare insight into hunting with golden eagles and the patience that this requires. Expert filming shows just how manoeuvrable a large eagle can be, even at speed.

But this is more than just a film about eagles; it is also a film about Joe and the way he interacts with his birds. Throughout the film he comes across as a man who is confident in his ability as an austringer. He is surprisingly gentle with his birds and is sympathetic to their needs, not pushing an inexperienced bird too hard and not setting them up to fail. He so wants his eagles to succeed and does all he can to help them in this. His knowledge of his birds' abilities and of their quarry always gives them the best chance of success. When a flight successfully ends in a kill, Joe is clearly more pleased for the eagle than himself. But he is equally admiring of a good flight and shows admiration for the jack rabbit which manages to out-manoeuvre his eagle.

It is interesting to note the terrain and surroundings in which Joe flies his eagles. I had imagined that there would be plenty of open spaces, far from civilisation, in which to fly in the States. But, surprisingly, Joe flies over scrub land very close to industrial buildings, main roads and housing estates. These areas are well populated with rabbits and Joe is keen to give his eagles the opportunity to hunt them.

The action is filmed by Joe's wife, Cordi, and she does a good job of capturing the true excitement of the flights. The film sometimes has a kind of "home video" feel, (for example, unwanted wind noise picked up by the microphone and inability to hear all participants of a conversation) but I don't think this detracts from one's enjoyment of the sheer spectacle.

Overall, this is a film which celebrates the bond between one man and his eagles. Over a few field meets, the viewer gets to share in the excitement of flying these magnificent creatures and can only marvel at the dedication and skill required to enable them to do what they do best. If you like golden eagles, this is a DVD for you.

Available from:- www.joeatkinsonseaglejournal.com



Letter

Dear Sir,
Having read your articles for a number of years and being used to the accuracy of the contents I was somewhat surprised, whilst reading your article about the Festival of Falconry, to find that your usual standards had slipped.

I refer to your statement that the medieval banquet was arranged by the Hawk Board as a fund raiser. As the Treasurer of the HB I can categorically state that the HB had nothing

whatsoever to do with this. It was arranged by the Festival organisers and all income went to them.

In fact the HB will be several thousand pounds poorer once the bill arrives to cover the UK tents which the HB has agreed to pay for.

Yours faithfully,
Mike Clowes

Appologies for the error in issue 78 - ed

New sculptures



New for winter 2009 are these sculptures from Bill Prickett. Bill's originals are carved in wood and then reproduced in limited editions.

• Harris on Glove, Bronze Resin, limited edition of 30, £550. • Harris on Glove original, carved from lime wood, £6500. • Preening Peregrine, Bronze, limited edition of nine, £6500.

For more information contact:

info@billprickett.co.uk

Tel: 0845 2570887 or 07786 424288"

Falconry – Celebrating a Living Heritage

By Dr. Javier Ceballos

Reviewed by Marian Eldrett

This book was launched at the International Festival of Falconry earlier this year in support of a submission, led by the United Arab Emirates, to UNESCO for falconry to be recognised as an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. It is one of those books that, just by its cover, immediately makes you want to explore its pages. The cover and jacket just ooze quality.

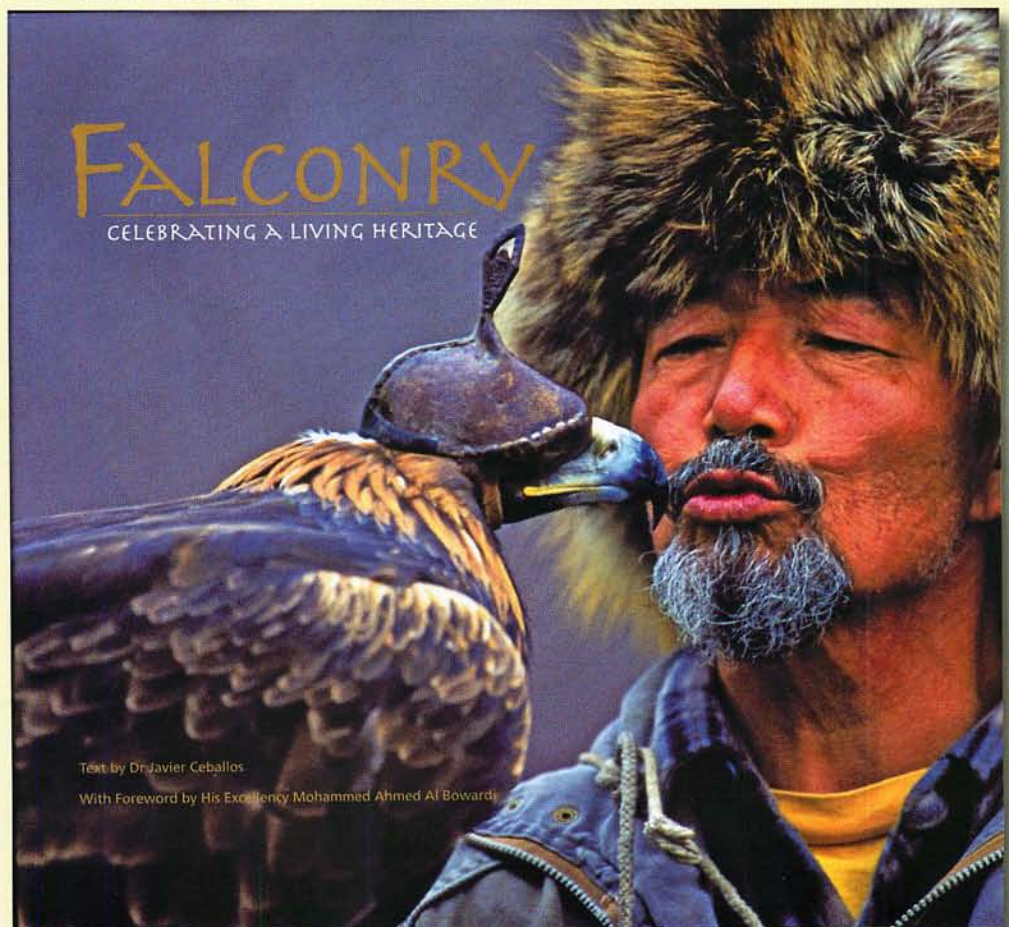
It describes the passion for falconry from the point of view of falconers across the world. It looks at the early origins of falconry worldwide and then traces its development in Asia, the Far East, Arabia, Europe and the New World countries. The text reflects the detailed research that has been undertaken in the production of the book.

The strength of the book, however, is not in its written word. Rather it is in the quality and variety of its photos – over 400 in full colour throughout the book. From traditional falconry practices, to scenes from modern-day field meets. From falconers at work to falconers at rest. Falconers from around the world star alongside their hawks, falcons and eagles – making a truly glorious collection of photos. The reader is given an insight into the falconers' love and respect for their charges, and an opportunity to share in the colour and sheer spectacle of the sport of falconry. From these photos it can be seen that, although the approaches to and practices of falconry may be different from country to country, the passion for the sport is worldwide and this passion has made falconry one of the greatest sports of all time. To quote the author, "Falconry exercises the mind and body in the open air in a way that few other activities do. In addition, this sport develops a knowledge of and a respect for, the laws of nature. Falconry truly embodies the meaning of the term 'sport' or 'sportsmanship'."

Towards the end of the book, the author makes a strong case for the continuance of falconry in the 21st century, including mention of the important part falconry has played in conservation. "Throughout its long history, falconry has made important contributions to society in many areas including the conservation of both the raptors and their quarry." In fact it "... has aided the recovery of several species that had been in danger of extinction."

There is something in this book for everyone. From novice to experienced falconers. From those with a keen interest in the sport to those who know nothing of it whatsoever. All will come away with an increased knowledge of what it means to be a falconer. I am sure it will have served as a strong tool in support of the submission to UNESCO – anyone reading it cannot fail to be impressed.

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Available from Coch-y-Bonddu Books
www.falconrybooks.co.uk





askchitty

Do you have any veterinary questions relating to your bird? If so, send them to the editor (see address on page three) and they will be passed on to John Chitty - BVetMed CertZooMed CBiol MIBiol MRCVS

Are there any effects to hawks if they eat rabbit that has suffered from myxomatosis?

During an outbreak there are a lot of rabbits showing the signs of myxomatosis – these may be dead or extremely ill and so may prove tempting to a hawk.

The good news is that raptors will not be directly affected by the myxomatosis virus – this is a pox virus that only affects lagomorphs (ie rabbits & hares). However, this does not mean that the meat is good or safe to feed.

Myxomatosis will cause the rabbit to waste and become emaciated: it will also weaken the rabbit such that it may also be affected by secondary bacterial or fungal infections – ie the meat on these carcasses (such as there is) is likely poor quality and may harbour other potential pathogens.

Either way it is more likely to cause gut infections than an unaffected killed rabbit, and it would not be safe to assume that such a carcass was providing all the bird's nutritional needs.

What are the symptoms to look out for if a hawk has been fed with shot rabbit?

Just because the rabbit does not show signs of myxomatosis does not mean it is safe to feed to a hawk. Many rabbits are shot at and not all shots will kill them! Therefore a lot appear to be carrying small amounts of lead shot in their flesh.

While this is clearly not affecting the rabbit (the rabbit's immune system walls off the piece of shot so lead is not absorbed into the bloodstream), a bird eating it can succumb to lead toxicosis.

This, however, does not seem to be a foregone conclusion – many falconers have fed shot game for years without problem. This may be because they have been lucky enough to avoid the affected

flesh, but more likely shows that the healthy bird able to cast quickly can expel any lead shot via the casting.

This does not mean that it is safe to feed shot game – anything that relies on a degree of luck should be avoided. If the casting is delayed or if a large amount of lead is ingested then toxicity will result and the consequences of this are severe.

There are many different signs of lead toxicity – mainly it acts on the brain and nerves, so weakness tremors and fitting are extremely common signs. The classic appearance is of a bird unable to stand on its feet: instead it may be sitting right down and may show "tetany", ie. rigidity/spasm of the feet that may be clasped in front of it.

As all muscles are affected, you may see delayed emptying of the stomach – the consequence of this is that the lead is held for longer in an acid environment allowing more of it to dissolve and be absorbed.

It is also possible to see greening of the urates – these are the lead salts being expelled through the kidneys and the mutes may become an emerald green colour.

Internally, the lead will damage liver and kidney mainly – the effects of this may be permanent so it is vital that potential lead toxicosis be investigated as soon as possible.

Fortunately, there is an antidote which, if given in time, will bind the lead so it can safely be expelled through the kidneys. However, nothing is quite that simple and most birds will require stabilisation and support (fluids and critical nutrition) to assist in protecting from and reversing the effects of the toxin.

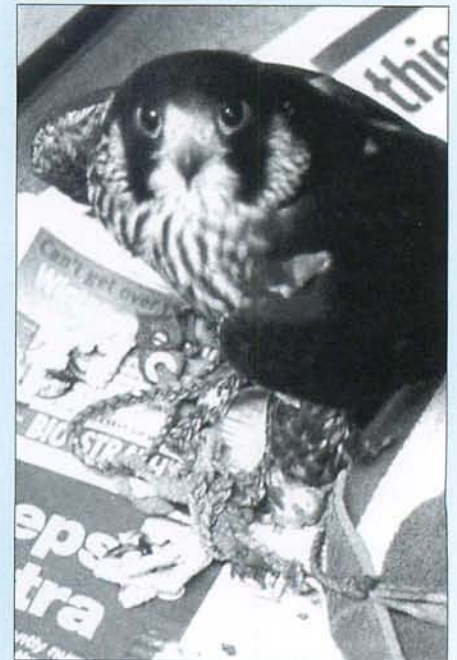
They will also require assessment of liver and kidney function so it can be decided how badly affected the bird has been and to give an idea of likelihood of recovery.

Normally medical management is enough – once the lead is bound the gut

will start to work and the lead will be expelled in castings. However, in some cases (especially when there is a large amount of lead in the gizzard) surgery or endoscopy may be needed to physically remove the lead pieces.

There may be further complications too – some of the lead will become calcium-bound and deposited in the bones. In males, that is probably not a problem. However, female birds take calcium out of the bones each year in order to produce eggs. They may, therefore, also mobilise lead and suffer a relapse of signs – this is not a rare event!

So, the consequences of lead toxicosis are very severe and certainly life-threatening. Therefore, no matter how tempting it may be to feed shot game, it probably isn't worth the risk....and don't think that head-shot game is OK – the last person may not have been as good a shot, and most shot will fragment. We have xrayed "headshot" game and the amount of scattered fragments through the carcass shows that it certainly is a major risk to feed.



Peregrine with classic lead tox pose



Lots going on since the last update – and my apologies for missing out after the Festival of Falconry, but with 12,000 visitors, the world's press, MPs, and a member of both the British and UAE royal family it was something of a marathon.

Since then we have had an election, the results of which are as follows: Nick Fox has been re-elected; Graham Irving is a new member, as is Terry Burden. Both Graham and Terry have a lifetime in falconry, the former as a British Falconers' Club council member and Terry as a long-term breeder. This is a



Festival of Falconry, Consultations and election results

very pleasing result as any accusations that the Hawk Board exists only for commercial breeders can be easily balanced by jobbing falconers who only have the sport at heart. In fact, of the six elected members half could be described as breeders and the rest falconers, although one, to my certain knowledge, has a foot in both camps. Add in the club representatives and the sport of falconry has the majority, so enough said.

The festival

The Festival was a massive success, so much so that Kate Hoey MP laid a motion to the House of Commons congratulating the organisers and urging the UK to support the application for falconry to be recognised as a UNESCO intangible cultural heritage. The submission, led by the United Arab Emirates (although the work was done by Nick Fox's company, International Wildlife Consultants), has been signed and is now in the process of consideration, which I believe will take several months. So fingers crossed. If successful, falconry in its purist form, will be very difficult to legislate against.

Consultations

Closer to home, we have had two major consultations on what you and I know as the pest species licences but are more properly the 'Open General Licences'. The first, issued by Natural England, has run its course and reported its findings. Go to <http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/policy/consultations/generallicencesfollowup.aspx> if you are interested in the many submissions (ours included) and the decisions that resulted. If you hawk corvids or gulls, you will need to consider very carefully the permissions you obtain for this season, particularly gulls as several are now protected. The second, issued by the Welsh Assembly, echoes some of the English proposals but there are subtle differences and we are looking at these. It is quite absurd

to have two differing licences, no three – mustn't forget Scotland where the licences have already been revised – covering the same issue. But that's life. You can find the Welsh consultation at <http://wales.gov.uk/consultations/environmentandcountryside/generallicences/?lang=en>

There has been some discussion about what constitutes a release of a non-native species. This came to us from Defra, as a result of a Scottish Parliament initiative on invasive species. The confusion lies in whether the falconer is releasing into the wild every time he slips a Hawk, be it Harris, hybrid, whatever. We argue that as recovery is expected, no deliberate release takes place. Defra are seeking legal opinion, but as we have been flying non-native hawks and falcons for decades – no centuries, and in the case of lanners and gyrs, almost for millennia – there really is no case to answer. It is Hawk Board policy that all hawks and falcons be flown with telemetry, and we expect all falconers to do this. Don't let us down on this one. If you can afford a hawk, you can afford telemetry.

Hope you are all ready for another season's hawking. Good luck and please remember that every day you meet a member of the public you, and the hawk on your fist, are our sport's ambassador and will be remembered for your words and deeds.

ELECTION RESULTS

Nick Fox has been re-elected
Graham Irving is a new member
Terry Burden is a new member

If you have areas of concern about falconry, remember this is your Hawk Board and you can raise issues with us by contacting me or any other member of the board.
My E-mail is: nk.quattro@zetnet.co.uk.

THE 2009 INTERNATIONAL FALCONRY FESTIVAL

Like many thousands of others, I attended the very first International Falconry Festival in 2007. Like many thousands of others, I found it difficult if not impossible, to believe that the organisers could excel this first event in any way, except for more toilets and certainly more food outlets. Well, for those that attended the 2nd Festival, which was again held at the Englefield Estate at Theale, near Reading, it was more than obvious that the impossible was achieved. For one thing, the fair was bigger, or certainly seemed it and it covered much more ground with seemingly endless participants.

The first Festival I attended as a spectator, the second as a participant, for I took along Star, my male Berkut Golden Eagle for the two days over the eleventh and twelfth of July. The Festival itself actually opened on the Friday, but I had to be elsewhere on that date. I had also asked fellow eagle enthusiast, Geoff Surtees to bring his female Golden Eagle, Abbie, along for both days also, and he willingly obliged. However, one or two problems became apparent shortly after our arrival.

Weathering worries

For one thing, our eagles were not afforded the protection of a marquee, which had been promised. Instead, a circular weathering ground had been created beneath a single tree using interlocking iron railings. There were already five Golden Eagles in this enclosure, four belonging to Terry

of the Kentish Falconry and Raptor Conservation centre, one female belonging to Chris Miller and the two belonging to Geoff and myself making up the seven. This lack of suitable cover was worrying, for if it became too hot, both mine and Geoff's birds would be exposed to the heat, for all the available shade provided by the tree was already taken up by the aforementioned five eagles. Fortunately, although it became sunny for most of the time, the glare was not so intense as to cause a problem. It didn't prevent me from worrying though. The next problem was the erection of the bow perches. The ground was rock hard and no way could a perch be sunk into the ground in the normal fashion. Luckily, across the way from our weathering area, the newly formed United Kingdom Eagle Falconry Association (UKEFA) had their marquee and it was to here that I made a quick visit. Roy Lupton, Steve, Robin and Clint had experienced the same hard ground problem with their perches and they lent me a lump hammer and a spike so that Geoff and I could make suitable holes for our respective bows. This was a useful piece of kit, duly taken on board for future events. This job completed, the next task was to place out the baths, which we had brought with us. A standpipe, situated a couple of hundred yards from our weathering ground was used to fill the baths and I had taken along a watering can for this purpose. Then both our eagles joined the five already ensconced on the weathering ground.

I had been hoping that all the Golden Eagles present at the Festival could have

been housed together, for there were at least another five on the UKEFA stand and a few others scattered throughout the various exhibits, but it was not to be. It would have looked spectacular. In fact, eagles had quite a large presence at the Festival including the breathtakingly beautiful immature Crowned Eagle and the unique hybrid Ornate x Golden Eagle belonging to that well known eagle exponent Andrew Knowles-Brown. I believe there were actually more Golden Eagles present than at any other event ever held in the UK and this was encouraging for eagle falconry as a whole. Additionally, the event was billed as the gathering of more world falconers in one place than at any other time in history, and I am sure this was indeed the case. The colour and pageantry was something to behold with each nation proudly gathering beneath their flags for the various main arena events. The one theme, falconry, transcended all religions, colour and race and everyone mingled with such passion, despite the obvious language barriers. If only man could always work together like this!

Experiences shared

A personal high note for me was meeting the well-known and highly respected American eagle falconer Joe Atkinson and his lovely wife Cordi. Joe and I chatted at some length and he very kindly presented me with a copy of his latest DVD entitled "Eagle Road Trip," a very interesting pair of braided nylon eagle jesses and some photographs of his eagles. Another great pleasure was meeting the doyen



Author (left) chatting to Roy Lupton, chairman United Kingdom Eagle Falconry Association

of Continental European eagle falconry, Joseph Hiebeler. Joseph gave two lectures on the training of eagles and Geoff and I attended the one on the Saturday evening, just as the rain began to start falling. The lecture was given in Joseph's native Austrian and ably translated for us into English by a colleague of Joseph's, who I believe was a Baron. Interestingly, Joseph used only 80 centimetre high block perches for his eagles and so at question time I suggested to him that he must have been dismayed to view all these eagles on large bow perches at the Festival. I voiced my concerns over the long eagle jesses straddling the blocks, but apparently they use a sleeve to slide up the length of the jesses to prevent this problem. Joseph had also given up using motorbike dragged ground lures, as one of his eagles had knocked an innocent cyclist from his machine. He used horses instead and when Robin of UKEFA asked him why the eagles didn't attack the horses, Joseph replied that they were too

large and intimidating. All in all, I learned a few items from Joseph's talk, which I intend to put into practice with my own eagles. Learning from each other's experiences is priceless in my view, why keep re-inventing the wheel?

Night time concerns

With the lecture coming to a close, many headed either for the beer tent, or those that had booked the medieval banquet, approached the marquee in which Joseph's seminar was held. Geoff and I hadn't booked the banquet so it was the beer tent for us. Unfortunately, the beer tent closed at ten so we meandered over to the banquet tent where a party was now in full swing. The marquee was heaving with falconers from the world over and it was worth going in just to see Nick Fox grace the dance floor. I spoke to countless friends during the evening but it was soon time for bed. Geoff and I had taken tents but the rain was lashing down and we would have been drenched had

we tried to erect them. Additionally, we had not been instructed as to where we could erect them anyway. True, we had been given camping numbers, but these turned out to be meaningless and any old patch of grass would have sufficed. However, I had a more worrying item on my mind. Throughout the day, I had been concerned at the lack of security for our eagles in the weathering ground. I had seen no site security guards whatsoever, and as the night progressed I feared for the safety of our precious and valuable birds. In the end, I mentioned to Geoff that I was going to collect my Land Rover and drive it down to the weathering ground and stay in it all night, if necessary and watch over the eagles. Geoff agreed and this is exactly what we did.

At about half past one in the morning, we both became concerned at the continuous rainfall washing over our birds and we both got out to review the situation. Both birds were in good condition and the rain merely ran off



Star at the festival

their well-oiled feathers, but Geoff began to suggest that we ought to put them in their travelling boxes for the night. We were in the midst of discussing this when one of the Austrian eagle falconers came up to us and advised us against boxing them, citing a case that he knew of where two wet eagles, boxed thus, died within hours of each other in the warm damp and close atmosphere of the boxes. I knew for a fact that Scottish eagles had been recorded brooding

eggs whilst covered in snow and they must also spend countless nights out in the rain. My big female, Skye, sits out in heavy rain despite having shelter available. I went into the weathering ground to study the extent of the rain on their feathering and despite the deluge, they were bone dry, so we decided to play safe and leave them where they were. More worrying perhaps was the fact that had Geoff and I not parked our vehicles alongside the weathering ground

all night, there was absolutely nothing to prevent anyone so inclined, to take all seven eagles and their equipment and drive away with them. Certainly, no security guards ever came anywhere near us all night and the only visitors were a few revellers from the various camps, some of whom seemed rather the worse for wear. The foregoing was the only real down side to the Festival, especially as we had volunteered to take our birds along, at our own expense to help make the Festival the event that we all hoped it would be, so the problems we faced were unacceptable and must never be repeated. It was not fair on us and even less on the birds. We deserved better, especially when one considers the volume of visitors that came to ask myriads of questions throughout the two day event and even more so when it was the eagles from our weathering area that were loaned out to the Kazakh, Japanese and other falconers for main arena events. And here surfaced another problem or two.

Careless handling

One of the Kazakh falconers had borrowed an eagle for his part in the arena event and when he returned, he un-hooded the bird and placed it on the bow perch, without tethering it! Most of the eagles on display were deep in the moult, up in weight and consequently not in flying order. There was nothing to stop this bird taking off and flying away, which is exactly what it did and it was only the quick thinking of another eagle falconer, Karl Leadley, I believe who grabbed the leash before the bird found some lift and became really airborne!! I was not present at this time and only heard about it when I returned from buying some books and equipment. This incident caused a lot of embarrassment all round and was closely followed by a second incident. Terry asked me why one of the eagle bow perches was empty. I replied that a Japanese falconer had taken it for the main arena event and I presumed that Terry himself had given permission for the falconer to take the bird. Terry was understandably not happy, especially as it was his bird again and that his permission had not even been sought. After this mix up, no eagles were allowed out without the supervision of those of us who owned the birds. It seems that falconers do things differently in each country and

with the aforementioned language barrier causing problems we had to rely on the fact that our eagles were allegedly being loaned to experienced eagle falconers! We were beginning to wonder.

All this may sound as though the festival was full of problems. We had some teething problems for sure, as I suppose did others, but by and large the Festival was a fantastic event and something to be justifiably proud of. I am honoured that I was allowed to participate and met many new friends and some of whom I had not seen in years.

The amount of equipment on offer was staggering. If it wasn't at the Festival, believe me, you didn't need it. It was good to visit all the foreign camps and discover how falconry was practised in their parts of the world.

Roger Upton kindly signed a pile of his books I had taken for the purpose, but I wish either he, or his twin brother Peter would wear different coloured hats at least as I can never tell the two apart. I was also surprised that I occupied a two-page spread in a new book that received its launch at the Festival and was entitled "Falconry-Celebrating A Living Heritage," with some lovely photographs of Star. Talking of stars, a star guest turned out to be HRH Prince

Andrew, flanked by Jim Chick and Dr. Nick Fox and who came into the British Falconers Club tent whilst I was in there. He didn't speak to me though!

On the Sunday, I joined the newly formed United Kingdom Eagle Falconry Association and I have high hopes of this organisation. With eagles becoming ever more popular, a special body dealing with these powerful raptors is long overdue and I hope it will provide a useful forum for beginners and experts alike. The Association was launched at the Festival with several falconers signing up for membership.

I had had little sleep on the Friday night, knowing I had to get up early to get to Reading and again had no sleep on the Saturday night guarding the eagles, but I was on such a high that I didn't feel particularly tired, that came later in the week. I am not sure how the Festival went financially, but it was a great success in every other way and I enjoyed it even more than in 2007.

Again, we have to thank the unsung organisers for this monumental event and I cannot wait for a third Festival, which if Nick Fox's closing speech is anything to go by, this should be a certainty.



Immature Crowned Eagle bred by Andrew Knowles-Brown

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Big is not always best!

A great many falconers seem to have a pre-occupation regarding size when it comes to quite a number of species of hawk that are currently used in falconry. Harris Hawks, Goshawks and Peregrine Falcons being absolute prime examples of hunting hawks subjected to this type of thinking. Hawks and falcons vary tremendously in weight not only within their own species but also within a clutch of siblings. I well remember the first ever clutch of Peregrines I bred which turned out to be three tiercels. To see the brothers lined up on a perch through a peep hole in the aviary wall they all looked approximately the same size. Yet when trained and entered the difference between the largest and smallest was some three ounces.

Obviously weights of trained hawks and falcons can vary tremendously and three siblings taken up for training at the same time may well end up flying quite a bit differently in terms of weight due to several significant factors. Amongst these

will be the degree of experience on the part of the falconer, the level of manning attained and not least the species of quarry to be flown. All will have a marked effect on the eventual flying weight of the newly trained hawk or falcon. For example falcons flown at game will not normally have to be cut so hard in order to enter them as those singled out for use against sable quarry. In the case of the three siblings mentioned all were trained by pretty competent falconers and all were flown at game, so it was a fairly level playing field with regard to final flying weights and it was interesting to mark the differences in the attitudes of the actual tiercels when it came to hunting.

The most successful of all was the middle weight of the three with the least successful being the largest. But then of course size does not have any accurate bearing on mental attitude or courage when it comes to chasing quarry.

Different weights

The two most successful grouse hawks I have ever had the privilege of flying were the exact opposite ends of the spectrum. One was a tiercel Red Naped Shaheen with a flying weight of just seventeen and a quarter ounces and the other was a hacked Peregrine Falcon that flew at a whopping thirty nine ounces. Both were extremely tenacious by nature and both were given plenty of hunting opportunities in their early days in the field. The ability to present quarry unflinching in the early part of a hawk or falcon's career probably has a great deal more to do with it ultimately turning out to be an accomplished hunter, enjoying success in the field, than sheer physical size.

However the lack of logic of this train of thought concerning the relationship between weight and successful hunting seems firmly imbedded with some. There are those that remain convinced

that size is all and inefficiency when it comes to hunting relates directly to lack of size. I received several enquiries this year from falconers and would be falconers interested in buying eyass Harris Hawks from me this season. Weight was a constant theme running through the questions asked by the prospective buyers and according to the majority of them any Harris Hawk that flew under two pounds two ounces could not possibly turn out to be any good in the field. No matter how much you try and explain that it is nigh on impossible to determine what the flying weight of youngsters in an aviary will eventually turn out to be the question was repeated with almost boring monotony. I could only ever say what the mother flew at and what the youngsters so far produced have flown at. In fact the mother flew at an ounce or so under two pound but was a superb hunting hawk. The father was a large male and he too was good in the field. But that doesn't mean that the young females will end up flying at the same weight as their mother. There are so many varying factors that contribute to the eventual flying weight, which itself varies over the course of a season.

A hawk may well have to be reduced to a weight a good ounce or two under the weight it will achieve once the season is well and truly under way and the hawk is killing regularly again if it is an intermewed hawk. Manning, weather, fitness, success at quarry will all play a part in determining the true flying weight of the hawk concerned. My old female Harris Hawk "Maud", now entering her seventeenth season will eventually over the course of the season reach a weight of thirty nine ounces or so. But she would have been initially re-conditioned and entered at a weight some two or two and half ounces under that. She will kill at the higher weight and return to the fist but it will be on her terms and without any real conviction or commitment to



Adult tiercel Peregrine

Mature male Harris Hawk



hunting hard. Once she has started to kill regularly again, she is muscled up and her own confidence level is back to a high then her weight can be allowed to creep back up. So many Harris Hawks are taken to the field in too high a condition. There is a great deal of difference between a truly obedient hawk following on and a hawk that is hunting for itself and allows the falconer to follow it. The first is fun, the second is a shadow of real falconry.

All of the above holds equally true for Goshawks as well. The two most successful male Goshawks I personally have seen fly well at quarry both flew around the twenty two ounce mark. I have seen several more superb male Goshawks hunting at flying weights that were six and eight ounces above that. But the two smaller ones in this instance were very successful at what they did and managed to make catching rabbits look very easy. But then a good goshawk does have the capability of doing its job so well that it's almost impossible not to feel that the rabbit didn't have much of a chance.

Sizes are changing

Please don't get the impression from this article that I decry any hawk that is anything other than the smallest member of its particular clutch. In fact nothing could be further from the truth. It's just that I hate to see hawks dismissed out of hand and therefore passed over because they may not be the largest around or do not conform to some predetermined scale laid down years ago. For example, there is a supposed rough rule of thumb that all Peregrine Falcons will fly at two pounds or just over. This may well have been the case many

years ago when scales were far from as accurate as they are now and also the domestic production of raptors was not our principal source for obtaining hawks. I appear not to be alone in thinking that, generally speaking, hawks and falcons are getting slightly smaller as the number of generations produced domestically extends itself.

Twenty years ago if someone phoned up wanting hoods for a Peregrine Falcon and Tiercel then almost certainly a size one hundred would fit the falcon and a ninety-four the male unless they were particularly large or small. Gradually this has decreased so now the appropriate sizes would be ninety-eight for the falcon and ninety-two for the tiercel, a drop of two per cent in overall size. This observation is obviously pretty much of a generalisation but never the less it seems to hold true for most of the larger species be they Goshawks, Harris Hawks, Sakers or Gyrs. Looking back through my old hawking diaries from forty years ago I am able to make a direct comparison between imported passage Sakrets and those produced domestically here now. The difference is on average that the domestically produced Sakrets are two to two and half ounces less in flying weight than their wild counterparts. By flying weight I mean hunting weight not just some lack lustre exercise to the lure. However it also should be remembered that these imported hawks were taken as passage hawks and consequently there was a need to fly them considerably sharper than their domestic cousins. So in actual fact the size difference is probably nearer three ounces on average.

The same is true of Peregrine Falcons

and in fact I have two wild taken ones with me now that were illegally taken from the nest last year. Because those that were responsible for stealing them from their eyrie were not falconers but merely persons seeking to sell them for profit both falcons are mal imprinted. But even allowing for this they both fly well over the two pound mark, whereas so many domestic Peregrines now fly around the thirty to thirty one ounce mark. It goes without saying that I am generalising here and there are plenty of Peregrines that will fly over two pounds but the majority do seem to be gradually getting slightly smaller. I am not convinced, however, that size is of such a critical criteria, certainly not the Holy Grail that some would appear to have turned it into.

During my many years of trapping Tundra Peregrine Falcons along with Harris Hawks and Red Tails in Mexico, for ringing purposes as well as falconry, then I can tell you that size variation in wild raptors of the same species and sex can be enormous. I have personally trapped male Harris Hawks that weighed fifteen ounces and at the other end of the scale twenty eight ounces. The fifteen ounce example, whilst being extreme I grant you, was in adult plumage and appeared to be the alpha male in the family group he was hunting with. So it was not as if he was a runt that was just managing



Immature Peregrine falcon

to cling onto survival by the skin of his metaphorical teeth.

A will to survive

Survival, and therefore hunting success amongst other things, has more to do with attitude and opportunity. I well remember some twenty years ago accompanying a falconer that was engaged in a ringing program for Prairie Falcons in Utah and Wyoming. I went along purely as an observer as Prairies had long been one of my favourite falcons. The third falcon we caught on our first day was a tiercel that had obviously broken its leg at some time or other. The leg was set at a strange angle and although the tiercel could use the leg he could not open or close his foot. We had used a Dho-Ghaza net with a starling as a bait bird and the Prairie Tiercel had come in and hit the starling so hard he had decapitated it before being caught himself in the net. The Prairie

tiercel was removed from the net as quickly as possible, checked over, rung, photographed and released as quickly as possible. He circled us as we released him and we threw out his starling for him which he duly took. I have to say he was in remarkably good condition and had a nice rounded keel, something not often seen in wild taken falcons.

Some 10 days later we were back in the same area and on spotting a large female Prairie on a water tower we set out net and baited it with a quail. The falcon bobbed her head and made an approach to our net but at the last minute pulled out of her attack and disappeared into the distance. Whilst watching her leave we became aware of another falcon circling and this one drove home the attack and was duly caught in our net. It was our friend with the damaged leg again. So he had obviously learnt to deal with his handicap and was surviving admirably.

This tiercel wasn't particularly large or small; he was an average Prairie tiercel when it came to size. But he was endowed with a strong and passionate will to survive and was doing so admirably. I kept in touch with my bird ringing companion and it turned out that the following season he had rung three Prairie eyasses at the eyrie and the father turned out to be the damaged leg tiercel.

A bigger hawk should mean more hitting power in the case of a falcon and perhaps more strength in the case of a hawk. But to my mind size should not be the first criteria by which a hawk is judged. Also allowances should be made for all the other elements that can contribute to the mental attitude of the hawk when it is brought to the field to hunt. Big most certainly is not a bad thing but by the same token it certainly does not guarantee best.



Author with a male Goshawk



Peregrine Falcon

Raptor envy

on the national seal gripping arrows and an olive branch, symbolizing the power of peace and war. The prevalence of raptors being used in this fashion, from medieval coats of arms to the modern flags of nation states, is probably only comparable to man's use of big

cats in this way, especially the lion.

In this modern age, we still manage to use raptors as a symbol, if not on a flag, as team mascots in sport. The Philadelphia Eagles and the Atlanta Falcons are two prime examples. Perhaps the greatest modern symbolic tribute is the F-22 Raptor, the new stealth air superiority fighter being used by the United States Air Force, considered by the USAF to be unbeatable.

In a more benevolent approach, volunteers at the Cascade Raptor Center (CRC) in Eugene, Oregon, are paying homage to raptors in their own way. CRC was founded 17 years ago by Louise Shimmel, an international financier out of Madrid who, by chance, fell in love with Oregon and the rehabilitation of wounded animals.

The non-profit organization, which tries to release rehabilitated birds of prey back into the wild, has grown tremendously since it's beginning, now with two paid staff, over 40 volunteers and about 65 permanent raptor residents that cannot return to nature. About 50 percent of injured birds brought to CRC or rescued by the volunteers actually survive, but this 50 percent on average is over 250 birds a year. When the volunteers at CRC are not working with raptors, they are educating visitors from all age ranges about the many different birds of prey living at the CRC, from pygmy owls to bald eagles, peregrine falcons to red-tailed hawks.

Why this human fascination with birds

of prey? There are many different kinds of birds in the wild. Yet humans are rarely as enthralled by sparrows as we are by eagles, owls, hawks or falcons. Many ancient religions and the Native Americans especially revered the eagles, symbols to some and sacred beings to others. The importance of raptors to humanity is undeniable and unique.

Perhaps it is because we admire these birds so much. Humans have desired to fly for centuries and looking up into the sky, there could not have been a more desirable creature to emulate. The noble eyes and beak, the commanding gaze, the powerful wings whooshing an eagle aloft, the precise daredevil stoops of hunting falcons. How inspiring and uplifting it must have been for humans of antiquity to gaze upon these creatures. We still feel it today.

Perhaps we are so inspired by these birds because we see so much of ourselves in these soaring rulers of the sky. We dominate our terra and raptors dominate the clouds. There is a difference between them and us though. Raptors do it with balance, never throwing off the ecosystem like we have too often done; and they do it with such grace and authority, the proud aristocracy of the skies. The nobility we claim to have in our veins pales in comparison to the raw nobility of the bird of prey.

There is much we can learn from raptors about living here on earth. We often fashion ourselves as falcons, or eagles, which is a fine tribute. But the best tribute would not be team mascots or F-22s. No, a proper tribute would be improving ourselves as humanity and living in harmony with nature even as we dominate the land. A proper tribute is the work done at the Cascade Raptor Center, where people volunteer their time to improve the world, one injured bird at a time.

Raptors are such a cultural phenomenon in mainstream America that you can find the impact they have made almost anywhere you look.

To clarify, when I say "raptor," I don't mean the terrifying reptilian monsters hunting for man-flesh in Jurassic Park, but rather the avian bird of prey that has so fascinated man for thousands of years.

This attraction has manifested itself in many different ways, one being falconry, the sport of hunting birds with raptors of an assorted menagerie, which can be traced back to the ancient Greeks, Romans and Chinese. The sport spread throughout history and became especially popular with medieval Europe and Japan. Falconry, along with the immigrants, migrated to America and is still legal (with some restrictions) and enjoyed in 48 states. Humans, hunting to survive before the greatest civilizations rose above dust, must have been in awe and even envious of the ease with which a skilled falcon could make a kill. For a species so prone to violence, it must have been eye candy. It still is.

The raptor, in particular the eagle, became a symbol of power and authority with many kingdoms, monarchs and nation-states over the course of history, most famously the Romans, The Holy Roman Empire, Napoleon, America and more infamously, the Nazis. America still holds the Bald Eagle in high esteem, the beautiful raptor front and center

The Wildlife Licensing and Registration Service



animalhealth

The Wildlife Licensing and Registration Service (WLRS) is responsible for two areas of work:

- Registration of Birds listed on Schedule 4 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, and
- Considering applications to import, export and sale endangered species, under CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species)

Registration of Schedule 4 birds

Any bird listed on Schedule 4 and kept in captivity must be registered by the day-to-day keeper with the Wildlife Licensing and Registration Service (WLRS) of Animal Health. If you keep a Schedule 4 bird, or have such a bird in your possession or control, you are the 'Keeper', even though you may not be the owner of the bird. Each bird must be registered under an acceptable unique mark.

England and Wales

This year has seen lots of changes in England and Wales to the species listed on Schedule 4 and how we register birds.

Hybrids are no longer registrable. The following species of birds must be registered with WLRS by way of the blue registration document:

Golden Eagle
Goshawk
Honey Buzzard
Marsh Harrier
Montagu's Harrier
Osprey
White-tailed Eagle

The Peregrine Falcon and Merlin must also be registered with WLRS and must be covered by one of the following documents:

- a blue registration document, or
- a yellow Article 10 (CITES) Specimen Specific Certificate (with the breeder's or keeper's name and Animal Health ID number) issued by WLRS, or
- a yellow Article 10 (CITES) Transaction Specific Certificate (issued to the actual keeper of the bird with their name and full address) issued by WLRS

The new legislation which made these changes requires birds to be recorded on a database maintained by the Secretary of State. This means that semi-complete certificates are not valid for the purpose of registration until WLRS have updated

their records with the details of the bird supplied on the pink copy of the certificate.

Rings and microchips

We no longer supply closed rings for Schedule 4 birds in England and Wales. To comply with the bird registration controls keepers are required to permanently mark birds with a uniquely numbered closed ring or if that is not possible, a microchip.

Contact details of suppliers of rings can be found on our website <http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalhealth/CITES/birdregistration/links.htm#rings>.

If a ring number has already been recorded on the WLRS database, we will be unable to register it under that identifier, and the bird must be microchipped and registered under the microchip number.

As mentioned above, if the physical or behavioural properties of a bird do not allow the safe fitting of a ring, it may be registered under a microchip number. The microchip must comply with ISO Standards 11784:1996 (E) and 11785:1996 (E). This is a microchip with a fifteen digit number. Microchips should

be available from your local vet. For a detailed explanation of the marking requirements, please see our website <http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalhealth/CITES/news/080922-birdregchanges.htm>

Registering a Bird

Most first-time keepers of a Schedule 4 bird will have obtained their bird from someone who has, or should have, already registered the bird in their own name.

If that keeper had a blue registration document, it should be passed on to the next keeper along with the bird. The back of the registration document serves as a registration application form for the new keeper.

If the bird is a peregrine or a merlin, and is covered by a yellow Specimen Specific Certificate issued by WLRS, that bird is already registered and there is no need to re-apply to register it in your own name. If a peregrine or merlin was registered by way of a yellow transaction specific certificate, you will need to apply to WLRS for a transaction specific certificate in your own name, or you may prefer to apply for a blue registration document if you do not intend to use the bird commercially.

If you are not given any documentation when you acquire a Schedule 4 bird, you can contact WLRS (see address below) for an alternative application form.

Scotland

There have been no changes to Schedule 4 and how birds are registered in Scotland. Please see our website for further details: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalhealth/CITES/news/080922-birdregchanges.htm#scotland>

The Scottish Government are progressing Orders to amend the Bird Registration Scheme in Scotland which will bring it in line with England and Wales. The Orders are expected to be laid shortly and the legislation will take effect once the Orders have been laid for the appropriate timescale and approved by the Scottish Parliament

Origin of birds

We strongly advise that you check the origins of any bird before you acquire it. The 1981 Act forbids the taking of most birds from the wild, unless they are

disabled, (see Information Sheet 5) and puts the burden of proof on the keeper to show that the bird was acquired legally. Therefore a keeper could be found guilty of possessing an illegally taken bird even if he/she did not personally remove it from the wild.

Wild Disabled Birds

If a bird is to be rehabilitated and released back into the wild within a short period of time it does not need to be marked and will be registered under a UR Licence (i.e. a licence to keep a bird unringed) issued by WLRS for birds held in England, or by the Welsh Assembly Government or the Scottish Government as appropriate for keepers in Wales and Scotland. This licence will be valid for an appropriate period to be determined on a case by case basis. If the bird is so disabled that a vet considers it is likely to remain in captivity permanently, it must be fitted with a microchip transponder and registered by the Wildlife Licensing and Registration Service under the microchip number.

We are looking at procedures for wild disabled birds and will be monitoring more closely the rehabilitation and release of wild disabled Schedule 4 birds. More details about wild disabled birds are given in Guidance Note 13 <http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalhealth/CITES/guidance/GN13.htm>.

Import, Export and Sale of Endangered species (CITES controls)

There have been no changes to the European Council Regulations implementing CITES (the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) in the European Union in relation to birds of prey.

Commercial use

If your bird is a species listed on Annex A (see list at the end), or is a hybrid of one or more of those species, you will need to obtain an Article 10 certificate before you can use it commercially.

Guidance Note 2 (GN2) provides further details on commercial use <http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalhealth/CITES/guidance/GN2.htm>.

We can issue two different types of certificate. These are known as Specimen Specific Certificates (previously

known as breeders certificates) and Transaction Certificates (previously known as holders certificates).

Specimen Specific Certificates (SSCs)

These are 'one off' certificates that will be valid for all commercial uses for the specimen. They are generally issued to breeders, and provided the description in Box 4 does not change they act as passports for the specimen throughout its life. Unlike a transaction certificate they can be used in other EU countries. If you have an Article 10 certificate from another EU member state and are not sure whether it will allow you to use the bird in the UK, contact us and we will be happy to advise you, but we may need to see a copy of the certificate.

Another type of specimen specific certificate that we may issue to breeders is a 'semi-complete' certificate. This type of certificate is only issued to breeders of the birds who agree to abide by certain rules when using them. Part of the certificate is left blank for the breeder to complete in typescript and the pink part is returned to us as soon as it has been used. The advantage to these is that they can be applied for at the beginning of the breeding season and allow birds to be moved on quickly for imprinting.

Transaction Specific Certificates (TSCs)

We may decide to restrict a certificate to a specific holder in the interest of conservation, or where there are welfare implications, or when a specimen is not correctly marked. In these cases we may issue a transaction specific certificate instead of a specimen specific certificate. This will state what it may be used for, but it usually restricts the type of commercial use, and may only be used by the person named on it. Again, more information is given in Guidance Note 2.

Marking requirements

Before WLRS can issue a certificate Annex A birds of prey must be permanently and uniquely marked. Currently, birds bred in captivity must be fitted with a closed ring, or if this is not possible due to the physical or behavioural characteristics of the specimen concerned, an unalterable microchip that meets ISO Standards

11784:1996 and 11785:1998 (E). Closed rings are continuous metal bands with out any breaks. Birds permanently taken from the wild (or birds of unknown origin) must also be fitted with an unalterable microchip. If this is not possible due to the physical or behavioural characteristics of the specimen concerned, they may be marked with a ring, band, tag, tattoo or other appropriate method.

Import and Export

All birds of prey are listed on Annex A or B and will need a CITES permit if they are going to/arriving from a country outside the EU. The permit must be issued before any movement takes place. Guidance Note 1 (GNI) provides further details of the import/export requirements <http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalhealth/CITES/guidance/GNI.htm>. All application forms are

available from our website <http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalhealth/Forms/list.asp?subject=CITES>

You do not need a certificate or permit simply to possess a CITES specimen (unless it is listed on Schedule 4 – see above).

CITES Charges

From the 6th April 2009 new CITES charges were introduced. Briefly, the new charges are:

EC Certificate for commercial use (known as an Article 10 certificate) £25
 Import and export permits (issued under Articles 4 and 5 of Regulation EC338/97) £59

EC Certificates for zoological & scientific institutions (issued under Article 60 of Regulation EC865/2006) £177

Detailed guidance on how the new charges apply to CITES applications,

how costs can be minimised and how you can apply for waiver can be found here: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalhealth/Charges/citesfees.htm>

**Animal Health
 Wildlife Licensing Registration
 Service (WLRS)
 Temple Quay House
 2 The Square
 Bristol
 BS1 6EB**

Tel: 0117 372 8774
 Fax: 0117 372 8206

E-mail: wildlife.licensing@animalhealth.gsi.gov.uk

Website: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalhealth/cites/>

List of Annex A Birds of prey

Scientific name	Common name		
<i>Accipiter brevipes</i>	Levant sparrowhawk	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>	Peregrine falcon
<i>Accipiter gentilis</i>	Goshawk	<i>Falco punctatus</i>	Mauritius kestrel
<i>Accipiter nisus</i>	Eurasian sparrowhawk	<i>Falco rusticolus</i>	Gyr falcon
<i>Aegolius funereus</i>	Boreal owl	<i>Falco subbuteo</i>	Eurasian hobby
<i>Aegypius monarchus</i>	Cinereous vulture	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	Common kestrel
<i>Aquila adalberti</i>	Adalbert's eagle	<i>Falco vespertinus</i>	Red-footed falcon
<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>	Golden eagle	<i>Glaucidium passerinum</i>	Eurasian pygmy owl
<i>Aquila clanga</i>	Greater-spotted eagle	<i>Gymnogyps californianus</i>	Californian condor
<i>Aquila heliaca</i>	Imperial eagle	<i>Gypaetus barbatus</i>	Lammergeier
<i>Aquila pomarina</i>	Lesser-spotted eagle	<i>Gyps fulvus</i>	Eurasian griffon
<i>Asio flammeus</i>	Short-eared owl	<i>Haliaeetus spp</i>	Sea eagles
<i>Asio otus</i>	Long-eared owl	<i>Harpia harpyja</i>	Harpy eagle
<i>Athene blewitti</i>	Forest owlet	<i>Hieraetus fasciatus</i>	Bonnelli's eagle
<i>Athene noctua</i>	Little owl	<i>Hieraetus pennatus</i>	Booted eagle
<i>Bubo bubo</i>	Eurasian eagle owl	<i>Leucopternis occidentalis</i>	Grey-backed hawk
<i>Buteo buteo</i>	Common buzzard	<i>Milvus migrans</i>	Black kite
<i>Buteo lagopus</i>	Rough-legged buzzard	<i>Milvus milvus</i>	Red kite
<i>Buteo rufinus</i>	Long-legged buzzard	<i>Mimizuku gurneyi</i>	Lesser eagle owl
<i>Chondrohierax uncinatus wilsonii</i>	Cuban Hook-billed kite	<i>Neophron percnopterus</i>	Egyptian vulture
<i>Circaetus gallicus</i>	Short-toed snake eagle	<i>Ninox novaeseelandiae undulata</i>	Norfolk boobook
<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>	Western marsh harrier	<i>Ninox squamipila natalis</i>	Christmas hawk owl
<i>Circus cyaneus</i>	Northern harrier	<i>Nyctea scandiaca</i>	Snowy owl
<i>Circus macrourus</i>	Pallid harrier	<i>Otus irenae</i>	Sokoke scops owl
<i>Circus pygargus</i>	Montagu's harrier	<i>Otus scops</i>	Eurasian scops owl
<i>Elanus caeruleus</i>	Black-winged kite	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>	Osprey
<i>Eutriorchis astur</i>	Madagascar serpent eagle	<i>Pernis apivornis</i>	European honey buzzard
<i>Falco araea</i>	Seychelles kestrel	<i>Pithecophaga jefferyi</i>	Great Phillipine eagle
<i>Falco biarmicus</i>	Lanner falcon	<i>Strix aluco</i>	Tawny owl
<i>Falco cherrug</i>	Saker falcon	<i>Strix nebulosa</i>	Great grey owl
<i>Falco columbarius</i>	Merlin	<i>Strix uralensis</i>	Ural owl
<i>Falco eleonora</i>	Eleonora's falcon	<i>Surnia ulula</i>	Northern hawk owl
<i>Falco jugger</i>	Lagger falcon	<i>Tyto alba</i>	Barn owl
<i>Falco naumanni</i>	Lesser kestrel	<i>Tyto soumagnei</i>	Soumagne's owl
<i>Falco newtoni</i>	Newton's kestrel	<i>Vultur gryphus</i>	Andean condor
<i>Falco pelegrinoides</i>	Barbary falcon		

Apart from certain New World vultures all other birds of prey are included in Annex B.

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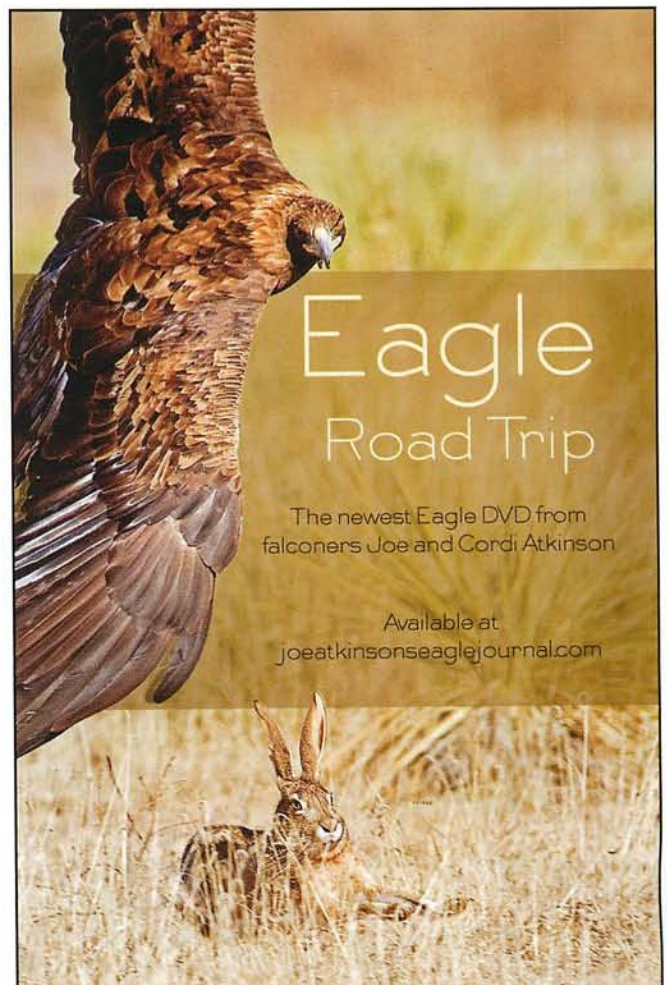
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Two old birds together

It's many years since I lost my exceptional female Goshawk, Cruella. I put everything I had into making her a steady, capable bird and she was a joy to be with. She did have one hangup, and it was due to a miscalculation on my part. During manning, in which I tried to get her used to every scenario and then some, I chose to walk across a field containing two aged nags, defined by their grizzled grey foreheads and rheumy eyes.

It went well to start with, and then seemingly for no reason they started to take an interest. Cruella kept her beady eyes on them and vice versa. I started to hurry realising that they were approaching fast, the elderly pair had turned their turbo's on and had decided they wanted to see us gone. I managed to get Cruella's hood on (her-not me) and climbed the gate as they reared and squealed – a hoof narrowly missing my head. Suffice to say that we did make it safely out but it did give her a hang-up about horses and when out hawking should she spy one she made herself temporarily scarce.

Anyway, I'm burbling as one tends to in one's latter years.

When a Goshawk was offered, I snapped her up

This part of the story started in 2007. Chris and I had booked a hawking holiday in Scotland, when the hawk I had planned to take bruised a shoulder in the moult chamber. I had only four weeks to sort something out and when a young Goshawk was offered, without stopping to think, I snapped her up. Yes, of course I could get a bird of the year up and running in a few weeks, I'd done it many times. But as we know, they're all different.

Chaos turned out to be of that temperament that told me she would



Chicks in a basket

do things in her own time, hence her name. To hell with my time constraints – she would do things 'as and when' and yarboosucks to me.

My main problem with settling Chaos was that we live in a very quiet area where not a lot happens. But it was 'silage' season so we had plenty of tractors rumbling by with their huge clamps rattling, plenty of sheep round-ups with the whistling and calling that that entails, and eventually, aided by a rabbit spine and a lot of imagination, she eventually became pretty steady in all scenarios. Time was flying by and it was obvious that she would not be ready in time for our jaunt to Scotland.

I suppose it has happened many times to many people – when you get an unexpected call that can change the course of your life. A friend had heard about Chaos and had been looking for a large parent reared female Goshawk.

Would I be interested in exchanging her for his imprint female Goshawk – a bird I had known for all of her 12 years. I had seen this bird as a chick at one of our club meetings during her imprinting and had known her on and off ever since. And so the deal was done and in early September the swap took place, my first year bird for the older, much more experienced bird that I'd known all her life.

The weathering into which she went was set up with a remote camera, the monitor for which was in the kitchen. It had been set-up mainly to watch the young Goshawk, her reactions to dogs, ferrets, people and generally to keep an eye on her. My hawk accommodation is on high ground due to being on a hill, which is very handy as it gives the birds the advantage of height.

After one or two setbacks (which mainly consisted of her attacking my Wellington boots with evil intent), we

were up and running in a relatively short space of time and she took her first rabbit on her 10th day here. Well, that was it – and after much packing and re-packing of all that was needed for a hawking holiday, Chris and I, Kevin the Brittany, Beano the ferret and the Goshawk were off to Scotland.

Mud, glorious mud

We spent two days with a friend in the Borders. Due to the immense amount of rain which apparently had gone on unabated for weeks, the going was hard – well no, actually the going was soft – so soft that we sank with every step. We spent one very frustrating afternoon chasing a pheasant and the bird from one end of a valley to the other – the valley was deep and very steep sided. The flight started promisingly enough and as we watched, the hawk was closing fast on the fleeing cock bird.

We squelched our way along the top of the valley nearly sinking to our armpits especially near the trough where the cattle had collected to drink. The telemetry was telling us that she was not moving and that she was in the bottom. An hour went by – one of our party had given up trying to keep his boots on but was game to go on in his socks. Then we saw her – right in the bottom obviously marking her quarry. A few well aimed missiles dislodged the pheasant and they both headed back the way we had come. She was right on its tail but we saw it dump into some scrub and she took stand above it. We all looked at one another and grimaced as we set off again, squelching and muddied to the armpits. Then we collapsed with laughter – we must have looked so funny to anyone watching, four people and a dog floundering around in the mud and seemingly dedicated to a television aerial thingy.

Good old 'sods law' was out to get us – as we were halfway back, we all watched in amazement as the cock bird closely followed by the hawk shot past us again going back the way we had just come. One or two hours passed, by now we were past caring about time, the telemetry had her fixed and unmoving and as I slipped and slid down a steep gully I heard her bell close to my left. As I peered through the bracken I could see her red eyes glowing and her feet triumphantly pulsing on her quarry. As

I got nearer there was the unmistakable pungent odour of stoat or weasel, and sure enough that's what she'd got.

We took a slow and slippery walk back to the vehicles, all of us now tainted with "eau de Weasel" and cleaned ourselves up as best we could. Mikes socks were ditched and as the only shoes we had for him were two sizes too small he decided to stick with bare feet. News of our goings on had obviously reached the hostelry well in advance of our appearance and we had two hours of p***-taking to go through.

The longest slip . . . ever

The following day found us out on a piece of moorland where rabbits had been in abundance in previous years. Not a lot to be seen now though and no buries were marked by Kevin as most were under water. We walked up a couple of Border rabbits, recognised as such by their red/orange pelts out of some reeds which the hawk took on but she was still relatively unfit. We walked over to a Peels tower which is on higher ground and where we knew there were lots of buries. I kept the bird on my glove as Kevin got to work – she had definitely seen something – head moving gauging distance, crown up, feet gripping. I was tempted to release her but am so glad I didn't – she had seen a Barn Owl high on the ramparts of the tower which glided off silently and disappeared into the forest – against a stormy sky this was just such a magical sight. The buries were empty so we walked back and over to a promising looking boulder strewn bank.

Kevin had a positive point on a bury amongst the rocks and so the ferret got to work at last. Banging from underground got the hawk going and as the rabbit hit the ground running the old hawk was swiftly away. I stayed on the high ground for a short time to get a bead on where they had gone – down the slope, the hawk threw up and over a stock fence, through a huge reed bed, out the other side and on into the distance. I started to run and left Chris at the top to direct me – and then I heard the unmistakable sound that told me she had at last achieved success.

As I got nearer there was a huge flash of lightning followed by thunder and then the heavens opened. I hate hurrying a bird on a kill, she had worked long and hard for that rabbit so I took off my

hawking vest and sheltered her as best I could. When she'd settled she was quite happy to step up onto the glove, then we made a beeline for a belt of shelter until the storm had passed.

Back at base, I got to work with the hair dryer and after a cropful of food she settled down quite happily, put one foot up and dozed in the watery sunlight.

The following morning we re-packed the vehicle, and with the Goshawk still smelling of weasel we continued our journey through the stunning scenery that is Scotland to our final destination. On arrival in Perth we set about getting everything settled into their quarters whilst we renewed friendships made in past years and it was a happy band of people, united through falconry, that sat down to a very decent meal that evening.

Gareth could run as fast as a hare

During our week, there is one particular incident which sticks in my mind, and doubtless the minds of all those we were out with. We had palled up with some friends from Bristol and their son Gareth, who, we discovered can run as fast as a hare. We had chosen this particular piece of ground as we knew it was home to the ubiquitous brown hare, none of which had ever been bought to book in all the years they'd been pursued. Maybe we'd



Juvenile Goshawk



Mature female Goshawk (mother of juvenile)

succeed where others had failed!

It wasn't long before our first hare gave the hawk a good run for her money – she was making headway both going towards a dry stone wall and then it wasn't there, poof, just like magic, never to be seen again that day. It wasn't long before another was sighted, crouched in its form and we got reasonably close before it moved and ran uphill with the hawk hot on its heels. We saw her connect with its head and get kicked off – she connected again and got kicked off – up again and as she went in, it stopped and then immediately ran downhill. Again she was closing and this is where Gareth started his run, legs blurring with speed, hare, hawk and Gareth all racing downhill – but the hare had the last laugh and just as they appeared to be coming together, the hare changed tack and headed up hill again, leaving the bird and Gareth flat out and gasping for breath.

I picked up my tired bird, made a fuss of her, told her she had been brave to try and then noticed that during the melee she had had a talon ripped out – fortunately only her balance toe, no blood, no swelling, no fuss, just no talon.

Back at base I fed her a good cropful and put her out in the sun where she took a long, leisurely bath and rested contentedly.

The next four days were very productive for the hawk who was now fully fit. We had all thoroughly enjoyed ourselves in good company, with good food and plenty of flying.

About a fox and a fence post

One afternoon when I had been working hard at my Aboriginal art, with the bird right outside the window on her bow, a movement outside obviously caught my eye and on looking up I just couldn't believe what I was seeing – 10 feet away from the hawk was a very sick looking fox – low to the ground, eyes rimmed with green goo.

My first instinct was to grab the camera from the kitchen, but in that split second it could be on her – the second instinct was to let the dogs out but as the fox was right behind her they'd have mown her down in their attempt to get the fox. I still can't believe she didn't see it, but her eyes had been trained on me as feeding time had been fast approaching. I ran out but far from running off it sat and looked at me. I hurled a handful of stones and it eventually slunk away, through the gate and into the ditch. We found it dead by our pond two days later. Chris bought some mesh the following day and we made the hawk a huge cage in which she can now be left out with confidence.

Back at home during one of our hunting trips, the ferret pushed a rabbit out which ran down hill in the larch woods, the hawk in hot pursuit and in a blur they both crashed into a bramble thicket. Chris and I heard a resounding 'clunk', then silence. I ran down and cut my way through the brambles.

The bird was lying on her side – she had hit a fence post which had been hidden in the cover. As I very carefully scooped her up, she shook herself, but her eyes appeared to have almost been knocked into the back of her head. Once she'd come round she scrambled to get onto the glove and peered into the brambles to check if the rabbit was still around. I called to Chris to get the ferret and Kevin and by the time we got home she seemed fully recovered, all but her eyes. A visit to the vet confirmed that her vision had not been affected long-term but we gave her a week off anyway. The

only sign of the collision now is that her mandibles grow crooked, the upper to the left, the lower to the right which we have found we can keep in check with regular coping sessions.

I had decided to try and breed from my good old Goshawk and as she was an imprint I sent her off to her original breeder for Al'ing. It would be lovely for her to have chicks, she'd always produced copious amounts of eggs with her previous owner but had never had the chance to actually produce anything. What with one thing and another it didn't go to plan as the three eggs she laid were clear. Could age be a factor we wondered?

We collected her and let her finish her moult at home and got her out looking in tiptop condition in October 2008. The season went very well – we all had enormous fun together, but as we all know that winter was a hard one and when we got snow shortly after Christmas I hit real problems – she just flatly refused to hunt in the snow. I tried all sorts of things but the snow completely turned her off and so the season finished early.

My hawk got two chicks to look after . . . at last!

During that season I had hatched some plots with a friend who also reckoned that she should be given a chance to reproduce – but taking into account that she was fast approaching 14 years old he told me not to hold my breath, and she was soon happily settled into her breeding pen.

The Al'ing went to plan and she produced three eggs, two of which were fertile. The eggs developed copybook style and the first chick hatched in mid May closely followed by the second. Both chicks doing well. Chris and I saw them when they were 4 days old and they both looked strong healthy little fluffy things that reminded us of E.T. and it was planned to get them back under her the following day. We waited with bated breath to hear what she would make of them – would it be minced meat or love at first sight?

Well, it was nearly minced meat – she had found them quite interesting but all she wanted to do seemingly was pick them up and drop them off the nest-ledge. Noticing the problem, this very experienced breeder quietly removed

them and went to plan B. Chris and I were sat on the edge of our seats, longing to know what was happening, but as time went on with no further information, we had to assume that no news was good news.

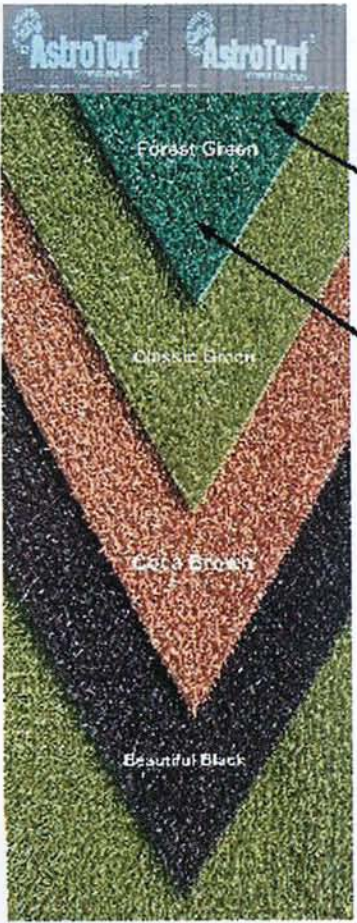
It turned out that, in this case, no news HAD been good news. The second day they were placed in the nest she not only sat them but started to feed them. We saw them again when they were four weeks old – two lovely chicks could be seen through the spyhole being attended to by their now devoted mother. I was a 'granny' at last – joy of joys.

Although they were both male we were very impressed with the span of their feet, almost as big as their mother's and I just couldn't wait for them to harden and get started on training.

As I write this article, the female is completing her moult and looking good and the youngster, now called Gus, is coming along very nicely in his training and although I plan to dedicate the majority of this season to him I am on the itch to get my dear old girl out to continue our partnership – hunting in the hills, two old birds together.



Brittany on point



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Which dog for falconers?

When I was asked by Peter Eldrett, your editor, to write an article I had just finished a demonstration on working dogs at this year's Falconer's Fair in Shropshire. My experience with dogs has developed since I was a child and grew into a full time occupation. However, I keep a Harris Hawk for the purpose of familiarising dogs in training with birds of prey, and flying over the dogs in demonstrations.

I am therefore very much a "dog man" as opposed to a "falconer" – as anyone unfortunate enough to have witnessed my display will agree!

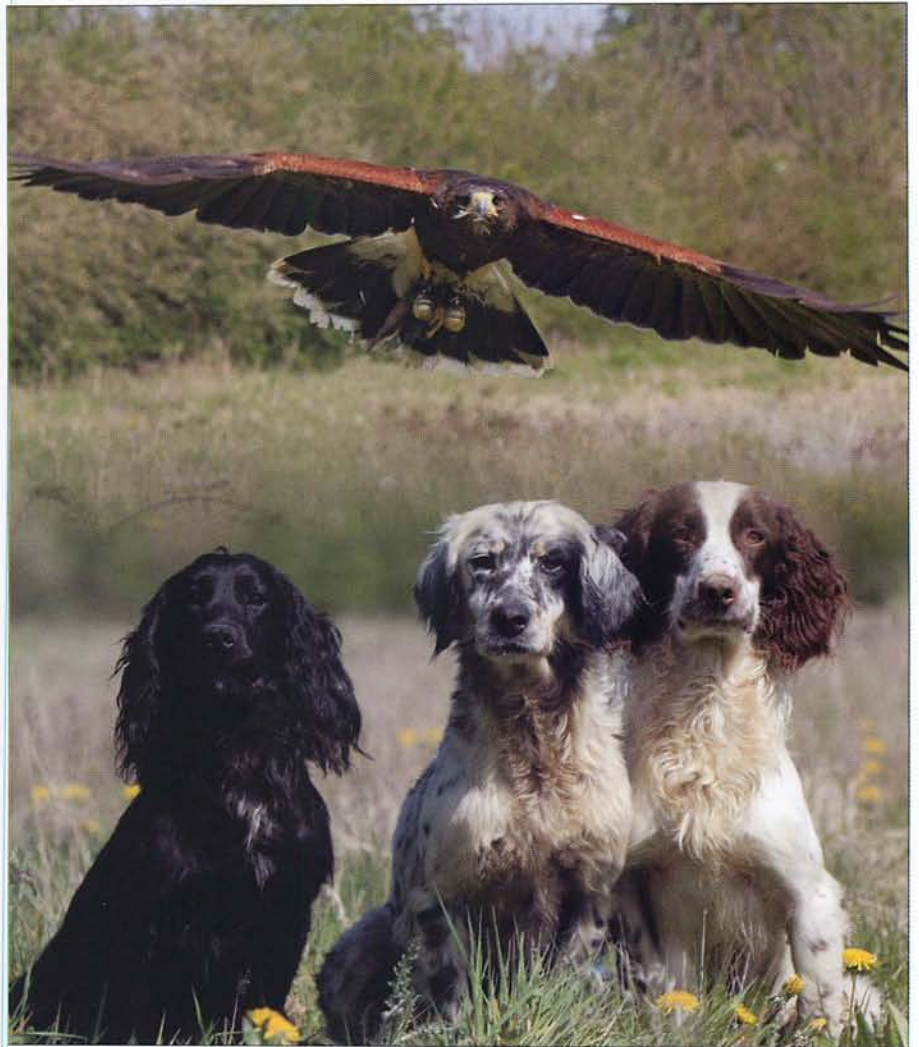
I am sure that many readers will fall into the opposite category in that they are falconers with a passion and view the dog as a necessary assistant. With that in mind my article is founded upon basic principles for anyone considering purchasing and training a dog to work with a bird of prey.

However, before we look at the breeds available some consideration needs to be given to the following options:-

1. Starting with a puppy
2. Buying part-trained
3. Buying fully trained
4. Dog or bitch
5. Can it still be a pet.

1. Starting with a Puppy

If you choose the puppy route you have the benefit of what to most of us is the enjoyable experience of rearing a young animal, taking pride in how it develops thanks to our efforts. You also have the benefit of developing a bond at an early age and encouraging good habits and discouraging bad ones. The disadvantage is that you have to be a good enough trainer in six months time to get the best



Hawk flying over dogs

from your pupil. With this also comes of course the immense pride and satisfaction when you succeed.

I know a lot of falconers who have attended courses in order to get a basic grounding in their craft but very few that have contacted a good professional dog trainer to help them with their dog. With the many pitfalls that await the novice handler a day or two spent at professional kennels should prove invaluable.

2. Buying Part-Trained

The label "part-trained" means different

things to different people. I would class a part-trained falconer's dog as completely obedient in the basics; sit, stay, heel and come. This is the foundation of steadiness in your dog and must be done very thoroughly.

The methods of achieving results are simple but time-consuming. The dog will now be around 8 to 10 months old and you will have the advantage of seeing his/her character evolving. You will be able to judge for yourself if he or she is too boisterous or maybe too soft for your liking. We all suit different

types of animal and the choice is yours.

Even some experienced and capable handlers achieve better results with certain temperaments so the novice can expect the same. Again the dog's temperament will play a part in how quickly it settles in and begins to bond with the new owner. When we sell a part-trained dog we go to great lengths to ensure that the new owner is confident as to what is required to keep his youngster on the right path, and you should wherever possible try to make this happen.

3. Buying Fully Trained

For the owner without time and facilities this can provide a very attractive option but, as with "part-trained", "fully trained" means different things to different people. It should mean that it is the complete finished article – obedient, on the whistle, hunting, pointing, flushing and steady to all game.

Trained dogs come up for sale for various reasons; many people think that if an adult is for sale it must have a problem and sometimes they do. However, many dogs are offered for sale for genuine reasons.

Many Field Trialers sell young dogs which may not be fast and stylish enough for their purpose but make excellent falconry dogs. These may be shooting dogs but can still make perfect dogs for the falconer.

We sometimes have dogs that have become bored with demonstration work that are very well trained or trained specifically to be sold when finished.

You should be given a very thorough demonstration of the dog working on game before you make your purchase. Again dogs vary in how quickly they settle into their new homes but even a four year old should soon fit in.

4. Dog or Bitch

Just as a good horse is never a bad colour, a good dog is never the wrong sex. Generally, however, the most experienced trainers would agree that dogs are usually stronger characters, harder temperaments, and more independent than bitches, but this is a "big" generalisation.

I have seen too many great dogs and too many great bitches to make a "black or white" statement.

5. Can it still be a pet

Well contrary to a lot of opinions I train many dogs for people that have to be a pet as well as a working dog. If the family treat the dog as a dog and not a toy there really should not be a problem.

We always keep one dog indoors and the last two that we have had, have been amongst the best we have ever owned. So common sense must prevail!

Choosing a breed

There is now a much bigger selection for the falconer to choose from than even 20 years ago. This is largely due to the increase in the Hunt, Point and Retrieve (HPR) breeds from abroad which have become very fashionable. Generally breeds can be broken down into dogs which have a contact flush, and breeds which indicate the presence of game by pointing it. Each have different merits and vary tremendously in character and trainability. Unfortunately novice handlers are far too often guided by their eyes and not their brains when choosing their canine companion. It must be said at this stage that a puppy from pure working strain should make the job of training a lot easier.

A breed said to have a contact flush is any dog which on finding game flushes it immediately. This category would generally be covered by the spaniel breeds.

I would suggest an English Springer Spaniel or Working Cocker as the best options. There is now a strong Clumber Spaniel Club which have done wonders to revive the breed in the field. My experience of them is that they can make capable dogs but are generally less responsive than the English Springer Spaniels and Cockers. We have Sussex and Field Spaniels but these are dominated by the 'Show World' and seem to have less drive and natural ability.

Labradors and Retrievers are very trainable but usually lack the drive required to hunt heavy brambles but as always there are exceptions.

The advantage of all the above against pointing breeds is that they should hold a very tight hunting pattern in heavy cover and woodland. Although they do not indicate by pointing their game (however some do), the general body language of the dog on scenting game should give the handler plenty of warning of the flush.

The second option of pointing breeds is favoured by many, especially those flying falcons. This group give plenty of warning to the handler by freezing behind the discovered game thus pointing it. You now have plenty of time to get yourself and your bird into position.

The decision to opt for our own native pointers and setters or one of the many breeds from abroad categorised as Hunt Point and Retrieve (HPR) breeds may be influenced by the type of ground you will be working. Our native breeds are the classic Moorland dog, working at speed and taking in a lot of ground. They are also very useful on a lot of our arable land which has large fields suitable very often for partridge.

The HPR group are equally at home hunting up the side of a hedge or woodland as they are more amenable to hunting a little closer, although still not as tight as a spaniel.

The most popular of this classification that we train are the German Short-haired and Wire-haired Pointers, Vizlas and Brittany Spaniels. In my experience they have a little more drive generally than many of their competitors. Having said that many handlers prefer a slower dog that "potters" but it must have the ability and natural instinct to find game, which some may lack.

When making your final choice take your time and do some homework. Go to the trouble to find some experienced handlers, with good representatives of the breeds, and be sure to buy from the best available.

I sometimes travel miles to look at dogs because the difference between the best and the average raw material is significant and so it is worth the effort!

A final word of advice - there is a lot more to achieving the best from a young dog than the majority of us imagine. It is no sign of defeat to ask very early on, the advice of a good experienced or professional trainer, to help prevent problems that may otherwise arise. Don't leave it until it is too late!

You can contact Graham at
Gamegoer Gundogs for more information

www.gamegoer.co.uk

Tel: 07889 821711

Discovering the true art of falconry ... continued

It's a curious and somewhat awe-inspiring thing looking into the eyes of a Berkut. When one has an eagle of such prowess and magnificence gripping onto the bulk of their gauntleted arm such an event is difficult to avoid . . . and why would one ever want to?

He stands so tall that his eyes are level with my own. I look at him and he coolly stares straight back, almost as if he's looking right through me with eyes that burn with the gentle fury of glowing embers and molten lava, liquid and wonderful. His face, framed with a shimmering and golden mane of feathers, tells the tale of a creature who is certainly no stranger to human kind.

Throughout history they have soared our skies and watched over our trials and tribulations as we have carved our way through time, in an attempt to establish our own place in this world. We have

struggled, we have broken, we have destroyed and all the while their great shadow remains hanging, with such ease, like a watchman in the winds, a constant reminder of our own vanities and greed. How much we have changed and evolved as a species and how little they have ever needed to . . . surely a testament to the utter perfection of eagles, falcons and hawks alike.

Despite our imperfections and being the blatant cause for a lot of the destruction of our precious and delicate planet many of us have seen sense and have revered the eagle as one of the true lords of the sky. We have noted their power and their sheer deadliness and yet, when the coin has been flipped, we have also acknowledged their mercy, intelligence, understanding and gentility; and how glorious it is.

In years gone by the eagle has become a truly iconic symbol. Men have ridden

into battle with them astride their fists, as a sign of power and freedom, they are depicted in folk lore and song as being the heralds of the skies and a symbol of grace and when Tolkien wrote his epic tale *Lord of the Rings* it was the eagles that valiantly came to the rescue every time it seemed as if all hope had been lost for our heroes. No wonder the Berkuts were described as the Emperor's Bird for what mightier charge could an Emperor ask for?

I have certainly held eagles in high reverence from a very, very young age and since then I have been fortunate enough to have come into very close contact with a few. Since reading *Eagle Dreams*, *Bird Of Jove* and *Garden of Eagles* I have had a profound fascination with the Berkut in particular. The two former books I have listed have focussed heavily on this eastern and far larger, more aggressive sub species of our well known golden eagle and all of these books have mentioned the challenges and delights of having the divine privilege of working with these amazing raptors. Needless to say I have learned that they can be one hell of a challenge to train and work alongside, but that only spurs my enthusiasm on further!

I have had the lucky fortune of meeting a Berkut and having it sit on my fist for a few special moments. As I have mentioned already, the experience really is quite profound and awe inspiring. His name is Star, a three-year-old male eagle and belongs to David Fox, author of the excellent *Garden of Eagles*, who kindly gave me the opportunity to meet Star personally. I wondered how long it would be before I was able to meet a Berkut face to face and I have to say I thought I'd be waiting many years . . . thanks to David's generosity and trusting kindness, however, my wish was granted far sooner



Author with Golden Eagle

and I have to say that Star was a credit to him – perfectly calm, tolerant and well behaved. I hope that I may see him in full action in the field and meet with him once again in the not too distant future . . . he really was wonderful and I think of him often.

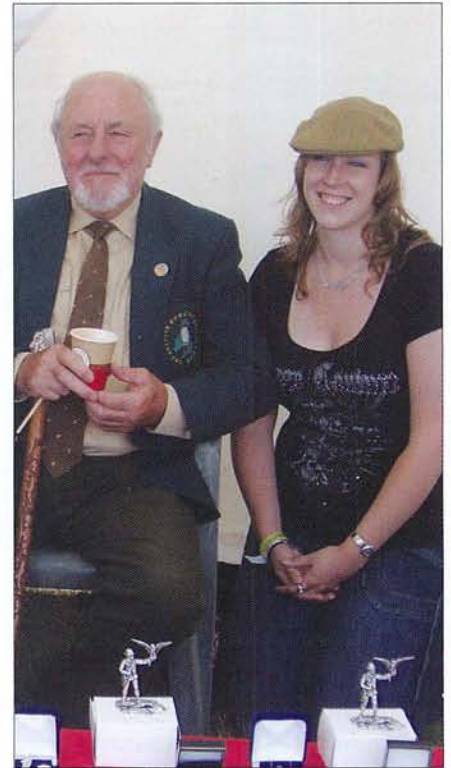
An event to remember

This fortuitous meeting between apprentice falconer and eagle took place at the International Festival of Falconry 2009 and is an event that most falconers and non-falconers alike will have heard of. Nonetheless I feel I must make some mention of it before I continue any further. Set in the picturesque surroundings of Englefield House in Reading it was certainly an event to remember. The festival had been generously backed by the Arab Emirates, whose representatives were to be found in the cosy and welcoming Bedouin camp that had been set up on the far side of the grounds. Along with lots of promotional falcon-related gifts flown in all the way from Abu Dhabi and tasty dates there were also staff from the Abu Dhabi Saluki centre giving away promotional flyers and a beautiful storybook produced especially for the event. Literally thousands of people flocked to the festival and what I thought was the best part of the whole weekend was that they had all come to celebrate a common love – falconry. Between helping out on the Falcon Leisure stall, run by Bob Dalton, and multiple visits to the coffee van I was able to take several opportunities to have a good look around all the various tents and displays. It was fantastic to see so many people from all over the world gathered, in full and very impressive ceremonial regalia to mark a truly ancient sport in their own unique way. People came from as far as New Zealand, Mongolia, Kazakhstan, Peru and the USA (not to mention many other places spreading from far oceans and across many lands). Along for the ride were also some well-known favourites from all over Great Britain including well renowned artists Martin Brooks and Carl Bass (plus many others), the Irish Falconry Club, the Scottish Falconry Club, Diana Durman-Walters, who is president of the German Wire Haired Pointer Club and along with her comrades put on a fabulous display, Central Falconry and again many, many

others – if I attempted to list them all I may well use up my word count for this article!

Various displays took place over the course of the weekend including falcons being flown to kites, a Harris hawk and red tailed hawk being flown at a dummy bunny and also an impressive display showing just how effectively dogs and hawks could be worked together, not to mention all the others that were equally as impressive. On my travels somewhere between the Falconiformes tent (yes, our good friend Jan Wooning and his crew from Holland had made it in time to join the festivities) and Marshall Telemetry I had the delightful pleasure of running into Roger Upton, who was joined by his brother Peter.

I am a fan of old black and white movies and I believe it may be due to the fact that it offers me a rare glimpse into a time when the true *lady and gentleman* still existed in considerable numbers – two breeds that now, unfortunately, appear to be rapidly dying out. As falconry has always been, traditionally, considered a gentleman's sport I feel this is a great pity. My brief encounter was one of those rare occasions when you take enormous pleasure in knowing that you have come across a real diamond in the rough – in this case a true gentleman and a true, 'old school' falconer and what a lovely chap Mr Upton seems to be. Unfortunately, because he is well known in falconry circles it was difficult to fire up any real conversation with him because everyone else had exactly the same idea! Bob and Roger are well acquainted, however, so I was lucky enough to get a formal introduction and now wish that one day I might meet Roger once again in the hope of perhaps hearing one or two tales from his life and his career in falconry. One of the best things about having Bob as a teacher are the stories from his own life as a falconer that he often regales us with and I always find each and every one of these tales entertaining, brilliant and also highly valuable as learning tools. Another wonderful gentleman, who has plenty of great stories to share is a fellow called George Roach, famous in his day for flying a cast of falcons from horseback in displays. Bob introduced me to George at the Falconry Fair earlier in the year and again at the festival, where he joined us



Having tea with George Roach

for a hearty cup of tea, a piece of cake and a memorable chat about falconry in days gone by. Truly fascinating stuff.

I could go on and on about the Festival but I feel it's probably already been covered in far greater depth by others so all that is really left for me to say on the subject, before I move on, is it was a brilliant turn out and I'm sure everyone enjoyed themselves tremendously . . . I know I certainly did. It was simply phenomenal and well done to the organisers for making it all happen.

In my last article I wrote about how I wanted to make a kill by the end of the summer with a young female Harris Hawk called Lucy. After I'd finished writing that article I made steady but good progress with her and spent a great deal of time manning her because she still wasn't overly happy about accepting anyone, apart from Bob, handling her. Despite this things were looking good in terms of meeting my goal.

In the interim Bob and I made a visit to the International Falconry Centre (in June), owned and run by Jemima Parry-Jones. He had loaned Dodgy, a 14 year-old male Harris Hawk to her for some display work she had. This had passed and now it was time to collect him and take him back home. As we were led down the path we could see Dodgy sat



Author with Jameson

on his bow perch on a little patch of lawn, surrounded by knee high picket fencing. Sat next to him was another male Harris hawk.

At first both Bob and I were confused as to why Jemima had needed the loan of a Harris Hawk when she already had one! Upon enquiring as to her reason she then proceeded to explain that this male Harris hawk was a 'rescue'. Confiscated, along with around 30 other birds that had all been badly mistreated he had been passed on to her and was the last to find a new home. She continued by telling us that they thought this hawk was probably five or six years old and hadn't ever been flown properly for the whole of his life and neither had he been manned sufficiently. As a result he had developed some really bad habits, the worst of which was his *constant* bating. For anyone who has visited the International Falconry Centre it would be easy to understand why such a hawk would never find a place there. It's on such a large scale that even out of breeding season the staff are constantly run off their feet. As Jemima stated, no one had the time to give him what he really needed and as a result he desperately needed a new home with someone who did.

Jameson:

Now I don't know if it was actually the case, or if I was simply having a sentimental moment, but he really did seem to be miserable. His eyes looked

dull and sad as he sat hunched awkwardly on his perch. Glances were exchanged between Bob and me and then Jemima handed me a glove and instructed me to have a go at picking him up. As I approached him the feathers on his head went flat, in that way they do when the hawk isn't overly sure of a person, and I prepared myself for the bating to begin. I used only slow and gentle movements and talked to him calmly, still convinced that pandemonium was sure to set in. But fortunately, after a brief pause as I put my glove down to him, he jumped to the fist most willingly, letting out low social growls and was as good as gold. . . much to everyone's surprise! And so it was that I first met Jameson.

Following that initial encounter it was decided that Jameson was to come home with me. I couldn't bear the thought of him falling into the hands of anyone who may let his suffering continue and was determined to give him the best shot at a life as I could, with Bob's help of course.

Three months down the line and he truly is a different creature. Gone are the days of his constant bating, his grumpy tantrums and his dull, depressed appearances. He now spends a lot of time with me sat on the lawn in the sun at home and he flies brilliantly. Within three weeks of having him back at home he was flying out of trees to my fist and he now follows on like a dream. Best of all, however . . . he's made a kill – a rabbit to be exact! Within the circles of

austringers and falconers this is a usual practice, but my excitement stems from those early days of owning him and feeling nothing but utter frustration . . . the type that makes you wonder if it will ever improve or get better. Jemima wasn't kidding when she said he bated all the time, it literally was *all* the time and it was bordering on nightmarish. Despite this, with grim determination and sheer doggedness and the use of many, many tirings we've overcome it and now bating is almost a thing of the past. As for Lucy and my ambitions that were to include her, I decided that because she already had a capable owner that would work her well and look after her properly I should concentrate all my efforts into my own hawk, who had not been so fortunate to begin with.

His weight hasn't exactly been easy to gauge. I initially could get him to fly to the fist, on a creance, at 11lb 6 ¼. However, it became obvious after spending 5 ½ hours under a tree trying to coax him down that this was certainly not his hunting weight. He now flies at 11lb 5 ¼. His weight is very erratic, as he seems to gain weight far easier than any other hawk I've come across thus far. Upon mentioning this to Bob he suggested that Jameson might have accumulated some internal fat, which can make a big difference to their weight gain and loss and obviously their overall general health.

I employed the use of wrangle, but only after having the process thoroughly explained to me several times. This involved putting a small pebble into the mouth of a dead day old chick, which is then fed to the hawk and thus helps to remove any residual fat. Following a couple of days of repeating this process (which is all it usually takes) Jameson seemed much sharper and his weight retention became far more predictable. Because of this his overall manageability became a lot easier.

It is unfortunate in some ways that I can never know what happened to him during the first few years of his life. In many ways starting from scratch with an eyass may well be simpler and more straightforward than breaking a mature hawk of old habits and teaching him new ones. Saying this, if done well and thoroughly Jameson is proof that it is possible. Plenty of manning, tirings (quail wings work wonders) and of course patience are required. With the right

wings work wonders) and of course patience are required. With the right combination of treatment and handling it's inevitable that one will end up with a hawk that looks to you for company and will come to know you as a companion rather than simply the person who brings food! Once this is achieved then the real sport can begin in earnest. Jameson certainly accepts me above all others now and it's nice to know that he is *my hawk* and it is Jemima's generosity that I'll always be grateful for; her gift of what turned out to be such a kind natured and delightful hawk will never go unappreciated.

To be honest I don't even mind if he never catches anything again, though of course it'd be great if he did for his sake more than my own. The true pleasure with this particular hawk comes when we go for a simple stroll through the woods. Having put him up in a nearby tree the hawk, ever gregarious and ever alert, remains quietly within the foliage, his keen eyes glinting occasionally as he patiently sits and waits for us to beat the scrub below. He knows the game well.

As we move off a way we listen carefully. First silence with nothing but a slight breeze to push the leaves around on the trees and the grasses on the earthen ground, then a tiny sound of bells. At this point you know he's there, right behind you. The rhythm of this type of hunting is not aggressive . . . in fact it's surprisingly gentle as equilibrium between companions unravels.

He's never in a hurry, but instead he glides effortlessly from tree to tree, often drifting right past us, a glimpse of auburns and deep fiery bronze. Occasionally he may drop down to meet us at the next gate post waiting for us ever patient and ever knowing. For me this is serenity at work, an almost spiritual experience and proof that man and creature can indeed work in perfect harmony.

I may contradict myself a little here. I have said that I really don't mind if Jameson chooses never to take quarry again – it is purely *his* choice. Saying this, however, I'm going to persist with him. When the season gets into full swing I hope to fly Jameson in anger at feathered quarry, as he seems to show more inclination to go after such creatures. . . more so than fur it would seem. Anyway – watch this space and hopefully thou shalt be rewarded with some good news!

When Peregrines Go Bad

As I'm sure many falconers will agree, the peregrine is sheer perfection. Even if hybrids are more your bag the peregrine is often a derivative, valued for her phenomenal power and above all speed. It is also with the peregrine, or a peregrine derived hybrid that the purest form of hawking can take place, upon the moors of Scotland and Northern England. Allow me to set the scene a little more.

It's just you and a few companions out on the moor. Below foot are rolling hills of thick mauve heather and weather worn rock that seem to carry on forever – untouched and unspoiled. Your face is numb from the biting cold winds that have whipped at your face for hours and hours and it is these same winds that churn up the grey, swirling skies – dark and unruly. The occasional break of blue sky, if any, is a welcome sight, the eye in the storm, but lasts only a few moments before you are to take another beating from this harsh and wild land. You begin to suspect that at any moment a band of blue woaded Celts will come charging over the next horizon, the metallic song of their Claymores ringing aloud! You've been dragging your legs through the heather for hours, ripping through the labyrinth of thick roots and your feet feel like lead. Your whole body aches and shivers – every joint feels as though it's about to collapse and you feel like this land could swallow you whole until, suddenly and without any prior sign, the dog goes on point. A huge rush of adrenaline shoots through your system and all hopelessness is forgotten, for the time of the falcon is nigh.

Her hood is removed and she quickly takes in her surroundings including the pointing dog rigid in its declaration of game. After a quick rouse she is away, swift and free. She is now in her element, riding the winds and whipping round on the turbulence. Struggle she certainly does not and in many ways one could take her jovial aerodynamic display as a show of her utter enjoyment. The dog remains steadfastly on point and completely motionless, fixated on the quarry and fully aware of the falcon above, who has now started to pump up towards her pitch. She carries on climbing, beating her wings and circling higher and higher, perhaps until she is sometimes a thousand feet above the tableau stretched out below her. Even



Peregrine falcon

if she can't be seen with the naked eye the falconer will undoubtedly know that somewhere up there she is waiting on, now gently soaring on the currents and awaiting the signal. When the falconer is sure that the falcon is correctly placed to be able to deliver a telling stoop he sends the dog in to flush the birds. Before the grouse has even lifted from their heathery hideout the falcon has folded her wings and is now plummeting earthwards, like a tear shaped torpedo, reaching speeds in excess of 200mph. Onlookers lose their breath as she is now almost at terminal velocity, hearts skip beats and hairs stand on end as she thunders towards the earth, cutting through the gale as if it were butter. Then, with the greatest ease and the gentle extension of her sickle wings she levels out as she approaches her prey with her feet outstretched. Gliding effortlessly past she gently cuffs her quarry with her back talon and sends it tumbling to the floor. It is almost invariably dead. The falcon flips over and lands, her quarry in foot – the reward for her valiant efforts and bravery is a feast of warm flesh from her kill.

The lead up to taking part in such sport, as with all other sports, requires a vigorous training regime. Following

Peter and Roger Upton



By this point the desire to throttle him was great. He's now being moulted at the block and come the new season will be trained deliberately and slowly as if from scratch in an attempt to iron out the wandering desire within.

Despite this little hiccup, Ralph is still a Peregrine and therefore an astounding creature in his own right. His boldness only adds to his personality and when the season really gets into full swing this year I'm sure, along with

training, if all goes well, this type of falconry is like a well-oiled machine. If it goes awry, however, the results can be one of three things. . . disastrous, irritating or downright hilarious!

In my last article I wrote about Ralph, the three year old tiercel that has recently come into Bob Dalton's care because its previous owner had simply tired of it. Falcons are not normally moved on without there being a very good reason for it and it was decided to find out what shortcomings, if any, Ralph had by getting him on the wing and assessing him properly before he was put down to moult. All was going swimmingly with his training and he was certainly showing plenty of gusto on the wing, often cuffing Bob in the back of the head in an effort to get an easy meal. This good behaviour did not last for long however, as we were to find out. Ralph went feral!

It all happened on a crisp spring morning. The news had reached me that Ralph had absconded and was last seen headed out of Hamptworth, northwards. He had been circling the training field and then, for reasons best known to himself, had gone! The chase was on. It would appear that falcons have, over the course of thousands of years, evolved so that they may fold their primary flight feathers down at the ends to create a shape that very much resembles a certain two-fingered hand gesture that we humans use in moments of rage, frustration or

simply times when we just need to be rude or cantankerous. With the use of telemetry Ralph was quite easily tracked down. Seven successive times Ralph was tracked down to a tree or telegraph pole. Upon discovery he would take off and the process of tracking would have to be repeated. The route he had chosen was, of course, one where a car could not be taken so an on foot pursuit followed . . . not for a few hours but all day. He stopped every now and again in a tree, then as soon as he was in sight he quickly left. I believe he thought it was a brilliant game of tag – probably because he was the only sure winner! Those who were in pursuit of him must have also, to him, looked ridiculous, thus encouraging him to misbehave further. Following severe trouser ripping, about ten thousand fights with barbed wire fences, a run in with a very wet stream, mass stinging nettle attacks, a tangle involving a bramble bush (which frankly had a mind of its own), two comedy falls off a fence (the ones that begin with much uncertain wobbling then a fall that ends in a roll right through some cow pats) and then an extremely unpleasant encounter with an irate badger that ended in the telemetry set being put to a previously entirely unthought-of use, Ralph eventually returned to one of the buildings on the estate of his own accord, and then came down to the lure as if nothing had happened!

the three other Peregrines that are being trained up, we will have lashings of fun. I am fortunate in that I have been given an intermewed eyass Peregrine Falcon to train and fly with Pheasant Hawking being the goal we will strive towards.

The Peregrine, in my opinion, is the noblest of all falcons. Compared to other falcons there is something totally unique about them, about the way they hold themselves and conduct themselves in every day existence. When in the presence of a Peregrine one can only feel as though you are initially being gazed upon under scrutiny and judgement, as the masked face looks you up and down. Once you have been deemed worthy then there is an air of acceptance, but that wildness never truly leaves them.

Their eyes tell the tale of their ancestors. They bear that same nobility, the same power and sheer fight that their forbearers also possessed. It is with this spirit to survive and rule over their airy and storm filled world, rife with torrents, gales and blizzards that they have purveyed throughout time to still be here today, unchanged with their same dark mask and gentle eyes, their presence surveyed across the globe. It's another curious thought that it may well have been the great ancestors of our modern day falcons and the ancestors of the fiery Goshawk also, that were partly responsible for the purveyance and survival of our own kin.

The Peregrine commands the sky.

Buteo Regalis

Part of my evolution as a serious game hawk was a stint flying an imprint female ferruginous hawk, aka *Buteo Regalis*. I had, up to that point, successfully flown a tiercel redtail, a female North American kestrel, and a passage tiercel Harris's hawk. I had the idea that I would like to try a ferruginous, but in Arizona one can only trap passage ferrugs. My research indicated that most falconers had been disappointed with their passage ferrugs in terms of their willingness to pursue jackrabbits. Many falconers who had flown imprints did not have this complaint, but did struggle with issues of serious aggression.

So off I sent to Wyoming for a permit to take an eyass ferruginous. It was

a very simple process and the permit was reasonably priced; I wish all states were as simple to deal with for non-resident raptor permits. I made contact with Rock Springs, Wyoming falconer Dan McCarron, who had flown several ferrugs in the past. With his generous assistance, I was shortly in possession of a young, dark-morph female ferruginous I named Ripley, after Sigourney Weaver's character in *Aliens*.

I raised her with the intent to avoid any nasty food aggression, and to that end I was successful by using operant conditioning, or what I fondly call the "Steve Layman method." She was still an imprint, but not once in the four years I flew her did she grab me or my hand in association with food. However, I always

handled her with the assumption she could (or would) display aggression if I got complacent. As a result I never had a serious problem with her. The only two incidents of aggression we experienced each led to significant changes in my falconry. More on that later . . .

Slope soaring

Here in Kingman the wind seems to always blow, so a proficient slope soaring hawk can be a real boon. Ripley was good at slope soaring, although she was no match for a redtail. This is really due to the design of the ferruginous: the surface area of their wings as compared to their body weight makes for much higher wing-loading than the redtail or the golden eagle. Thus, slow and lazy soaring is not their way. In a light wind, they must maintain a relatively high speed to avoid stalling. It was easiest to slope soar Ripley on a good windy day of at least 15 knots steady wind, preferably 20-25 knots. On a good sized hill, she would easily attain altitudes of 1000 feet or better. A couple of my favorite fields with very large hills (or small mountains) would frequently result in her specking out above.

Ripley's first jackrabbit came on one of those windy days where she was soaring very nicely. Up to that point in her maiden season she had been hesitant about grabbing jacks due to a lack of confidence. On this particular hunt she was soaring about 300 feet above a ridge line. My husband Greg and I were working the drainage below the slope, and we managed to flush a jack up the hill. Jacks usually know very well that a raptor is above them, and almost always flush away from the hill, a gamble that pays off for them 90% of the time. That day was Ripley's day, however. It seemed like the jack ran up the hill in slow motion, Greg and I hollering and running to try to keep it moving. Ripley held her position, but suddenly changed her mind and folded her wings. I saw her go for it and stopped to watch. Her stoop was magnificent, vertical, and hell-bent. I'm



Jamaica Smith with Ferrug

pretty sure the jack never knew what hit it. I, of course, was in seventh heaven, having worked very hard to get Ripley going on jacks. It had often seemed like it would never happen.

Case in point: on an earlier hunt Ripley flew across a wide drainage to perch on a hillside. I lost sight of her, but began working my way across the field, hoping for a good slip on a jack to give her the edge she needed for some confidence. Tyler, my gung-ho little female Brittany, suddenly locked up on point. But before my mind could even register the point, she lunged as the jack jumped, and she caught it. She immediately began thrashing the hapless jack from side to side. I yelled at her and she dropped the now mortally wounded jack, but I knew it was too late. Ripley arrived on the scene a handful of seconds later and grabbed the jack. It felt like a huge failure on my part at the time.

Problems with dogs

That was not the last time my Brittany would cause problems for Ripley. Working one of my favorite fields with a guest from out of state, avian veterinarian Dr. Mike Jones, Ripley was flying very nicely, and flew down a jack Tyler had flushed and chased. The flight continued over a rise and out of sight, but the scream of the jack signaled Ripley's success. However, Tyler was hot on her tail, and I had a feeling a confrontation was brewing.

I ran for all I was worth, and as I topped the rise I saw with horror that my ferruginous was angrily plucking my Brittany. The jack was nowhere to be seen. Ripley had Tyler by the neck and ribs, and was attempting to break in on her shoulder. Thankfully a dog's skin is much thicker than a rabbit's! I ran up and used the back of my glove to roll Ripley backwards off my dog. I picked up Tyler and handed her to Dr. Jones, asking him to check her out. I turned to deal with Ripley, who was seriously ticked off at this point. Then Dr. Jones pointed out the jack, which was dead on the ground behind Ripley. I showed her the jack, she took possession and began to break in, and Dr. Jones confirmed my dog was fine, not a mark on her but for a slightly thin spot on one shoulder.

One would think that would cure my Brittany of bad behavior around the hawk, but no, it happened again a couple

of weeks later. That time I heard her cry out, followed by silence. I ran hard, fearful that I would find Ripley with a talon through my dog's eye socket, but no. Tyler was lying on the ground several feet away and looking quite contrite. That time Ripley had managed to fend her off before she got a hold of the kill.

Tyler was not Ripley's only nemesis. Once during our second season I allowed my husband to bring along his yellow lab, Jessie. Ripley caught a jack, but when I arrived on the scene Jessie was chasing the jack around my bird in a big circle, completely oblivious to my shouting. The jack lit out for the horizon with Jessie hot on its tail. Ripley stalked around in a huff, I suppose hoping to find the jack she had caught. She refused to hunt after that. A few minutes later Jessie returned to the scene of the crime, her jaws bloody. She didn't even have the decency to bring the dead jack back with her. Jessie was never again allowed on a hunt with my ferrug. She is an exceptional dog when hunting ducks or upland birds, but the scream of a rabbit sends her over the edge, and all bets are off.

I always flew Ripley with telemetry, but I only needed it once. She was perched on the top of a rocky hill, about 200 feet up, while I worked the flats below her. The first hint of trouble was when I flushed a jack and got no response. I could no longer see her on the hill, but couldn't be sure she wasn't up there somewhere, ignoring me. However, I soon flushed another rabbit and still there was no sign of Ripley. Without a doubt she couldn't see the flushes. Whether that meant she was behind the hill or down on a kill I hadn't a clue. Her range was tremendous. When she was at weight, anything that slipped within sight of a good perch like that was fair game. I went straight to the car and got my telemetry receiver. The signal was rather confusing, and I called my husband in for backup. He was certain she was somewhere on the opposite side of the hill from where I had been hunting, but I was not convinced. Finally I got a signal I felt I could track and about ten minutes later I found her standing on what was left of a jackrabbit. She had eaten every morsel between the head and the hind legs, picking the spine so bare it looked like it had been professionally cleaned. When I got her home and weighed her I found that she had eaten over 500 grams

of jackrabbit. Her crop looked like it would split it was so enormous. But she was indeed one happy hawk. The signal had been confusing, by the way, because she had been down in a drainage, causing me to get a better signal from farther away, and also making it seem like she was on the other side of the hill, which she was not.

Speaking of range, I very well recall the day she took an incredibly long slip from a fairly low hillside perch. She missed, but not for lack of trying. The flight had happened parallel to a dirt road, so I was able to use my car to see just how far she had flown. It was over a quarter of a mile, or about half a kilometer.

A reference for cottontails

I think the most memorable hunt I had with Ripley involved a cottontail. This particular hunt helped me understand her gradual transition to a preference for cottontail over jackrabbit, despite her impressive ability to catch jackrabbits. I had been hunting along the top of a ridge line working her along the slope with the wind. Game seemed scarce, and I finally opted to cross the ridge through a saddle and hunt the lee side.

Ripley took a perch near the top of the ridge to my left as I came through the saddle. My Brittany worked her way down the slope to my right. She flushed a cottontail that had no idea the bird and I were up above. It ran up the slope straight at Ripley. It was about 15 feet (5 meters) in front of me when Ripley met it head on. But it saw her at the last moment, and jumped straight up. Ripley didn't bat an eye, but came up underneath it as if she knew all along that would happen. She did a full rotation midair with the rabbit in her talons, and came down on top of it.

The moment she touched down she did her typical routine with cottontails: gut it and eat it. I was used to finding her already eating with a steaming pile of entrails next to her. But I really didn't understand, until that day, just how fast she could do that. She came down on the rabbit with a foot on its head and the other on its rump. She immediately reached with her beak to the abdomen, and with one ripping motion pulled the intestines out and deposited them to the side. Then she reached down and grabbed the shoulder. With one hard pull she had a large hunk of meat to eat.

This whole process took maybe 5 or 6 seconds.

This ability to begin eating immediately is a key evolutionary aspect of *Buteo regalis*, and led to her transition from jackrabbits, which had been easier for her to catch, to a frustrating preference for cottontails. Although in her first and second seasons she lacked the manoeuvrability to reliably take cottontails, she eventually developed her closing agility to the point where she could make a fair effort on most of them, even late in the season. While she could break into a jackrabbit without my assistance, it definitely took considerably longer than she liked. Ferruginous hawks have that extra-wide gape for a reason: the faster they eat their kills, the less the eagles get when they come to rob them.

Strong wind

Where I live, jackrabbits are most numerous out in the open, flat areas of the valley, whereas the cottontails tend to live along the rocky hillsides and drainages beneath them. Unfortunately, when the wind blew (which is most of the time in Kingman) I could not hunt Ripley out in the flats. She would allow the wind to carry her to the next hill, which could be several miles away. So on windy days I had no choice but to slope soar her, which increased the cottontail slips and decreased the jack slips. Thus it was not possible to employ "frustration conditioning" by exposing her only to jacks and more firmly wedding her to my preferred quarry.

When I had my little girl, I decided

to transfer Ripley to another falconer. I carried my daughter on my back while hawking, and I could not take the risk that an imprint ferruginous hawk would inflict harm on my baby while she was on my back where I couldn't shelter her. I trapped a passage female Harris's hawk instead, and she has been the ideal hawking companion for me and my daughter, who is now 5. She also happens to be a much more reliable hawk when it comes to jackrabbits. She will stay with me even in a stiff breeze, and often shows a preference for the larger quarry. The only limiting factor is getting the jacks to run downwind on the really windy days. They're no dummies. While I enjoyed the education I gained from Ripley, I will likely not fly a ferruginous again. The female Harris's hawk is every bit as capable as the ferruginous, but with far fewer idiosyncracies, particularly if she is passage. Living in Arizona I have easy access to passage Harris's hawks, and in my opinion, there is simply no better all-around hawk for falconry in warmer regions. I also have a fondness for redtails, and I feel both the males and females of this species are superior to ferruginous in terms of suitability for falconry, and are of course better adapted than the Harris's to living in less temperate regions.

That being said, I would not hesitate to recommend the ferruginous to anyone looking for a different challenge, or perhaps some large raptor experience with the goal of flying a golden one day. Personality-wise, I believe the

ferruginous is a lot more like an eagle than a hawk. However, the ferruginous is a poor choice for the urban falconer. They need a great deal of room to fly and soar. Ripley would frequently fly to the opposite end of a ridge we were hunting, putting close to a mile between us. She would come back when she felt like it. She was just enjoying her freedom and ability to fly, especially on those days I had trouble producing slips. This is not a hawk that will do well in industrial lots and small urban fields.

Not a hawk for everyone

As for the aggression concerns, as I said earlier I had very few due to my respectful attitude toward her, and the use of operant conditioning. However, early in her third season she did foot me in the face. It was a slash, not a grab, and barely drew blood, but it surely got my attention. I had been attempting to fly a second bird that year, an eyass hybrid, but at that point I decided I had too much on my plate, and sold the hybrid. After that Ripley got all the attention she needed, and her aggression subsided immediately. The only other aggression issue involved hooding. I had elected not to hoodtrain her while she was an eyass, figuring I could easily do that later on using operant conditioning. It is safe to say that was my biggest mistake with her, although she really wasn't a nervous bird that required hooding. After making a kill, she would happily ride the fist back to the car without a single bate. I always allowed her to eat her meal before picking her up, so a full crop probably helped. At any rate, my attempts to hoodtrain her were a dismal failure. The longer I tried it, the more irritated she would become. Finally she would lash out at the hood, trying to foot it as it came close to her. Not long after that she made the connection that I was controlling the hood, and rather than try to grab it she would bate towards me with murder on her mind. The day she did that I decided I didn't want to hoodtrain her that badly.

In closing, I would say *Buteo regalis* is not for everyone, but if you have plenty of open space, suitable quarry, and a reliable method for avoiding and controlling aggression, then it may well be your next favorite hawk. Best Wishes, and Happy Hawking!



Ferrug in flight

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Part of the ring number has been replaced with an ? for security reasons

REMEMBER! We offer a service don't abuse it.

STOLEN x 6

BREF	RING NUMBERS	SPECIES	39651	?432?	BARN OWL	31477	?895?	KESTREL
54273	5260 / IBR43396YA	RED-TAILED HAWK	42808	?5BC?	TAWNY OWL	38456	?575?	HARRIS HAWK
56358	IBR49586X	RED-TAILED HAWK	43196	?233?	HARRIS HAWK	39797	?50BC0?	KESTREL
57865	IBR51731P	SPARROWHAWK	49803	?955?	HARRIS HAWK	46608	?39RR9? / ?709?	HARRIS HAWK
66974	IBR63612U	BARN OWL	55092	?632?	HARRIS HAWK	49238	?342?	RED-TAILED HAWK
74190	CHIPPED	STEPPE EAGLE	59216	?873?	HARRIS HAWK	54856	?258?	BARN OWL
74191	?	STEPPE EAGLE	59671	?940?	GYR X SAKER FALCON	60527	?933?	BARN OWL

REUNITED x 89

BREF	RING NUMBERS	SPECIES	61383	?044?	BARN OWL	62056	?093?	HARRIS HAWK
BARN OWL		9	62462	?104?	HARRIS HAWK	63622	?422?	KESTREL
COMMON BUZZARD		1	62628	?943?	BARN OWL	64319	?144?	BARN OWL
EUROPEAN EAGLE OWL		2	63971	?201?	PRAIRIE FALCON	64684	?155?	BARN OWL
GOLDEN EAGLE		1	64827	?504?	TAWNY OWL	66765	?253?	KESTREL
GOSHAWK		2	65420	?512?	PEREGRINE FALCON	70482	?871?	HARRIS HAWK
GYR HYBRID		11	65505	?YOONEEK?	LANNER FALCON	71209	?CH9?	LANNER FALCON
HARRIS HAWK		28	65935	?02HB	HARRIS HAWK	72924	?5148? / ?907?	BARN OWL
KESTREL 7			65964	?8MARRA0?	PEREGRINE X LANNER HYBRID	73112	?528?	SPARROWHAWK
LANNER FALCON		5	68522	?692?	SUPERIOR HARRIS HAWK	73665	?0XOWLS080?	EURASIAN EAGLE OWL
PEREGRINE FALCON		3	68738	?262?	KESTREL	73727	?RC9?	EURASIAN EAGLE OWL
PEREGRINE HYBRID		11	69998	?797?	GYR X SAKER FALCON	73730	N/A	KESTREL
RUPPELLES GRIFFON VULTURE		1	70471	?951?	HARRIS HAWK	73865	N/A	HARRIS HAWK
SAKER FALCON		1	71000	?897?	PEREGRINE X SAKER HYBRID	73915	?3969?	BARN OWL
SNOWY OWL		2	71442	?894?	KESTREL	73916	?05GB0?	EURASIAN EAGLE OWL
SPARROWHAWK		2	73869	?7 MARRA0?	PEREGRINE X LANNER HYBRID	73973	?9NL3457BEC12?	SAKER HYBRID
TAWNY OWL		2	73928	?B745?	SAKER FALCON	74062	N/A	SAKER FALCON
TURKEY VULTURE		1	73959	?907?	BARN OWL	74134	?897?	KESTREL
			74135	?833?	EURASIAN EAGLE OWL	74189	?7BC0?	KESTREL
			74297	?842?	HARRIS HAWK	74298	?81BC0?	BARN OWL
			74323	?428?	PEREGRINE FALCON	74302	N/A	MAGELLANS EAGLE OWL

LOST x 32 (this is a list of lost IBR registered birds)

BREF	RING NUMBER	SPECIES
29580	?FAK0?	BARN OWL
29768	?292?	HARRIS HAWK
30759	?861?	HARRIS HAWK
34086	?966?	SAKER FALCON

FOUND x 32

BREF	RING NUMBER	SPECIES
13142	?211?	BARN OWL
22485	?216?	EURASIAN EAGLE OWL
25033	?052?	BARN OWL
25034	?053?	BARN OWL

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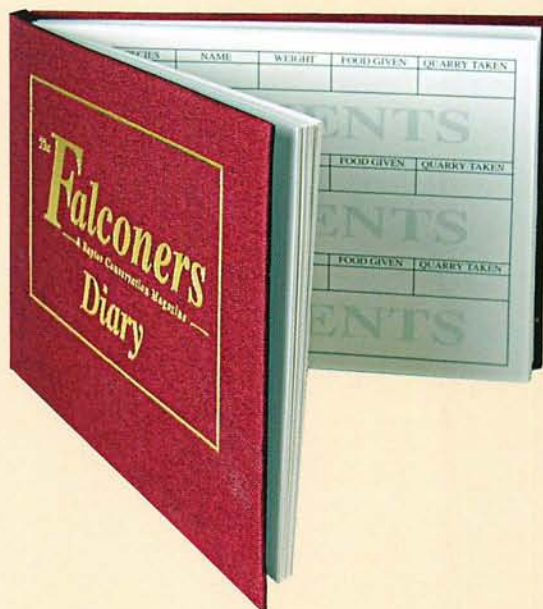
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