The International Association of Falconry and Conservation of Birds of Prey

Circular Letter No. 1

1. In this my initial Circular Letter as President of the International Association of Falconry and Conservation of Birds of Prey, I wish in the first place to express my thanks to the Founder Members of this Association for the great honour they have done me in electing me as its first President. I promise you all that I shall do my utmost during my term of office to uphold the interests both of Falconry and of Conservation, and to develop the Association so that it obtains recognition in International circles as the one responsible body representing the true interests of falconers and Falconry Clubs and Associations on a world-wide basis.

   I am confident that I can count upon the support of all present and future members of this Association in pursuing the above aims, and in upholding the Principles adopted at the inaugural meeting of the Association in April 1968.

2. My main object in sending you this letter is to draw your attention to the enclosed Report, drawn up by me, on the IXth Conference of the International Council for Bird Preservation, held in Hungary on 15th - 19th May, 1968, which I attended as President and representative of the British Falconers Club (An associated Society of the British Section of the Council).

3. It will be seen that this discloses a disturbing state of affairs, which will need to be considered by the International Associa ion at its next meeting.

4. With reference to Paragraph 9 (3) of the Report, I would like to propose for your consideration the addition of a new Section (between III and IV) to the Principles of the International Association adopted in April 1968, to the following effect:

   " Research

   Promotion of research into the breeding of birds of prey in captivity, with the following objectives:

   (1) Preserving threatened species from extinction

   (2) Restocking suitable wild habitats

   (3) Providing a source of supply of hawks for falconers in substitution for hawks obtained from the wild. "

5. The adoption and inclusion of the above principle would, I believe, favourably impress Conservationist organisations; and in fact a growing number of falconers are already devoting resources in time, space, and money to hawk-breeding programmes.

6. Members of this International Association, and all other falconry bodies claiming or aspiring to nation-wide (as distinct from merely local) status must, I suggest, now ask themselves whether the luxury of rival and often hostile associations in the same country can any longer be afforded. The dangers threatening falconry are such that a common front is more necessary now than it has ever been in the past: and I accordingly feel entitled to call on all falconers

of good will everywhere to forget past feuds, close the ranks, and unite to safeguard our common heritage.

7. May I end with an appeal to all individual falconers, to whose notice the contents of this Circular letter, or of the accompanying Report, may come, whether belonging to Clubs comprised within this International Association, or to other national or local clubs, or to no clubs, to do their utmost to conduct the sport of falconry in such a way as to demonstrate to ornithologists, biologists, conservationists, sportsmen, landowners, Government departments, and all other interested parties that falconry is not only a time-honoured but a noble and reputable sport; and that the falconers who practise it are respectable and responsible people who know more and care more about birds of prey than anyone else, and are passionately devoted to the real long-term interests of all birds of prey everywhere in the world.

J. G. Mavrogordato,
President, The International Association
of Falconry and Conservation of Birds of
Prey,

South Manor,
Tilshead, Wilts.

15th August, 1968.