

Newsletter



QUOD TOTUM PROCEDIT EX AMORE

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Others: Keiya Nakajima, The Falconiformes Centre, Japan - jaface@ylw.mmtr.or.jp, Matt Gage, Tony James, Frank Bond, Patrick Morel, Tim Kimmel, Tony Crosswell, Janusz Sielicki



EDITOR'S FORWARD

Anthony Crosswell

As I write the first eggs of the new breeding season are incubating and the first eyasses hatching. My Gyrs wake me at first light with a call to the new day. The next hunting season is a far off dream spurring my desire with enthusiasm to get me out of bed. Dogs welcome me to the new day, the dawn chorus of songbirds fills the village in this small corner of England. Life goes on.

All over the world falconers modestly conduct their own way of life practising our sport reliant on support from their friends and neighbours. Some are strong enough to manage their own government authorities to maintain today's enabling regulatory framework. The values of falconry are in essence the same the world over and clubs arise in many different cultures as people come together to aid their own more modest individual effort. 35 years ago the trend in international regulation presented falconers with a need for all organisations to share their representation and coordinate management. What had hitherto been seen as individual difference came to be seen as shared values from many diverse cultures.

Last year saw welcome of the international community by the first group of middle eastern falconers to join our Association. The AGM was held in the UAE at the kind invitation and sponsorship of the Emirates Falconers Club where many falconers from all over the world had their first insight into the culture of falconry in this part of the world. Shortly after the AGM we all heard the sad news of the death of one of the most significant contributors to our sport in this part of the world - Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan. His insight and commitment to the world of falconry has been immense over many years.

Sheikh Zayed's international dimension in the creation of conservation effort related to falconry has had a tremendous and positive impact. His contact and message has been an inspiration world-wide. In our commercial world the strains of exploitation often set themselves in some tension against scientific endeavour and the needs of conservation even when based on sustainable use. Political aspects affect us all.

IAF has a challenging line to tread in representing the whole falconry community. Defining policy when opposing ideals might command equal respect in different parts of the globe requires alertness and insight. Not to degenerate into a circus act seeking public support from those who care not in the slightest for our way of life, far less respect our values and ideals presents many falconers with hard choices, sometimes not well managed. Reverence for our sport can be appreciated when seen in a culture of high religious values.

Undoubtedly the plight of the Saker falcon is of concern to us all. A few years ago the Peregrine was in dire straits world-wide and extreme measures were adopted in different parts of the world to bring about its recovery. Falconers played a major role as a few individuals saw an opportunity for radical measures. Dr Tom Cade recruited our own Vice President Frank Bond along with a few friends to set in place the modern concept of conservation that led to what falconry is in the US today. Selfless individuals driven by true values of our sport and not in any way by commercial motive have

secured a future for our sport that might be the envy of many different parts of the world.

The current challenges that confront us in the Saker issue were appreciated by many in the range states and not least by Sheikh Zayed. He will be sadly missed but his values will live on in our work.

Anthony Crosswell
Executive Secretary IAF





Treasurer

Antonio Carapuço
Portugal
Tel +351 919 728203 Fax +351 262 950 147
E-mail: a.carapuço@mail.telepac.pt

Advisory committee members:

Gilles Nortier - Chairman
France
Home Tel ++33 388 95 80 03
Fax ++33 388 95 89 28
mob ++33 689 21 84 03
E-mail: gilles.nortier@libertysurf.fr

Dr J. Timothy Kimmel, Ph.D. - Substitute Chairman,
USA
Tel: 620-792-9331 (W) 620-562-3509 (H);
620-786-1164 (Fax)
E-mail: kimmelt@bartonccc.edu
E-mail: kimmelt@hbcomm.net



Majid Al Mansouri
United Arab Emirates
Phone: 00971 -2- 6934606
Fax: 00971 -2- 6817357
Email:
malmansouri@erwda.gov.ae

IAF Officers 2005

President

Patrick Morel
Belgium
Tel: ++32 10 88 11 88
Fax: ++32 10 88 11 77
mob. ++32 495 18 82 77
E-mail: iaf.president@skynet.be



Vice President Americas

Frank M Bond
Office: ++505-988-5600
Home: ++505-984-2061
Fax: ++505-982-0185
Fax home 505 983 2999
E-mail: gyrfalk@aol.com

Christian de Coune
Belgium
tel : ++32 4 368 40 21
fax : ++32 4 368 40 15
E-mail: christian.decoune@belgacom.net

Dr. Hermann Döttlinger
Deutschland
Tel.: +49 (0) 8444 7588
Fax: +49 (0) 8161 953 195
E-mail: herdoe@pfaffenhofen.de



Dr Matthew JG Gage
United Kingdom
Tel 01603 592183
Mobile 07815518278
Fax 01603 592250
Email: m.gage@uea.ac.uk

Vice President Europe-Asia-Africa-Oceania

José Manuel Rodríguez-Villa
Spain
Tel/fax:00 34 91 650 00 80
mobile: 00 34 608 61 11 56
E-mail: jm.rodriiguez-villa@aubisa.es

Executive Secretary

Anthony Crosswell
United Kingdom
Tel / Fax ++44 1379 677 296
E-mail: gyr@gyrcross.freemove.co.uk

Dr Robert Kenward
United Kingdom
Tel: +44 1305 213606
fax: +44 1305 213600
H 44 1929 553759
mob 447720
E-mail: reke@ceh.ac.uk

Lorenzo Machin Acosta
Spain
Tel: ++ 34 91 8566639
Mobile 00 34 659 62 77 47
E-mail: lorenzonebli@jazzfree.com

Janusz Sielicki
Poland
Off Tel ++48 22 43 41. 501
Mobile +48-502-19-60-61
E-mail: jsielicki@gfk.pl

Martin Jones
United Kingdom
Tel ++44 1600 750 300
Fax ++44 1600 750 450
E-mail: Martin@falconryonline.com

Information Advisors (not members of the AC)

Gary Timbrell, Public Relations Officer
Ireland.
Tel: 00 353 21 7730298 or 00 8 6650619
Email: gary1timbrell@eircom.net or
iaf.informationbureau@dublin.com

Dr Jevgeni Shergalin, Scientific Information Adviser
Estonia
Tel: (3725) 090684
Fax: (3726) 599351
E-mail: zoolit@hotmail.com

The Late Sheikh Zayed

First Falconer and True Supporter to Wildlife Conservation

Within the December-2004 issue of its periodical "Al-Saggar", the Emirates Falconers' Club published a special profile about the late Sheikh Zayed as a falconer and environment supporter. This profile underscored that with the demise of Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, President and founding father of the United Arab Emirates, the world was bereft of arguably one of the greatest conservationists of this century whose forthright vision of falconry and conservation long preceded the present-day global conservationists' movement.

Dubbed as the fore-runner of contemporary falconers and conservationists across the world, Sheikh Zayed was born a conservationist. Although he was born into a harshly inhospitable environment of the Arabian deserts where the Bedouins eked out a living through hunting, young Zayed foresaw the need to strike a balance between preservation of the ancestral heritage of falconry and hunting on the one hand, and ensuring the long-term survival of falcons and of their prey on the other. Without such a symmetrical balance, he believed, not only would the saker, peregrine and houbara species face extinction but also that the very tradition of Arab falconry that has been handed down from one generation to next would disappear into oblivion.

This view, by any stretch of imagination, was a transcendental and far-sighted view that modern conservationists today know as "sustainable hunting". Clearly, Sheikh Zayed was not only ahead of his own generation but also far ahead of the entire worldwide conservationist movement.

By mid-1930s, Sheikh Zayed became both falconer and conservationist with a fully blossomed vision of conservation. This was an encompassing vision in which he envisioned a transformed conservation-friendly society. In the social arena, Zayed was undisputedly the epitome of Arab falconry, for he exhibited an enormous ontological and intuitive knowledge of Mother Nature, thus enabling him to capture the imagination of his Bedouin society. His social stature enabled him to inculcate the values of conservation into the society. For instance, he taught the society that, despite the ruggedness of the environment in those days, it was incumbent for the society to be conservative rather than destructive of its ecology.

He argued that the society owed it to the next generations that this environment and its habitats be conserved and passed over as pristinely as ever to the posterity.

He also introduced a humane face to the concept of falconry which he perceived as an invaluable sport and heritage. In this sport, his skills were again unrivalled as chronicled by the great British desert explorer, Sir Wilfred Thesiger, who hunted with him over half a century ago.

In a nutshell, Zayed stood for conservationists' values as a matter of conviction and necessity. He loved the nature and the wildlife as never before. In the words of renowned British journalist Patrick Seale who met him 1965 in his hometown of Al Ain where he was governor, Sheikh Zayed *knew every stone, every tree, and every bird of his domain. Above all,*





he understood the importance of preserving every drop of water and putting it to productive use. Tree-planting was his passion.

He knew his own social and environmental milieu so well and cherished a dream of turning it into treasure for the next generations. As a visionary leader, he knew that his vision of conservation would only be realized by working with his people. One way of doing it was through the sports of falconry itself. Zayed himself described the particular attraction of traditional Arabian falconry, not just the sport itself, but the companionship of the hunt, for in Arabia, unlike elsewhere in the world, falconry is a communal pursuit.



It permits, he wrote, "each and every member of the expedition to speak freely and express his ideas and viewpoints without inhibition and restraint, and allows the one responsible to acquaint himself with the wishes of his people, to know their problems and perceive their views accurately, and thus to be in a position to help and improve their situation."

What was uniquely fascinating about Sheikh Zayed - the man and the conservationist - was his ability to remain focused on his convictions and values.

Even when he became President of the seven-member federation of the United Arab Emirates, including Abu Dhabi, which was established in 1971 after the British withdrew from the Arabian Gulf, he was neither swayed by the affluence of modern life nor by many responsibilities which he had to shoulder.

On the contrary, this marked the beginning of a new era when he was able to ensure that his concern for conservation took on a nation-wide approach, and a raft of legislation followed. Prior to the federation, Zayed had sharpened an advanced view on conservation in the early 1960s. In the early 1960s, for example, aware that high-powered rifles and four-wheel drive vehicles were threatening to bring the Arabian Oryx to the verge of extinction, he arranged, just in time, for the capture of two breeding pairs for the nucleus of a captive-breeding programme. Today, 40 years later, there are well over 4,000 Arabian Oryxes in captivity in the UAE, many on his own private nature reserve island of Sir Bani Yas, along with hundreds of other endangered species like the Arabian gazelle and the scimitar-horned Oryx.

Release programmes are now being planned. In 1966, when he became Ruler of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, then beginning its rapid rise as an oil producer, Sheikh Zayed created the Association for Animal Welfare, a group of rangers who patrolled the deserts to ensure that there was no uncontrolled

hunting of wildlife. The populations of Arabian gazelles, pigeons, hares and other wild animals were immediate beneficiaries.

Sheikh Zayed's efforts on falconry and conservation continued unabated, not just as a participant but also as a source of numerous initiatives that were to have far-reaching effect. Of significance in this respect, was his initiative to organize the first World Conference on Falconry and Conservation, held in Abu Dhabi at the end of 1976, which for the first time brought falconers from North America, Europe and the Far East together with falconers from Arabia. The conference acted as a launching pad for a strategy devised by Sheikh Zayed to bring falconers into the mainstream of emerging conservation efforts.

It was at this time that captive-bred falcons from Europe first began to appear in Arabia, launching a trend that today sees most Arab falconers choosing captive-bred birds for preference, thus reducing the off take from wild stocks.

In the early 1980s, Sheikh Zayed established a falcon hospital at Al Khazna, outside Abu Dhabi, this being followed in 1999 by the Abu Dhabi Falcon Hospital, part of Abu Dhabi's Environmental Research and Wildlife Development Agency, ERWDA. Today, this hospital, working with the Emirates Falconers' Club, is playing a major part in promoting the use of captive-bred birds and in helping falconers to keep their birds healthy, while, in association with the Abu Dhabi-based Middle East Falcon Research Group, it is undertaking important research into the diseases of falcons.

In sphere of species protection, Sheikh Zayed was first to discern the threats. He set in motion a wide variety of projects designed to protect the species. In Morocco, for example, he set up the Emirates Centre for Wildlife Propagation in 1995, to breed houbara for release into the wild. Increasing success over the years saw a total of 2150 birds being raised in 2004 as part of a strategy to start producing 5000 birds a year by 2007. In Pakistan, support was given for the formation of the Houbara Foundation International. This collaborates closely with the Pakistani Government to stamp out illegal trapping, and also rehabilitates trapped birds for release.

The Houbara Breeding Programme started in Al Ain Zoo (UAE) in 1977 and the National Avian Research Centre, NARC, part of ERWDA, has also launched a breeding programme for the Asian Houbara, which, after a slow start, produced over 200 birds in 2004. The first hatch was announced in 1982. By 2002, the UAE started using captive-bred birds at a large scale, thus becoming the first country in the Arab world to introduce captive-bred falcons into falconry.

The long-term objective, determined by Sheikh Zayed himself, is to produce 10,000 houbara bustards a year, most to be released to supplement wild stocks.

Another initiative taken by Sheikh Zayed to tackle problems caused by illegal trapping was the introduction in 1988 of legislation in the UAE to ban the import of houbara, mainly used for the training of falcons. In association with the Houbara Foundation International, NARC rehabilitates the seized birds, so far numbering several hundreds, and then releases them on wintering grounds in Pakistan. Another initiative launched by Sheikh Zayed was a major research programme, coordinated by ERWDA, into houbara ecology and distribution. This has included satellite tracking of wild birds, providing information for the first time on the extent of their migration. Birds trapped in Abu Dhabi, for example, have been tracked to breeding grounds in Mongolia, nearly 6,000 km away, and then back again on the autumn migration to Abu Dhabi.



Like most Arab falconers, Sheikh Zayed traditionally released many of his birds back into the wild at the end of the season. In 1995, however, recognizing that this provided an opportunity for detailed scientific research, he launched the Sheikh Zayed Falcon Release Programme. Since then, nearly 1000 wild-caught sakers and peregrines have been released in spring along migration routes in Pakistan and Central Asia. Sheikh Zayed actively encouraged his fellow falconers to make greater use of captive-bred birds, and introduced a strict licensing system for the trade in wild-caught birds in the Emirates. Coupled with the introduction of a 'falcon passport' approved by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Flora and Fauna, CITES, this has already had a dramatic effect on reducing trapping pressure in neighbouring countries.

As can be discerned from the massive efforts exerted over years by Sheikh Zayed, it is only fair to assert that his success story is almost unparalleled anywhere in the world. This explains why his endeavours have received international accolades, notably the FAO trophy in 1995, the Panda Gold Award from the WWF in 1997, the UNESCO Environment Chair, and many other accolades. All these accolades come as a well-deserved recognition of the efforts of a man whose monumental work will leave an enduring effect for many generations to come.

Zayed lived and died with the values of conservation in his heart. In his own words "Conservation of Nature," Sheikh Zayed believed, "is our sacred duty and obligation. The ecological balance should not be disturbed, for our survival is dependent upon it. We should play a positive role in leaving this earth a 'greener' place for the generations to come."

In his life and even after his death, he has received plaudits and praise from around the world for his statesmanship and for his achievements in building a modern, developed and harmonious society in the United Arab Emirates. Falconers worldwide owe him thanks, too, for his far-reaching contributions to the sport - or indeed art - that he loved so much.

What better way to remember him than to quote from his Foreword in the **Global Strategy Plan for the Conservation of Falcon and Houbara Resources**:

'The traditional sport of falconry was passed down to us from our fathers, from a time when we were close to nature and life was more simple. It is a constant reminder to us of the forces of nature, of the inter-relationships between living things and the land they share, and of our own dependence on nature. Falconry depends on healthy populations of the quarry, such as the Houbara, and they in turn depend on the continuing health of their breeding and wintering grounds. Falconers thus have a concern for natural habitats and for the sustainable use of resources.

During my own lifetime I have seen many remarkable changes and achievements occur in the Middle East. Oil has brought immense benefits for the welfare of our people. But progress can also pose problems for nature - pollution of land and sea, unwanted development and spoiling of natural areas, and disturbance of quiet places which once gave refuge to wildlife. Some of the prey species have suffered from loss of habitat, and from persecution or over-hunting. It is important for us to take steps to turn the tide before it is too late, in order to safeguard the future.

All of us share a common goal: the sustainable, balanced use of resources. We wish to leave the Earth as good, or better, than we found it.'

Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan

Kinya Nakajima, Vice President of the Japan Falconiformes Centre said:

"It was my great privilege to have been granted audiences with this distinguished statesman on two occasions. I shall always cherish the memory of those meetings during which I was queried in detail concerning the traditional art of falconry in Japan".

Patrick Morel, IAF President said:

"Sheikh Zayed was highly estimated as leading falconer worldwide and had a profound impact on the falconry world, as we, in the West, are only beginning to understand".



Death of Ron Hartley

7 April 2005

"It with great sorrow that I learned of the tragic passing away of Ron Hartley on 5th April 2005. Ron Hartley moved to South Africa last year and had recently taken a full time position in there with The Peregrine Fund. Ron was the main representative of IAF from Zimbabwe and indeed all of southern Africa. At his school in Zimbabwe he introduced hundreds of boys to falconry at an appropriately named school, Falcon College. Ron was one of the finest examples of the falconer/raptor conservationist ever to come from our ranks. His friendship and sound advice will be greatly missed. Ron was one of God's own true gentlemen. A great loss to the international falconry community. I would like to extend the condolences of the falconry community to Ron's family, colleagues and friends.

Patrick Morel
IAF president

PROCEDIT EX AMORE



Abu Dhabi, 2004

The Lead-up

The 2004 IAF's Council of Delegates Meeting (AGM) was in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. Over a hundred falconers, both delegates and observers representing 34 countries attended the main meeting and a number of peripheral meetings during a week hosted by the Emirates Falconers' Club (EFC) and timed to coincide with the Abu Dhabi 2004 International Hunting and Equestrian Exhibition. VIP observers from six non-IAF countries in the region also attended the meeting and gave of their valuable experience.

With falconry legal on five continents and known to be practiced in over sixty-seven countries, it is a universal hunting sport. IAF currently federates 52 falconry clubs from 40 countries, but approximately one third of the world's falconers come from the Arab tradition of falconry, which, before 2003, had never been represented in the International Association. This year's meeting truly presented an international face and a global voice for falconry.

The hosting by Emirates Falconers Club of the 2004 meeting gave IAF new opportunities for cooperation with a large proportion of the global falconry community. In a press release to the UAE National Newspapers (national press is a first for IAF) during the lead up to the meeting, José-Manuel Rodriguez-Villa (IAF Vice-President for Europe, Asia, Africa and Oceania) said: "I am particularly proud that it was in my country Spain, that the IAF started to solve a long standing deficiency - that of not having a member representing traditional Gulf falconry. Less than one year after welcoming the Emirates Falconers Club we are very pleased and thankful to our Emirates friends for hosting our 2004 Annual General Meeting.



Death of Givi Chogovadze

20 April 2005

Mr.Givi Chogovadze, President of Georgian Falconers Association has passed away last Monday.

As you may know Mr.Chogovadze was one of the founders of the Association and its leader over the last 3 decades. He was the promoter of this traditional activity and has made great efforts to popularize and revive this centuries old national tradition. Under his presidency the Georgian Falconers Association became the corresponding member of the IAF. Besides his perfect professional abilities (he was a doctor), he had great personal qualities and was an excellent father and friend. It is a great loss for his family, friends and colleagues, all of us.

Rest in Peace Batono Givi!

Sorrowfully,

Georgian Falconers Association
Batumi, Georgia

It is with great sadness that we learn the passing of Givi Chogovadze of Georgia.

Givi was a great falconer and a modest man. We had the opportunity to know him better when he visited us in Belgium ten years ago.

He will be sadly missed.

Please convey the condolences of the IAF to the members of the Falconers Association and Givi's family.

Kindest regards
Patrick Morel
IAF president



Frank Bond, IAF Vice President for the Americas added: "The falconers from North and South America are very appreciative of the EFC's generosity in hosting the 35th Annual General Meeting where we will meet falconers of the region to learn first hand about the deeply rooted and important part falconry has to play in Middle Eastern society. Falconry is the epitome of conservation through sustainable use and initiatives in the Gulf are greatly enhancing that reputation.

The patrimony of traditional Arab falconry must be preserved in the same way a World Heritage Site would be. It is no less significant."

IAF President Patrick Morel said: "We firmly believe our visit to be very positive and fruitful for IAF's future presence in this key falconry area. We have the chance to better understand the concerns of Arab Falconry directly on the ground, learning facts and projects from actual players. Hopefully we'll be able to help, to our best ability and means, our Arab friends in their challenging endeavours in the future, just as they help us. We ask the falconers of the Gulf countries to become organised in the same way the Emirates Falconers' Club has. Falconry is deeply rooted in Arab culture. The falcon traditionally used is the saker and the traditional quarry is the houbara. For various reasons, both species have suffered severe decreases. Without international action in all the concerned areas (breeding and migration routes) the future of traditional falconry in Arab countries is at best uncertain. Organised falconry means coordinated actions, better control, law enforcement, education and information. As an umbrella federation and respected NGO, the IAF could help falconers to present initiatives, recommendations and proposals."

As can be seen from the main report on the AGM itself, these themes took up much of the main meeting.



The Meeting

IAF has reached an important threshold in its history. We are no longer a small collection of hawking clubs dominated from Europe. The potential problems in organising the seating of 34 delegations around a single table in the sumptuous meeting room of the Millennium Hotel, Abu Dhabi certainly reflected this. Some national delegates were alone, some brought translators and some came with parties of observers. All were looked after and all were very impressed with the professional and efficient way the EFC organised the logistics of the event. The taking away of such necessary tasks as giving out badges, fitting in breaks, allowing time for press coverage without disrupting the meeting, making sure non-native English speakers sat near delegates with a common language etc. meant that IAF officials were able to concentrate on the matters they had come here to discuss (see elsewhere for minutes of the meeting). The AGM was addressed by His Excellency Mohammed Al Bowardi who, together



with Mr. Majid Al Mansouri of the Emirates Falconers' Club, received the IAF President's Award for their work in conservation and the promotion of sustainable falconry. The main AGM ran over by more than two hours, but even that was not a problem for the EFC team and all passed without hitches. Future IAF meetings will use this one as a template and if they run as smoothly as Abu Dhabi did, IAF will accomplish great things for falconry.

In addition to all this the EFC also offered subsidized flights and hotel for the delegates of less well-off countries, enabling the biggest attendance ever at an IAF Meeting. They also entertained the Advisory Committee to lunch on the first day and the entire Council of Delegates to lunch on the day of the meeting and a further beautiful lunch on the day of visits.

The Hunting Exhibition

With outside temperatures above 40° the prospect of making any visits outside the comfort of an air-conditioned hotel were very daunting and, being from Ireland where 22° is considered a roasting hot day, I found even the ten metres between the lobby and the courtesy bus oppressive in the extreme. Thankfully the luxurious Abu Dhabi International Exhibitions Centre, covering several acres, is also kept comfortably air-conditioned. The 2004 Hunting and Equestrian Exhibition was a superb setting to showcase products and services related to hunting, fishing, falconry and equestrianism. It was opened by Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Director General of the President's office and was held under the patronage of the Abu Dhabi royal family whose personal interest in falconry is of worldwide renown. Indeed, H.H. Sheikh Hamdan invited us all to the gala dinner on the final evening of the exhibition.

The Emirates Falconers Club kindly provided a stand for IAF in a prominent position in the exhibition and delegates helped in a rota manning it and talking to international visitors from all over the gulf region and further. The importance of showing off IAF in this way cannot be over emphasised and we succeeded in presenting a multi-national face to the constant stream of falconers coming through the stand. At the same moment one could hear Arabic, Spanish, Russian and English all being spoken in our 10 square metres, and all about falconry.

The theme of the exhibition is very much the preservation of traditional Arab culture and hunting and although sporting



Emirates Falconers' Club HQ.

Sheikh Sultan was kind enough to receive delegates individually at a formal dinner in the Intercontinental Hotel. We are also indebted to him, to Profalcon and the Al Ain Tourist Office for a visit to Al Ain on the last day.

A high point for most was the trip to H.H. Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan's training camp, our only taste of the desert. The facilities, the enormous hacking pens and the wonderful traditional hospitality enjoyed in the presence of the best falcons in the world left a lasting impression and to watch the sun setting over the Arabian sands having watched a most beautiful falcon exercised to the lure in the relative cool of the evening fulfilled a dream.

Thanks

This meeting was a high point in the history of IAF. EFC's

gun-shops and safari companies are very much in evidence, at least half the show is concerned with falconry. There are many manufacturers and suppliers of equipment, familiar names from Europe, the Gulf and Pakistan. There were also bargains to be had, mainly not from Europe. Well-known breeders from the US, Germany and the UK had stands of screen perches topped with hooded falcons. More well-known breeders mingled in the aisles. The main EFC exhibit of a complete hunting camp was of great interest to delegates, as were the Houbara Conservation area of NARC and the Falcon Hospital exhibit. Some of the exhibitors erect facsimile Bedouin tents, complete with cushioned and carpeted interiors where fragrant Arab coffee is served in traditional fashion to visitors. Of particular note was the palatial display and the hospitality of the Profalcon Breeding project, closely associated with Sheikh Sultan bin Hamdan Al Nahyan.

Visits

It being outside the hunting season, the EFC had also organised falconry related visits for the delegates not tied to the IAF stand in the exhibition. Trips to NARC, the Houbara Breeding Centre where conservation through sustainable use is being experienced first hand; to the Saluki Centre, which preserves the traditional Arabian heritage of these beautiful desert greyhounds and to the Abu Dhabi Falcon Hospital and the



role in the organisation was pivotal and set the standards for future IAF meetings. Those of us representing small falconry nations are all a little daunted that we might not be able to live up to the expectations of the delegates now they have tasted the efficiency of Abu Dhabi!

by Gary Timbrell, Delegate for Ireland





Notice Of 36th Annual General Meeting 2005



This is notice to the members of the IAF for preliminary information for the AGM in Opocno, Czech Republic 2nd - 9h October 2005, by kind invitation of the Czech Falconry Club. Contact:

**For further enquiries
please contact
the Czech IAF Delegate**
Dr. Bohumil Straka
Merhautova 80
Brno 613 00
Czech Republic
GSM or SMS:
00420 777071722
e-mail:
bohumil.straka@seznam.cz

or
Gary Timbrell, Public Relations Officer
Kilnagnady, Upton,
Co.Cork, Ireland.
Tel: 00 353 21 7730298
or Tel: 00 8 6650619
Email: gary1timbrell@eircom.net
or iaf.informationbureau@dublin.com

Annual General Meeting IAF - Abu Dhabi - 14-19 September 2004 - Minutes

VIP list of Arab guests:

- Bahrain
 - Dr. Adel Al Awady
- Saudi Arabia
 - Prof. Dr. Abdul Aziz bin Hamid Abuzinada
 - Dr. Hani Tatwani
 - Patrick Paillat
- Kuwait
 - Mr. Dawoud Salman Al Dabbous
- UAE
 - H.E. Mohammed Al Bowardi
 - Abdalla Zamzam
 - Maysa Al Nowais
 - Dr. Ahmed Bashir
- Iran
 - Mr. Abdolali Yazdani
 - Mr. Mahdi Malak Shahabi
- Iraq
 - Mr Sabah Al Shamari
- Pakistan
 - Mr Mahmud Rizvi

Agenda



- Opening by the President
- Approval of the minutes of the AGM 2003 in Jerez - Tony Crosswell
- Candidatures - President - FIF (Federation Italian Falconers) and CIC
- Financial report 2004 ; budget for 2005 - Antonio Carapuço
- President's report and strategy - President
- VP report Frank Bond
- VP report José Manuel Rodriguez-Villa
- Membership Liaison - Tony Crosswell
- Report of the PR officer - Gary Timbrell

- L U N C H - photograph session for newsletter.

Reports of the chairmen of the Working Groups:

- WG Eastern Middle Eastern Relations - José Manuel RV
- WG HYBRIDS - Frank Bond
- WG CIC- Frank Bond
- WG IUCN - Robert Kenward
- WG NAMEAN - Tim Kimmel
- WG BASS - Robert Kenward
- WG CITES - Tony Crosswell
- WG BERN Convention - Robert Kenward



- WG FACE - Christian de Coune
- WG Science Committee - Tim Kimmel
- WG CHARTER - José Manuel RV
- MARK & BANK SCHEME - Dr Matt Gage
- Europet passport and microchipping in rings - Dr Michel Schoffeniels
- Reports of the delegates
- Any other business
- Presentation of the IAF's award
- AGM 2005 (place and date) Opovcno (Czech) - AGM 2006
- Close of business

Minutes

- Opening by the President - Patrick Morel

been possible thanks to the generosity of the Emirates Falconers Club. I would also like to thank Manisha Pilai for the excellent organisation.

On behalf of the IAF and the meet organizers, it is my profound honour and pleasure to wish you safe travels and a wonderful stay in Abu Dhabi.

The assembly was then addressed by His Excellency Mohammed al Bowardi.



Ladies, Gentlemen,
It is with a great pleasure that I open this 35th AGM.

Today about 100 delegates of all around the world sharing the same passion 'falconry' are together for celebrating this meeting. It is the first time we have representatives from 40 countries and I am very pleased to welcome observers from non-members countries especially from the Gulf. I have the pleasure to welcome Dr. Adel Al Awady from Bahrain, Ali Yazdani and Mahdi Malak Shahabi from Iran, Sabah Al Shamari from Iraq, Dawoud Salman Al Dabbous from Kuwait, Prof Abdul Aziz bin Hamid Abuzinada and Dr Hani Tatwani from Saudi Arabia and of course the strong delegation from the United Arab Emirates lead by HE Mohammed al Bowardi : Majid Al Mansouri, Abdalla Zamzam, Mrs Maysa Al Nowais, Dr Ahmed Khider Bashir, Dr Frederick Launay, Dr Olivier Combreau, Dr Margit Muller, Dr Salim Javed, Abdunnasser and Al Shamsi, Sobhia El Masri.

This meeting is probably the largest falconry event ever organized and I would like to remember another memorable meeting already organized in Abu Dhabi in 1976 thanks to the hospitality of a great falconer, HH Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan al Nayan, president of the UAE.

Most of the delegates were able to travel thanks to the help and generous hospitality of the Emirates Falconers Club. On their behalf I would like to express all our thanks for your sponsorship. In the coming days, You'll have the opportunity to enjoy a tremendous program of visits, taste fantastic food and witness the legendary Arab hospitality. This program has

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen:
Good morning.
It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to Abu Dhabi, the capital of the United Arab Emirates, to the 2004 Annual General Meeting of the International Association for Falconry and Conservation of Birds of Prey.

Falconry is close to our hearts - handed down by our forefathers over thousands of years. It is a constant reminder of the balance of nature itself, and also of our relationship with





it. Falconry in the Emirates remains, as it always has been, a sport of great nobility - not because of its practitioners, but because of the way it reflects the most noble aspects of the interaction between man and nature.

This sport of ours, however, cannot survive unless falconers - and others - recognise the need for effective conservation, both of falcons and their prey. As far back as 1976, long before 'conservation' became a fashionable word, our most prominent UAE falconer, President His Highness Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, sponsored the holding in Abu Dhabi of the first International Conference on Falconry and Conservation. This meeting is a direct descendant of that event.

Among the most popular birds for falconry are Peregrines and Sakers. In much of Europe and Central Asia, the numbers of both are now declining rapidly, often for reasons completely unassociated with falconry. In response, we in the UAE have launched a large scale programme of captive breeding, hoping thereby to reduce the number of wild birds trapped for falconry.

At the same time, since 1995, the Zayed Falcon Release Programme, created by the President, has seen around 1000 Sakers and Peregrines - all wild caught - released back into the wild at the end of the hunting season, to replenish native stocks.

We have taken other initiatives too. The UAE works closely with national and international organisations abroad on research into raptor populations and their conservation. In 2003, we organised a special Symposium on Sakers, to discuss protection and conservation. This resulted in the Abu Dhabi Declaration on Saker Falcon Conservation, which lays down a framework for multi-lateral cooperation throughout the range states on this important issue.

We have too, recognised the need for falconers to work with conservation organisations. We have developed, in association with CITES, a special Falcon Registration scheme, to regulate the orderly movement of falcons used for hunting. This, in turn will help to curb unsustainable traffic in illegally-caught wild birds.

Falconry' of course, cannot continue unless there are healthy populations of the prey species, both in their breeding territories and their wintering grounds. For Arab falconers, that means the Houbara, in particular the Asian Houbara.

In the UAE, our wintering Houbara are migrants. Their numbers are in severe and rapid decline, as they are throughout the range, countries, including their breeding grounds. Our initiative in 1989 to establish the National Avian Research Centre, NARC, was intended to achieve two objectives:

1. To undertake research to improve our knowledge of the species
2. To commence a captive breeding programme that can be used, eventually, to supplement wild stocks through carefully planned releases.

NARC is now carrying out research, in association with local organisations, in many of the range states, in particular in Central Asia and adjacent countries, while our captive breeding programme continues to become more successful, year by year. Through such methods, we in the UAE hope to contribute, both to the continued sustainability of falconry, and to the continued viability in the wild of both the falcons and their prey.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We have the obligation to devote our efforts to conservation, as well and to falconry. Thereby, not only will falconry continue, but it can do so in accordance with the need for sustainable and balanced use of the world's wildlife resources.

We need conservation. But conservationists need us too. Let us not forget that some of the world's major wildlife conservation organisations owed their birth to the efforts of people who were also keen hunters - who understood the balance of nature and the importance of sustainability. Falconers and conservationists need to work hand in hand. That, after all, is one of the main messages of this Association.

I bid you welcome.

- Approval of the minutes of the AGM 2003 in Jerez - Tony Crosswell

Minutes were approved and signed by the president.

- Candidatures - President - FIF (Federation Italian Falconers) and CIC

Dieter Schramm for CIC addressed the meeting:

Excellencies and following the words of Mohamed al Bowardi; falconry is close to our hearts; dear friends,

CIC was founded 78 years ago by a group of passionate hunters recognising the importance of sustainable use for conservation.

Today the CIC is operating in 80 countries and recently has been accorded the status of 'working in the public interest' by decree of the Austrian government. Based on this we were accorded the status of an IGO (inter-governmental organisation) at the recent Convention of Bio-Diversity (CBD) and could be instrumental in assisting to get adopted by 188 states 'The Principles and Guidelines of Sustainable Use. We are convinced that only strategic alliances of the 'user side' can succeed to promote sustainable use principles. This is the reason we welcome cooperation with IAF.

Peter Sapara, who has built up the CIC Falconry working group to a full Commission will hand over the chair to IAF Vice President José Manuel Rodríguez-Villa at the upcoming General Assembly of the CIC in March 2005 here in Abu Dhabi. So we have a close personal inter-link between our 2 organisations.

Falconry a World Heritage - to be acknowledged by UNESCO as such - this is part of our common mission to the outside world. To create a better understanding for this great tradition of wise use i.e. responsible hunting in the public interest, and to have the ideals of falconry recognised by the International Convention is the 'foreign affairs' objective. The 'inner mission' is to convince true sports hunting associations around the world to acknowledge falconry within their own ranks in a more prominent way.

It is in this context that I on behalf of the CIC, wish this General Assembly of the IAF all true success. Our wonderful relationship with this country, the UAE, not only deserves our sincere thanks, but also obliges all of us to spread the news - to tell the world of the extraordinary efforts and achievements of the UAE in the field of conservation through sustainable use of our world's living resources. Thank you.



Peter Sapara, chairman of the CIC Falconry Commission, also addressed the membership on behalf of CIC and in addition to confirming the message of Dieter Schramm he went on to explain his decision not to stand again in CIC elections for José Manuel Rodríguez-Villa to take over chair of the Falconry Commission. He also outlined changes in the hunting law in Germany as yet incomplete. He outlined their recent achievements in breeding and reintroduction projects with DFO and looked forward to the UNESCO world cultural heritage project for falconry with IAF and UAE.

Accepted unanimous vote of delegates.

Federation of Italian Falconers had been examined by the AC and with no objection was accepted by unanimous vote.

The candidature of Serbia had been received too late for this meeting and was delayed until 2005 whilst an observer from Serbia was welcomed at this meeting.

- Financial report 2004 ; budget for 2005 - Antonio Carapuço

IAF financial report regarding "Abu Dhabi 2004"

Dear IAF members,
This letter concerns the financial report from year 2004:
Balance on 2004-09-07:

2004 Balance 5,011.49 €

This balance will be lower by the end of the year, after the travel and secretariat expenses of the last four months are considered. Nevertheless we should reach the end of the year with a positive balance.

Income:

2004 Income	%	
Balance (31-12-2003) carried forward*	489.85 €	2.75%
Members contribution	14,714.15 €	82.72%
Donations income	1,750.50 €	9.84%
Other incomes	159.00 €	0.89%
Sales	675.00 €	3.79%
Total	17,788.50 €	100.00%

* € in Bank Cantonale Vaudoise 18.90 €
* € in Banco Comercial Portugues 470.95 €

The main financial source still is the membership fees.

Fees:

Clubs with <100 members:
100 € per club + 1,75 € per member
100 to 200 members:
200 € per club + 1,75 € per member
>200 members:
250 € per club + 1,75 € per member

As approved at the AGM, the number of members to be considered for the calculation of the fees for a given year

will be the highest registered for the club in the previous year. For 2004 the calculation was made on the basis of the corresponding figure for 2003.

Members from countries with GDP (Gross Domestic Product per capita) of less than \$10.000 (USD) can apply for exemption of the fixed amount. This exemption is effective after the GDP is confirmed by IAF Board.

The fees can be sent directly to the IAF account:

Bank: Millennium BCP
Address: Largo Afonso de Albuquerque, 15 B
2710 Sintra
Portugal
Account n. o: 236870994
IBAN: PT50 0033 0000 0023 6870 9940 5
BIC/SWIFT: BCOMPTPL
2004 Members Contributors

Bulgaria
Lithuania
Sweden
Denmark
Italy
Slovenia-SZZSIZPU
Belgium - De Valkenier
Poland - Polish Falconer Order
Belgium - BVVVH
Portugal
Japan - JFC
Belgium - CMB
Switzerland
Japan - JFA
Ireland
Spain-Alicantina
Poland Gniazdo Sokolnikow
Netherlands - AM
South Africa - SAFA
Scottish H.C.
Hungary
Netherlands - JVB
Austria
Emirates F. C.
France
Spain - AEECA
Czech Republic
UK - British F.C.
Germany
NAFA (USA, Canada, México)

Sales:

During 2004, additional fund were obtained from sales at the Falconry Fair (England), which included magazines, buttons, car stickers, donated prints, etc.... The Irish Hawking Club and our PRO Gary Timbrell should be acknowledged for this.

Several efforts have been also made to advertise the IAF and attract possible sponsors. At the moment we are offering to include the sponsor's logo and a short message on our website, Newsletters, banners etc. Any help from members in identifying potential sponsors would be very much appreciated.

Donations:

Donations are a substantial source of financial support. An increasing support from several organizations and/or affiliated clubs has resulted in a growing number of delegates participating in the AGM. In addition, we have received contributions from many individuals, which have helped to continue with our promotion of the Art of Falconry throughout the World.

DONATORS:
 Adrian Williams (UK)
 ANFA (France)
 Gilles Nortie (France)
 Biotrack (UK)
 Hawk Board (UK)
 Campaign for Falconry (UK)
 Penningn Valkeniersverbond (Netherland)
 Robert Kenward (UK)
 Thomaz Richter (Germany)
 Frank Bond (USA)
 António Carapuço (Portugal)
 California Hawking Club (USA)
 Patrick Morel (Belgium)
 CMB (Belgium)
 BVVVH (Netherland)
 AECCA (Spain)
 Angela & Ronald Brown (California USA)
 Liam O'Broin (Ireland)
 Emirates Falconers Club (UAE)

Expenditure:

2004 Expenditure		%
Secretariat	810.91 €	6.35%
Newsletter expenses	4,150.00 €	32.48%
Traveling expenses and accommodation	7,324.75 €	57.33%
Bank charges	312.75 €	2.45%
Web expenses	178.60 €	1.40%
Total	12,777.01 €	100.00%

The IAF is facing increasing expenses associated to secretariat and travelling needs, which result from the growing responsibilities of the Association. That implies a need for both more efficient uses of available resources (eg. lowering the printing costs of our Newsletters) and the search for new funding sources.

2004 Travel expenses concerning:

Strasbourg
 Denmark
 Slovakia
 CIC - Bucarest
 British Falconry Fair
 CITES - Abu Dhabi
 AGM - Abu Dhabi

Comparing 2004 (2004-09-07) with 2003 (2003-12-31):

	2004 Income	2003 Income
Balance (31-12-2003) carried forward*	489.85 €	3,230.70 €
Members contribution	14,714.15 €	13,972.90 €
Donations income	1,750.50 €	2,900.00 €
Other incomes	159.00 €	
Butons	675.00 €	262.65 €
Total	17,788.50 €	20,366.25 €

	2004 Expenditure	2003 Expenditure
Secretariat	810.91 €	4,485.61 €
Newsletter expenses	4,150.00 €	4,646.24 €
Traveling expenses and accommodation*	7,324.75 €	7,793.41 €
Subscriptions	- €	594.50 €
Donations	- €	500.00 €
Bank charges	250.10 €	441.65 €
Web expense	178.60 €	
Butons		1,415.59 €
Total	12,714.36 €	19,877.00 €

An increase of the secretariat expenses and travelling and accommodation expenses should be expected.

If you need further explanation or have any doubts please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely yours
 António Carapuço

President's report and strategy - President PATRICK MOREL

2004 was another busy year for the IAF even if we had only 9 months since the last AGM.

My report will be pretty short as I don't want to bother you with a duplication of the reports presented by the VP and the chairmen of the WG. I would like to benefit of this opportunity to thank both vice-presidents for the superb job they are undertaking. Thanks, Frank, for your wise advises and drafts of 'diplomatic' letters and all my thanks to José Manuel who inherited the area where most of problems affecting falconry arise!





On the European front, we had to deal with problems related to falconry in Slovenia (I remind you that falconry was not included in the new hunting law at the very last moment but is still not illegal in Slovenia but permitted under a licensing system as it was before).

Help was requested from following European countries: Finland, Denmark, Slovenia, UK and Germany and in Asia from Japan and Kazakhstan.

Relations with the CIC:

Peter Sapara, chairman of the Falconry Commission will report for you - JM attended the CIC AGM in Bucharest and was appointed VP of the Falconry Commission. The CIC and the IAF signed a MOU.

Preparation of the CITES consultative meeting:

The IAF attended the CITES Consultative meeting on Trade in falcons hosted in May in Abu Dhabi - it was the first time that such a meeting entirely devoted to falconry and trade in falcons was organised. Frank will report on the meeting. Participation of this meeting took a lot of time and we worked on Rings - DNA tests - micro chips - mark & bank scheme - CITES survey.

Appointment of a PRO:

After the Raptor Fair (UK) we realised the lack of knowledge of the IAF and decided the appointment of a Public Relation Officer Gary Timbrel. Gary will report on the enormous task he undertook.

I will briefly report about three major threats we had to deal with:

"Anti-falconry" campaign, web-site and discussions groups and saker falcon issue.

We had to face problems of organised anti-falconry campaigns.

An "anti-falconry" campaign already started in Slovenia under the banner of the "Eurogroup Against Birdcrime". Christian de Coune and I met the president of this group trying to convince him not to attack falconry.

This campaign was extended to Belgium (during the discussion on the new hunting season in Flanders) and in Germany. Our 'enemies' are very well organised and seeking help and letters of support in most European Countries.

Websites and discussions group.

The web is a fantastic tool for communication but a very dangerous one. The recent development of the IAF is for sure due to the benefit of an ease in communication between the members but at the same time the web could prove to be a real threat for falconry.

Discussions groups:

I remind you of the danger of participating in discussion groups. Most of the arguments against falconry were picked up in discussions groups. For instance, all the arguments against hybrids were "fished" from the 'anti-hybrid' website opened (by falconers) in Germany.

The falconers themselves are not innocent in this issue because they open their own discussion groups for instance the 'Falconry Forum'.

Considerable discussion pro and contra falconry was seen on the Yahoo raptor discussion forum (including Bulgaria, saker and so on...) and on a Russian discussion group.

Our reaction was to prepare a answer to be published only after approval of the PRO.

After considerable discussion, we decided to close our own NAMEAN group and we made some changes in the MERWG. The main reason was that we could not afford anti-falconry statements by some participants (a handful of the 50 members of this discussion group).

I can't end without mentioning the website 'Save the falcon'. This site is extremely injurious and infamous for respectable scientist and falconers. The main targets were Arab falconers. Legal action will be taken against the authors of this website: two American citizens. It is interesting to note that these 'conservationists' are less interested in the rescue of the saker populations than controlling of the Mongolian saker market.

Saker falcon

Most of the Arab guests do not know very well the IAF. The IAF is a non-profit NGO which has as prime objective the preservation of falconry. We are fully concerned by the future of Arab falconry. The main issues of concern are the decrease of saker and houbara populations. According to most experts, Asian saker populations have a decline of about 60% of their population.

The saker falcon may meet the conditions for an up-listing in CITES. What means an up-listing of a species: it simply means that no more birds could be harvested from the wild. Quotas could be allowed only for birds listed in appendix two. Up-listing the saker to Appendix I means the end of traditional Arab falconry. I remind our members that the roots of Arab falconry are the flights of wild trapped saker on its traditional quarry - the houbara bustard.

Without an 'electric shock' this up-listing can't be avoided.

The IAF is prepared to help to solve this complex issue but without the support of the concerned parties, we can't do it.

Arab falconers have now to face a challenge that western falconers had to face 40 years ago with the decline of the Peregrine falcon. The decline of the Peregrine was due to other factors - mainly the use of DDT and pesticides in agriculture. It took time for the Peregrine to recover, but at present Peregrine populations are at their best. In some countries like in the USA, falconers are again allowed to harvest peregrines from the wild.

Immediate action for the saker could bring immediate results. The saker is a prolific bird.

We would like to propose a resolution at the end of this meeting encouraging amongst other methods: monitoring of wild populations, establishing a reliable marking and control system combined with an owner certificate or falcon passport, a shorter trapping season (starting later- 1st of October) excluding the take of haggard falcons, a respect of quotas of harvesting, and especially a controlled program of release of all wild falcons after the hunting season.

Houbara:

The general decrease of quarry populations is another matter of concern:

In the USA, NA grouse populations are decreasing mainly due to habitat loss

In Western Europe (except some privileged places as Spain or the UK) most small game populations are decreasing.

In Asia and Africa, numbers of houbara are declining and face an incredible fate- it is likely that the population will be extinct in the next decade!

Falconers have to play an active role in habitat restoration and more than ever adopt principles of sustainable harvesting.



Presentation of IAF's award - President



President Patrick Morel presented the IAF award for services to falconry to His Excellency Mohamed al Bowardi and Majid al Mansouri in recognition of their generosity as our hosts for this AGM and their other work in service to the falconry community.

The President also presented the IAF award to Christian de Coune, former president of IAF and president of the BFA for 35 years, still very active for IAF at the European level.

VP report Frank Bond

As the Council of Delegates is aware, the IAF is operated by a group of dedicated volunteers who devote a great deal of time on behalf of the IAF and to promote the practice of falconry world-wide. President Patrick Morel continues to provide superb leadership for all of us. Vice President José Manuel Rodríguez-Villa, the newest member of the leadership team, has dealt with some very difficult issues through the year on behalf of the entire organization. I continue to be honored by being part of the IAF leadership and, in my capacity as Vice President for the Americas, I provide this report.

Conseil International de la Chasse (CIC).

Separately, I have reported on the IAF's new relationship with the CIC. José Manuel, who represents us on the CIC, will report on the issues facing both groups as they begin this promising working relationship.

CITES Consultative Meeting on Trade in Falcons for Falconry.

The CITES Secretariat convened a special meeting on the trade in falcons for falconry. It was held here in Abu Dhabi, May 16-19, 2004. The IAF was represented by President Morel and myself. We were graciously hosted by ERWDA and, particularly by Mohamed Al Bowardi and Majid Al Mansouri, the EFC delegate to the Council.

CITES only invited selected nations and just a few non-governmental organizations. The IAF joined two other NGOs and delegates from 17 nations for the four-day meeting. You can imagine that there were really diverse views, which caused some heated debate on a number of subjects. It is quite clear that many of the nations have rather narrow views



on the trade of falcons largely shaped by their own experience. The meeting was helpful to make the participants aware of broader problems and differing views.

I reported separately on this meeting and the full text of the summary record prepared by me was published in the last newsletter. The principal topics were enforcement matters, the establishment and management of catch and export quotas, certificates of ownership (falcon passports), captive breeding, and markings. The principal falcon of concern is the saker due to its declining population, and hybrids stirred strong emotions.

Hybrid Working Group

The IAF has a policy on the use of hybrids. As everyone knows, the use of hybrids by falconers generates considerable controversy, even among some of the delegates here.

President Morel and the Advisory Committee wish to have the hybrid policy reviewed, so as chairman of the working group, I will guide the committee's review this next year so that we can report to the Council in 2005.

South America and Central America

Through the year, I have had relatively little contact with the few falconers in Central America. Roy Beers will report on falconry in El Salvador and perhaps some of the neighboring countries.

In South America, I have had more contact. First, you will hear from the Brazilian delegates, who can provide us with direct information on the status of falconry there. Also, I have had e-mail contact with Jorge Lisboa, an active falconer and editor of their journal. He reports that falconry is permitted in certain states and tolerated in others. The Brazilian association, while small, intends to pursue legal status for falconry.

Separately, from a Peruvian, Juan Carlos Pena-Phillipides who lives in my state of New México, I understand that in Peru there are about 144 falconers. Some are not registered. Falconry has been practiced there for the last 40 years with some historical references to falconry from the late 1600's to the early 1800's. There are no falconry associations or clubs in the country. The Peruvian government tolerates the sport and permits registered falconers to hold two raptors from the wild.

In Chile, there are approximately 17 falconers, each of whom is permitted to keep two birds. The Chilean government regulates hunting and recognizes falconry as a means of hunting. There are no falconry associations.

Argentina has approximately 130 falconers, of which 10 have considerable experience, 20 with limited experience, and 100 beginners. There are two Argentinian falconry associations, Asociacion Bonarense and Club de Cetrería Argentina. There is no national law supporting and promoting falconry. The new NAFA-US delegate, Dr. Alberto Palleroni, who was originally from Argentina may be able to give us a better picture of the current status of falconry in Argentina.

North America

The North American Falconers Association (NAFA) represents Canada, the United States and México. Unfortunately, the NAFA-Canada delegate, Bruce Hanbidge, could not attend

the meeting. As I have reported previously, falconry is practiced freely throughout most of Canada.

Alberto Palleroni will report on NAFA's issues in the United States, as will Juan Carlos Rojo for NAFA-México. I will report briefly on a few issues for NAFA in the United States.

U.S. Falconry Regulations: Falconry is practiced in 49 of the 50 states under the federal regulatory framework. Only Hawaii does not permit falconry where there are no falconers. Connecticut is the final state to adopt the federal system. Several falconers in the U.S. Territory, Puerto Rico, may petition the Fish and Wildlife Service to adopt the federal system.

The U.S. federal regulations will be revised later this year. The system has not been revised in about 15 years so changes will be made to improve it.

Status of the Harvest of Wild Peregrine Falcons: Alberto Palleroni will report more on the status of the harvest of wild peregrine falcons. The harvest of eyass Anatum peregrines began again this year in four states. As I reported previously when the Fish and Wildlife Service first permitted an eyass harvest, several environmental groups sued the Fish and Wildlife Service to stop the harvest. I represented NAFA in that lawsuit and we defeated the opponents. Some of the same groups sued again this year and NAFA is seeking to intervene again to defeat the opponents. Because the population of peregrines is growing to huge numbers, we expect the environmental groups to lose again. For this action, I represent NAFA as its lawyer.

I take this opportunity to express NAFA's and my personal gratitude for IAF's support of our peregrine harvest with President Morel's letter to the Fish and Wildlife Service and Dr. Robert Kenward's expert testimony statement justifying a harvest. These letters become part of the permanent administrative record and will be used by me in the lawsuit

Conclusion

I take this opportunity to thank our hosts, the Emirates Falconers' Club, for hosting us at this superb meeting. Their generosity makes it possible for so many delegates to attend the wonderful events planned for us. The Arab world has one of the longest traditions of falconry and we are delighted to have some of them represented within the IAF.





REPORT OF VICEPRESIDENT FOR EUROPE, ASIA, AFRICA AND OCEANIA BY JOSÉ MANUEL RODRÍGUEZ-VILLA. ABU DHABI SEPTEMBER 2004

This is my first report since I took over the Vicepresidency for Europe, Asia, Africa and Oceania nine months ago in Jerez de la Frontera (Spain).

In such a massive geographical area, it is natural for falconers to face a long list of varying problems, risks and opportunities. Nevertheless, I think some integration can be made to have a general view on the status of falconry in different areas. Later today we'll have the reports of national delegates and Working Groups that will provide us with a closer and more accurate picture.

EUROPE

Maybe here is where we have the most complicated map due to a more developed legislation over decades whether in local, regional, national or supranational scales. In Europe there is also a politically well organized environmental concern including powerful anti groups and animal welfare lobby.

According to current but evolving factual and political status of our sport in the so called "Old World", we could divide the European continent in two different areas:

European Union Countries:

In spite of EU integration, the legislative status of falconry varies a lot from one country to another as it does the political environment towards falconry. In general, we could rate it as "stable" in most of the countries but with a growing pressure of restrictions and over-regulation on our sport. I think particularly here we suffer both from being an insignificant minority in political terms plus being a most suitable target for green groups.

We've had a report by our German member, the DFO, about the worrying situation in Germany, facing a threat of total ban of falconry mainly due to pressure by most influential anti groups. It is not an easy situation but a complex and a very serious one and, of course, we are ready to help as much as we can. It goes without saying that a ban of falconry in Germany would be a huge loss itself but also would have very negative repercussions not only in the European continent but throughout the world.

On the other hand, it seems that we may have a better forecast for falconry in the countries gathered under our Baltic and Scandinavian States Working Group, as we'll learn from the report by its Chair Dr. Robert Kenward.

Those formerly called "accession states" and now full EU members have been through a harmonization process in their hunting and environmental legislations with varying success for our sport, as we'll be reported today by delegates.

Due to the increasing relevance of European Union legislation in our sport and its application to a wider group of countries I'll propose to the President and rest of colleagues of the Advisory Committee to create a European Union Working Group, so we can better coordinate and execute our actions in this field.

Eastern European countries not in the EU

In a less "stable" situation we can find falconry in Eastern non EU countries. Quite likely, less "stable" means also less "complex" in terms of regulations.

We do have active membership in Bulgaria, Croatia and Georgia and we are very happy to count with the attendance of their delegates today for the first time in the Council, so we'll be updated on their national status and learn how we can help each other.

On April this year I attended in Bucharest the General Assembly of the International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation (CIC) and I learnt there is a small club of falconers in Romania as well. We'll try to get in contact with them soon.

We know there are falconers in several other countries of Eastern Europe and in Russia. Earlier this year we have been contacted by a recently formed Russian Association of Falconers and we have other lines of communication with falconers in that country. Of course, we'll study carefully any future partnership in that huge Euroasian country that has so many implications regarding raptor conservation concerns as being reportedly one of the hot spots where significant wildlife smuggling trade occurs, including raptors. We hope that we'll be able to find the right partners in Russia to build a creditable image for falconry in that big country.

ASIA

Central Asia

We also have several members in Central Asia some of them attending this Annual General Meeting. In that area of the world, falconry goes back to its origin and we are pleased that generation after generation it is kept in people's heritage. Our aim is to help to keep that happening in the future.

As international falconry representative body, the IAF must consider these countries also as range countries of saker falcon, the most significant conservation concern today among raptor species used in falconry.

We do not have a Chinese member yet and we even do not have any workable connection with Chinese traditional falconry that is still practiced following non interrupted secular traditions in some regions of that country. I believe that we have to sort that out to enrich IAF's wealth and representation and maybe to that purpose we can count with CIC's help taking advantage of their good links with Chinese environmental authorities.

Japan

In Japan the falconry cultural tradition is secure as well. We have an IAF long time member, the Japan Falconiformes Center and since 2002, a new member called the Japanese Falconers' Association.

We were reported earlier this year about a worrying threat on falconry regulation but it seems it had a happy end, fortunately. We'll be updated on Japanese situation by national delegate later today.

QUOD TOTUM PROCEDIT EX AMORE



Middle East

I am particularly proud that it was last year, in my country Spain, that the IAF started to solve a long standing deficiency which was not to count with a member representing traditional Gulf falconry. Last year at the IAF AGM we welcomed the Emirates Falconers Club and less than one year after we are very pleased and thankful to our Emirates friends for hosting our Annual General Meeting.

Falconry in Gulf countries is not only a tradition but a national heritage and emblem and a distinguishing mark, more than in any other people in the world.

We are happy and feel honoured to see here prominent observers from other Gulf countries. We look forward to cooperating with them in finding the ways to properly approach the very serious problems that Arab falconry is facing and that, at the same time, are affecting our sport worldwide due to increasing globalization.

In our limited capacity, the IAF is more than willing to support the right initiatives of Arab falconers to tackle the serious concerns that threaten the sustainability of their traditional hawking. The UAE's Mark, Registration and Passport System for falconry birds is a good example. As falconers we are proud and pleased to commend the long lasting conservation work carried out in this country by ERWDA, and by other agencies in the area like Saudi NCWCD. But we must recognize as well that there is a lot of work to be done yet and falconers must proceed coordinated to help the problems.

To this respect and again within IAF's limited role, we find it is a key element for future survival of our sport that falconers themselves get organized. A falconry organization, a falconry club is a vehicle for two directions flow of information, an element of control and implementation. It is also a source of education, proposals and initiatives by falconers. Therefore we encourage Gulf falconers to look into Emirates Falconers Club experience and find the way to get organized with full respect to its traditions in order to efficiently face the new challenges.

AFRICA

Our African membership comes from Magreb Countries (Morocco and Tunisia) and Southern countries in the continent (Zimbabwe and South Africa) actually representing the two existing forms of falconry in the continent.

We look forward to hearing promising news from Moroccan delegate Mohamed Nour Eddine. And wait good news as well from South Africa, we hope. Unfortunately, delegate from Zimbabwe couldn't attend this time but we'll look for follow ups about the worrying political situation in the country that is also affecting falconry practice. We can read an extensive report on Zimbabwe's status in our last Newsletter by Ron Hartley.

OCEANIA

Last year in Jerez our first member from Oceania joined the IAF as well: the Wingspan Birds of Prey Trust from New Zealand. Its delegate has apologized for not being able to attend this meeting and looks forward for future cooperation as we also do.

Finally let me briefly report on my attendance to International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation, the so called CIC, General Assembly last April in Bucharest. As it

was planned and reported in Jerez we drafted a Memorandum Of Understanding between IAF and CIC that was finally signed by Presidents of both organizations. The purpose of such Memorandum in short is to join forces and coordinate efforts to more efficiently represent the interests of falconers as hunters. Under the agreement it is foreseen that IAF will apply for CIC Membership and vice versa.

During the CIC General Assembly I had the opportunity to attend the session of its Commission of Falconry and Conservation of Birds of Prey chaired by Peter Sapara, an experienced German falconer. I was then appointed as Vice-president of that Commission. Let me say that I was very positively impressed by the CIC's management and their good contacts at Governmental level in many countries. I see this alliance with other hunters as a key relationship from a strategic viewpoint and certainly we'll take advantage of mutual benefits arising from it.

Well, that's all. We have a lot of work to do to successfully face the serious threats and challenges ahead and to take advantage of the also existing opportunities. Those aiming falconry in troubles are many and well organized but our passion for falconry is wholehearted. Let's work for it.

Membership Liaison - Tony Crosswell

Due to the unusual occurrence of the CITES Secretariat meeting in Abu Dahbi, May 2004 the Newsletter was delayed from its usual publishing date. This was to enable a 'Stop Press' report of the meeting to be included. The next edition should be with me in 2005 and any suggestions for inclusion should be with me by early February by email with photos on CD by mail.

This year we tried a new printer in Poland with the invaluable help of Janusz Sielicki to try to lower costs. The difficulties for the editor in this long range communication proved to be quite time consuming and in my opinion any saving on print costs were quite marginal in the final result in view of the extra time and difficulty of working up a new production team. This should be easier for the next edition. We are an entirely voluntary organisation without professional facilities other than those which I and others can impose upon personally. As we are now becoming a much larger Association I will be asking for more help from delegates and those who contribute articles when we undertake the next publication.

My thanks to Tim Kimmel and Janusz Sielicki in particular, for the great amount of work they put into updating our circulation list. It is much refreshed and with the input from members we now have a more targeted readership. Tim Kimmel is now tasked with the centralised communication lists for the executive.

Our newly appointed PRO, Gary Timbrel, came along too late for much input into this edition but I am expecting that he will be very involved in the next one. Our web site editor Ray Cooper has also proved invaluable and has recently installed a new facility that enables the PRO and Secretary to upload current news easily and distribute information to everybody in an efficient manner.

Last year IAF managed to obtain the production of a significant video 'Allies of the Air' through the initiative of José Manuel Rodríguez-Villa in partnership with GONDWANA Films in Spain. It is a most professional production of which IAF can rightly be proud on behalf of its members. Our particular thanks to Javier Ceballos.



And lastly our special thanks to Andy Ellis, the well known wildlife artist and falconer whose generosity to IAF and to me personally has been invaluable. In an utterly selfless manner Andy has supported us in every way that he can, as have his managers the Halcyon Gallery of London. He continues to do so as his personal contribution to international falconry.

PRO Report to IAF Board June-July 2004

PARAMETERS OF PRO

The appointment was made on 28th May. Time was spent initially in setting the parameters the PRO should work to and in reminding the Board and the AC that in view of the sensitive nature of the work and the non-AC nature of the post, everything done by the PRO needs approval from at least the President and input from many others in the AC. The agreed parameters are that the PRO should:

1. Prepare regular News Bulletins for distribution inside and outside IAF

- These bulletins to be a summary of IAF work in progress during the previous few months, the information to be harvested from emails received from IAF Board and AC.

- Before they go out they must be approved by the Executive and any relevant Working Group Chairmen (it is impossible to chase up the full AC although their input should be sought).

- They are to be carefully worded, in simple language and preferably non-controversial.

- Compile an email list for distribution of these News Bulletins

2. Compose the invitation and programme to AGMs and organise stands and information for AGMs, the Falconers' Fair (UK) and other venues when appropriate.

3. Respond to international falconry issues in the press and media.

* This will be a case of preparing a document for APPROVAL. The PRO can suggest a possible response, but only issues the official one. It is not possible to react instantly; too many people need to be contacted. Any reaction must be in written form, posted, and reinforcing of the national delegate's case.

WORK DONE AND IN PROGRESS

In the short period between early June and the beginning of August the following work was completed or is still in progress:

1. Tim Kimmel compiled the email list for distribution of News Bulletins and releases was compiled by Tim Kimmel. This list is secure, it can only be accessed by Tim and myself and none of the recipients can see the other recipients' email addresses or even who else is receiving it.

2. Ray Cooper enabled the IAF website so that GT can post the News Bulletins and releases, with back-up by Tony Crosswell. The current News Bulletin (July) is on it.

3. Email chat groups and forums were excluded from this list. Instead the entire bulletin is posted to our IAF website and interested groups are emailed with the website address.

4. The first News Bulletin was prepared and distributed. It received only good comments.

5. Negotiations are underway with International Falconer Magazine to supply regular material; I.F is a quarterly publication so not really suited to news, but the editors have expressed interest in feature articles on falconry in IAF member countries, on international field-meets, profiles of IAF officials etc. Other magazines may also be approached for a similar purpose.

6. An information pack for prospective new IAF members is in preparation ready for the AGM and the Abu Dhabi Hunting Exhibition.

7. The information, display material and leaflets explaining IAF to public attending the UK Falconers' Fair is being adapted to use in a stand at the Abu Dhabi Hunting Exhibition hosted by the Emirates Falconers' Club. Some of the key documents are being translated into Arabic, again courtesy of Majid Al Mansouri and EFC who are also assisting in organising the stand itself.

8. A PowerPoint Presentation is being prepared in Spain for use in Abu Dhabi.

9. The invitation and programme to AGM were decided, prepared and distributed.

10. The following response was made to a BBC Natural History television programme where the presenter stated wild peregrines are stolen to sell to rich Arabs:

Ref: "Britain Goes Wild" TV Programme Tuesday 8th June 2004

Dear Sir,

The TV personality and bird-watcher Bill Oddie stated on this programme that people steal peregrines and sell them to rich Arabs.

It has taken many years for organisations like the International Association for Falconry and Conservation of Birds of Prey and other like-minded conservation organisations to dispel this myth perpetrated by newspaper articles in the seventies and eighties.

Falconers in Britain know that falconers in the Middle East have negligible interest in nestling peregrines. Our concern is that to reiterate a "sale to rich Arabs" myth might well be a temptation to criminals with little knowledge of law and forensic DNA techniques and with no interest in falconry or conservation.



The matter has been brought to the notice of the International Association for Falconry and Conservation of Birds of Prey legal team who wish to state on behalf of IAF members that when an unfounded accusation such as this is made without evidence of illegal activity, it is not worthy of dissemination and damages the credibility of the BBC.

If there is such evidence then an investigation by the authorities must be commenced immediately.

Yours truly,
Gary Timbrell,
IAF Public Relations

This response backed up UK Hawk board and BFC responses.

Gary Timbrell,
IAF Public Relations
Kilnagnady, Upton
Co.Cork, Ireland.
Email: iaf.informationbureau@dublin.com
Telephone: +353-21-7330298
Mobile: +353-87-6650619

Reports of the chairmen of the Working Groups:

MIDDLE EASTERN RELATIONS WORKING GROUP REPORT BY JOSÉ MANUEL RODRIGUEZ-VILLA (CHAIRMAN)

Over the last year we have been building up a working relationship with our only member in the area, the Emirates Falconers Club.

As a result of this growing partnership the IAF was invited to participate in a Saker Symposium organized in Abu Dhabi on September 2003 by ERWDA. President Patrick Morel and I attended the meeting and made a presentation on IAF to participants: researchers from range countries, CITES, NGOs, environmental authorities and falconers. The most serious concern about saker falcon decline in most of its range was the reason and central subject of this Symposium.

We were also invited to participate in a meeting on Falcon Trade organized by CITES Secretariat hosted by ERWDA on May this year here in Abu Dhabi as well. IAF's representatives then were President Patrick Morel and Frank Bond, Vicepresident for the Americas. There is an interesting report on the CITES Falcon Trade Meeting in our last Newsletter by Frank Bond.

In both meetings we were able to make promising initial contacts with other Middle East falconers.

The organization by Emirates Falconers Club of this 2004 IAF 's Council of Delegates gives us a new opportunity to approach falconers of the region in order to look for ways of cooperation and eventually new members in the area in the near future. We find that IAF can play a significant role in promoting and supporting organized falconry in the region whenever the initiative is taken by local falconers. We look forward to it.

WG HYBRIDS - Frank Bond

The IAF developed a policy several years ago regarding the use of hybrid falcons for falconry purposes. Throughout the world, hybrids have been used routinely for at least 25 years. However, in recent years, some environmental and protectionist groups have exerted pressure to ban the use of

hybrids, particularly in Germany, Scandinavia, Hungary and to some degrees in other European countries. Hybrids are used in large numbers in the Middle East and North America.

The IAF essentially has adopted a policy of tolerance. Those countries which choose to use hybrid with legal authority are free to do so with the support of the IAF. Other countries, through their national falconry associations, may agree to the ban on hybrids in their countries.

The IAF will review its policy on hybrids through the next year to determine if it is consistent with present political and biological circumstances. The Hybrid Work Group, as appointed by President Morel, will report to the Council of Delegates on its review of the hybrid policy and whether it recommends any changes.

WG CIC- Frank Bond

At our 2003 AGM in Jerez de la Frontera, Spain, we were honored by the attendance of Dieter Schramm, President of the CIC. The CIC is a worldwide organization which supports appropriate management and sustainable use of wildlife. As the CIC has within it a Commission of Falconry and Bird of Prey Conservation, President Schramm eloquently suggested that the CIC and the IAF develop a relationship in order to avoid duplication of effort and to be mutually supportive.

To that end, Dieter Schramm and Frank Bond developed a Memorandum of Understanding to propose to the two organizations for mutual benefit. Each organization becomes a member of the other and an IAF delegate has become a member of the Commission for Falconry. During the year, both organizations signed the Memorandum of Understanding.

Presently, the President of the CIC Falconry Commission is Peter Sapara, and IAF President Morel appointed IAF Vice President José Manuel Rodriguez-Villa to be the IAF's representative. At his first meeting of the Commission, José Manuel was elected Vice President of the CIC's Commission for Falconry. He will report more fully as work progresses.

At the 2004 AGM, we are again honored to have the attendance of CIC President, Dieter Schramm, Chief Executive Officer, Kai Uwe Wollscheidt, Falconry Commission President, Peter Sapara.



World Conservation Council (IUCN) Working Group report for 2004.

Members of the IUCN Working Group in 2004 were Robert Kenward (chair), Frank Bond, Timothy Kimmel, Anthony Crosswell, Hermann Doettlinger, Matthew Gage and Majid al Mansouri, with Patrick Morel ex-officio.

IUCN was pleased during the last year to welcome its 1000th member organisation. There are now 1035 members, including 77 state members and some 130 national agencies, as well as a very large number of national and international non-government organisations. There are about 1000 staff and some 10,000 experts as volunteers in the 6 commissions and 125 working groups. The largest commission is Species Survival Commission (SSC), of which the largest part is the Sustainable Use Specialist Group (SUSG), chaired by Dr Jon Hutton. Christian de Coune and Robert Kenward are members of European SUSG and attended interesting meetings in Brussels during Green Week.

IAF has a number of other connections with IUCN. Hermann Doettlinger is a member of another SSC Specialist Group, for Conservation Breeding, in which he has just helped to produce an important report. The organisation in which Majid al Mansouri is a manager, UAE's Environmental Research and Wildlife Development Agency, has one staff member chairs the Reintroduction Specialist Group and another who provides general Specialist Group support services.

IAF has been an IUCN member for nearly 10 years, thanks to an initiative by Christian de Coune. IUCN now arranges World Conservation Congresses to develop its programme at 4 year intervals, with "WCC3" due in Bangkok during 17-25 November. IAF is joining CIC and FACE to co-sponsor a motion on "Cherishing voluntarism in IUCN" that was developed within the European Sustainable Use Specialist Group, partly to improve the status of SUSG volunteers. IAF also acted during the year to help FACE address an issue with an apparently anti-hunting group in IUCN. The issue was resolved by ensuring that the group agreed to accept all of IUCN's principles, which firmly endorse sustainable use.

Another action of working group members Matt Gage and Robert Kenward was a paper on "Incentive-based conservation of game birds through falconry" for a conference at Udine in Italy. The paper (available on request from reke@ceh.ac.uk) shows falconry to be an especially low-impact sustainable use of wild prey species that is very suitable for funding conservation of uncommon species (e.g. grouse and partridges) and their habitats.

Of great interest at present are IUCN initiatives to embed sustainable use principles further in the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). The Addis Ababa Principles and Guidelines on Sustainable Use were approved by CBD in February 2004 at its Kuala Lumpur Conference of the Parties. These principles came from IUCN's Sustainable Use Initiative, and European Sustainable Use Specialist Group is working on applications for Europe. The likely effect of these initiatives are (i) that sustainable use activities become an accepted part of conservation, but also (ii) that there may also be an onus on users to show that their use is sustainable and benefits conservation of species and habitats. It is important to ensure that responsibilities for groups like falconers do not become onerous, for which purpose your representatives must remain vigilant. Rights should come in exchange for responsibilities, but not for a socially or economically unsustainable burden.

Christian de Coune report

IUCN's European Sustainable Users Specialists Group met in Brussels on 4-5 June.

Robert Kenward, plays an active role in the Group, he participated to the meeting, as well as FACE, RSPCA, etc.. I attended the Wild Species Resources working group. Nicholas Hanley (European Commission) set out the position of the Commission on the principle of sustainable use of natural resources. A large part of the time has been devoted to a draft document titled "Towards principles, criteria and indicators for sustainable hunting in Europe", which has been worked on since October 2002. Interesting statements have been made, like: hunting does not endanger the long term conservation of the species concerned, nor any reduction of their natural geographic range is attributable to it.

Some participants, including myself, found the text too detailed and too mandatory and criteria too demanding. I raised the question of the burden of the proof: must the hunters prove that they meet the criteria or, must the antis prove that the criteria have not been met. Yves Lecocq replies that hunting has been in existence for centuries, it is a presumption of durability, the ones who say the contrary must prove it.

Robert Kenward expressed the fear that those criteria could be used against hunting if one can not prove that those sustainability criteria are met, some criteria are difficult to prove that they are met. In such case sustainability could be questioned and hunting sentenced. He recommends not to go beyond general principles and avoid going too much into details, like for instance with the criteria. He recommends to talk of "best practices" rather than of criteria and guidelines. The day after, a completely revised (by R. Kenward and others) document was proposed, it took account of the comments expressed the day before. It has become guidelines for best practice of hunting. It is still a draft...

WG NAMEAN - Tim Kimmel

As a communications and information-gathering arm of the Middle Eastern Relations Working Group (MERWG), the Northern Africa, Middle East, and Asia Network (NAMEAN) functioned from early summer 2002 through early 2004 when a decision was made by the MERWG and the Advisory Committee (AC) to indefinitely suspend NAMEAN discussions.

From the start, membership in NAMEAN was limited and had been tightly controlled through approval by the MERWG following review of each proposed member's background, falconry-related interests, and expertise. Because NAMEAN existed primarily to provide a mechanism for the IAF to gather and share information quickly across a broad geographic region (essentially, Morocco to China), attempts had been made to recruit potential members who were knowledgeable about falconry, raptor biology, conservation, veterinary medicine, etc. from as many countries as possible in the NAMEAN region, as well as others from outside the NAMEAN region who had an interest in NAMEAN issues. Otherwise, this membership recruitment effort was balanced with a desire to keep NAMEAN membership to a manageable level of selected individuals. At its height, NAMEAN consisted of a total of 49 members from 23 countries. Excluding 11 NAMEAN members who represented the IAF (mostly IAF AC members), the remaining 38 members were from 18 countries, and 87% of these 38 members were from 15 countries within the NAMEAN region.



NAMEAN never was intended as a typical, open email discussion group (e.g., a forum for members to air emotional, opinionated exchanges). When first approved as a NAMEAN member, each was informed explicitly that NAMEAN was to be a forum for the exchange of factual, credible information. Also, NAMEAN had a set of ground rules, which were provided to each member when first approved. The ground rules dictated the manner and nature of discussions - i.e., there were to be no personal attacks or innuendo; factual information was to be shared, rather than opinions alone; members were not permitted to forward any NAMEAN postings to others outside the network, etc. Indeed, there was even a clause in the ground rules that a member could be expelled (by MERWG vote), if they violated the ground rules or otherwise were disruptive to discussions.

In spite of having a fairly rigid structure and exclusive membership, NAMEAN discussions during the last several months of the network's existence tended to gravitate toward the more emotional and less factual kinds of exchanges. Also, there seemed to be a sense in some members that NAMEAN was a mechanism for international change, rather than being a forum for gathering and sharing information that potentially could use to nurture international change. Further, frustrations over saker/houbara conservation, the urgency of this issue, and the international complexities of managing these kinds of issues globally undoubtedly added fuel to some of the more emotional exchanges.

In the end, in spite of some attempts to manage discussions to keep them more factual and less emotional, the MERWG decided that the advantages gained by the discussions were being outstripped by negative side of the more emotional posts by a relatively small number of NAMEAN members. Thus, on 18 February 2004, NAMEAN discussions were suspended with the following notice to its members:

Dear NAMEAN Member:

I am obliged to send this message to announce a recent decision by the IAF Advisory Committee to suspend the IAF-NAMEAN network.

Having 'tested the water' with this kind of discussion group now for nearly two years, the IAF feels it has come to appreciate some of the strengths, weakness, opportunities, and threats associated with such a network. Given that appreciation, however, we also feel it is now time for the IAF to quietly and internally reevaluate the nature of any electronic discussion group that we might host in the future.

NAMEAN was created with a vision of providing a rapid means to obtain and disseminate objective and accurate information about the status of falconry, falconry traditions, raptor and prey status and conservation issues, and other falconry-related information across a broad geographic expanse from northern Africa to eastern Asia. It was spawned in the shadow of the looming conservation problems (notably, as related to saker falcon and houbara bustard populations) that still confront us. The IAF remains committed to a resolution of these conservation problems in a way that not only conserves these species but also preserves falconry and falconry traditions within the context of sustainable-use management. We shall continue to work in that direction, but at this point not with the aid of the NAMEAN network.

The IAF appreciates the input that many of you have provided via NAMEAN messages during the past many months. Through your input, we have come to better understand and appreciate the nature of some of the issues and problems in your countries. Should the IAF decide to reactivate NAMEAN

in its previous form or some variation of that form, we would hope that you might consider an invitation to participate at that time. Further, we would encourage continued dialogue between individual NAMEAN members, and if there is any way I might assist with that dialogue by supplying email addresses of individuals with mutual consent, please feel free to contact me. Also, more than likely, the IAF will be in touch with some of you on an individual basis as we find the need to cooperate and share information at that level.

Thank you very much,
Tim Kimmel,
NAMEAN Facilitator
and System Administrator

In summary, throughout its relatively short lifetime of almost 20 months, the NAMEAN experience was both "sweet and sour." Indeed, it was an opportunity for all of us to learn more about particular conservation issues and concerns across a broad region, as well as to come to better appreciate the complexities of the issues and the interplay of individual personalities. NAMEAN did represent a wonderful opportunity for the IAF to quickly gather information from individuals who most likely were "in-the-know" and for the IAF to send information quickly to those individuals. The level of individual member participation, however, often was less than what we might have expected or liked, and a few individuals tended to dominate, in some cases with incessant emotionalism. The future still may hold for the IAF a place for some kind of electronic sharing of information on conservation and falconry-related issues across the broad NAMEAN region. Most certainly, though, if such a network should be reactivated again in the future, it might need to be even more controlled than NAMEAN was controlled by its set of ground rules and expectations.

Respectfully submitted by J. Timothy Kimmel, former NAMEAN Facilitator

WG BASS - Robert Kenward

Report of the Baltic and Scandinavian States Working Group for 2004.

Members of the BASS Working Group in 2004 were Robert Kenward (chair), Jevgeni Shergalin, Tage Jessen, Frank Hansen, Darius Daugela and Magnus Wildt, plus Patrick Morel ex-officio.

The Baltic and Scandinavian states of Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania and Norway are a challenging area for falconry. Falconers have never been common there, so the sport is not well understood. Falconry has been misrepresented on many occasions in these countries by those who genuinely mistake it as a threat for raptors, and by others who have found it convenient to depict a threat from which they can save raptors. Hunting prey with trained hawks is illegal in three states round the Baltic Sea.

In Denmark and Sweden, this ban was introduced during the pesticide era, when there were very real fears for the survival of raptors. It was not understood that falconers were in fact part of the solution to the problem. In Estonia there was a recent misunderstanding about a trained peregrine, at a time when attempted breeding by a domestic peregrine hybrid in the wild had raised a storm in Sweden. In every case, the tiny minority of falconers had not managed to develop good relations with the national regulatory authorities, as they have in most countries of Europe. In 2004 there has been discussion



among ornithologists and falconers (and within BASS) about whether it is appropriate to use trained falcons to deter birds that are a hazard at airfields.

However, knowledge of what has happened in these northern states has been invaluable for falconry. It has helped IAF to develop a strategy whereby falconers everywhere can seek security through recognition of their importance for conservation and human culture. This is why, in IAF's strategy recommendations, it says, "To safeguard the future of falconry, IAF considers it wise for falconry organisations:

- a) to encourage falconers in activities which benefit humanity and wildlife conservation;
- b) to obtain regulations that enable such activities by falconers;
- c) to create public awareness of their beneficial activities;
- d) to preserve organisational knowledge by archives and use of their elder statesmen."

Falconers must never forget the lesson from the Baltic and Scandinavian States. Those bans are why IAF now also encourages everywhere the "development of skills among falconers that benefit humans and wildlife", "development by falconers of close relationships with their regulatory authorities" and "development by falconers of culturally sensitive public relations strategies".

The public and authorities in the Baltic and Scandinavian States have yet to understand the important role that techniques pioneered by falconers had in restoring their peregrine populations, which dwindled to a tiny fraction in the 1970s. They have yet to understand that the DNA techniques refined with funding from falconers can now allay all their fears with negligible administrative expense. They have yet to appreciate why falconers may practise their art without breaking laws in all other parts of the European Union.

However, there are glimmerings of hope that this knowledge will come. Legal challenges by Simon Hawking and Chris Eastham in Sweden this year have shown that fundamental European regulations, not readily abrogated by individual states, give the right to keep raptors in all EU countries. This means that groups can build to begin the education process and win back the right to the art of hunting with their hawks. Although falconers must work very gently to gain acceptance in all the BASS states, and therefore labour hard and long, they may one day win the respect that they deserve.

WG CITES - Tony Crosswell

IAF has for many years maintained a close working relationship with the CITES Secretariat. Christian de Coune during his presidency had extraordinary success several years ago enabling IAF to initiate the falcon passport scheme when he managed to get a CITES proposal approved at the HARARE COP in Zimbabwe. With the help of Frank Bond, Tim Kimmel, Nick Fox and myself at that COP a policy was initiated that today has enabled progress to be made for falconry worldwide and has started to be developed in current circumstances.

CITES Consultative Meeting on the Trade in Falcons for Falconry

Abu Dhabi (United Arab Emirates)

May 16-19, 2004

By Frank M Bond

The CITES Secretariat organized a special meeting of selected countries to discuss the trade in falcons for falconry purposes in Abu Dhabi. The intent was to review CITES issues with respect to international movement of falconry birds and to focus particularly on the trade of Saker falcons harvested from the wild. The meeting was hosted generously by the UAE's Environmental Research and Wildlife Development Agency through its CITES Management and Scientific Authorities and the United Kingdom's DEFRA. The Parties, non-Parties, and observer organizations were: Canada; the Czech Republic; Egypt, Germany; Hungary; Jordan; Kazakhstan; Kuwait; Mongolia; Pakistan; Qatar; the Russian Federation; Saudi Arabia; Tunisia; UAE; UK; Turkmenistan; IAF; Greifvogelzuchtverband; and, Birdlife International. President Patrick Morel and Vice President for the Americas Frank Bond attended to represent the IAF at the invitation of the CITES Secretariat.

Because of the superb organization of the meeting by Mohamed Al Bowardi, Director of ERWDA and IAF Advisory Committee member, Majid Al Mansouri, Secretary-General of ERWDA, the attendees were hosted at several special events which included special visits to the Abu Dhabi Falcon Hospital, the Emirates Falconers Club and the National Saluki Center. All of the facilities, staffed by very competent professionals, were first class. Patrick Morel, Frank Bond and Nick Fox were given a special tour of Sheikh Khalifa's spectacular Falcon Breeding Center near Al Ain which houses approximately 120 pairs of Gyrfalcons, hybrids, Peregrines and Sakers.

Since the CITES Secretariat had only set a provisional agenda a significant portion of the first day permitted the Parties to explain the falconry issues of their countries and their expectations for the meeting. There was a rather marked difference of views between some of the European nations, Saker falcon range states of Asia and the consumer countries of the Middle East. With these introductions the delegates were able to understand the magnitude of the international trade in falconry birds. Overall the most significant issues discussed were enforcement matters, establishment and management of catch and export quotas, use of certificates of ownership (falcon passports), captive breeding, and marking. The delegates ultimately produced a summary document of the meeting which will be available on the CITES website.

Enforcement: Particularly to protect the very low populations of Saker falcons in many range states, the delegates are encouraged to raise the awareness of falconers about compliance with CITES, the significant illicit trade and the need for additional training among law enforcement and airport security personnel. There was recognition of several nations' schemes for individual bird registration with encouragement of the Gulf States to adopt similar approaches for mandatory ringing and registration for identification and CITES compliance. Particularly in the Gulf States, the delegates stressed the need for stopping the waiving of various laws regarding hunting and falcon transport, which are often afforded to Middle Eastern VIPs.

Establishment and management of catch and export quotas: Saker falcon range states were encouraged to know their



populations in order to make non-detriment findings for appropriate quotas. Some range states, like Hungary, prohibit export and breeding of Saker falcons altogether. The range states are encouraged to provide data to the CITES Secretariat and Animals Committee for quotas. Finally, those countries authorizing export of falcons should do so in a transparent and fair manner.

Certificates of ownership (falcon passports): Generally the delegates approved of the use of travel documents, often to act as falcon passports, for frequent cross-border movements to curb illicit trade when combined with national registration efforts. The passport information should include at least country of origin, source (wild, captive bred), and reference to proof of legal acquisition.

Captive breeding: While acknowledging well regulated captive breeding programs in many countries, the delegates are concerned about unregulated captive propagation in other countries, which then become a means of laundering wild birds or locations for propagation of illegally acquired wild birds. The delegates noted that captive bred birds reduce the need for wild birds, although some Middle Eastern countries (particularly Saudi Arabia) noted that the strong preference of their falconers was for wild birds. There was considerable discussion on the adverse impact to wild populations by interbreeding with hybrids. Germany and Hungary were most vociferous, without being able to provide more than cursory detail; Germany has a proposal to completely ban propagation and use of hybrids, this ban will be effective very soon (when adopted by the Parliament) with a moratorium of 10 years for commercial breeders, allowed to produce hybrids only for export.

Marking: The delegates expressed a need to develop a harmonized approach to marking falconry birds by rings, rings embedded with microchips, microchips embedded in the birds, and/or use of DNA sampling. Frank Bond made a presentation of the IAF's Mark and Bank scheme, put together by AC members, Dr. Matt Gage and Dr. Robert Kenward. The delegates were generally receptive, and our suggestions are included in the summary document. Finally the delegates noted that registration databases need to be compatible to provide shared information. Dr Michel Schoffeniels of European Pet Network made a presentation of a falcon database based on the new pet passport, marking and banking of pets.

Overall the meeting was positive, despite the widely varying views among some delegates. There were some rather pointed comments by falconry range states to others who were not sympathetic to falconry as a practice. Obviously there were some issues which were discussed only cursorily or not at all. Most importantly the delegates and observers developed relationships to move into new areas of concern with greater knowledge of the biases and potential areas for consensus. The summary will be presented to the 51st meeting of the CITES Standing Committee. It was extraordinarily important for the IAF to attend to explain the view of the world's falconers and to be a resource of falconry information.

IAF continues development of this program on the basis of sustainable use and to that end keeps in close touch with CITES Secretariat. Through contacts worldwide with Governments and NGO's who help resolve current difficulties through creating sustainable ongoing policies of clear relevance to falconers and their sport, IAF represents ALL shades of viewpoint from its members in an inclusive manner. Through this

process consensus is achieved under the umbrella of IAF representation and is proving very effective.

WG BERN Convention & EU- Christian de Coune GREEN WEEK

The Green Week took place in Brussels from 1 to 4 June. It is always a good opportunity for meeting people and showing that the IAF takes interest. This year is the 25 anniversary of the Bird Directive.

On behalf of the IAF, I attended a workshop on the Bird Directive.

Nicholas Hanley (Chief of Unit of DG Environment of the EC Commission) said in his introduction that biodiversity is a resource of which hunting may benefit. There is no fundamental conflict between conservation and hunting, both must have a common approach and must cooperate. He is happy of the ongoing cooperation between BirdLife and FACE.

One session was devoted to the SHI (Sustainable Hunting Initiative) which is something like an agreement of understanding between BirdLife and FACE on hunting and conservation under the mediation of the European Commission. Claire Papazoglu, for BirdLife and Yves Lecocq, for FACE explained the progress since 2001 of their work towards the adoption of a 10 points joint statement. There are no real deep conflicts anymore but some misunderstanding have still to be solved. Both the organisations agree that the Bird Directive is the right instrument, it is a good law that should not be modified. BirdLife says that hunting in the "Natura 2000" territories is not incompatible, Yves Lecocq wants them to say that it is compatible instead of non-incompatible. BirdLife calls for a phasing out of the release of non-indigenous game species and of lead shot.

They aim at reaching an agreement on a document to be signed on 7-9 November, 25 anniversary of the Bird Directive. It would definitely be an important milestone!

Thinking of a farther future, BirdLife advocates for a single European Biodiversity Law.

Other sessions were also of great interest. I was happy to hear at one of them that scientific work must be the basis of every decision. A harvest potential must be evaluated. The example of cooperation is given by Denmark, where all interested parties are represented in the Wildlife management Council.

A seminar was devoted to the implementation of the Bird- and Habitat Directives.

Interpretations by the Court of Justice have been recalled, like the acceptance of recreational purposes or traditional character of some hunting activities. There are about 10 cases currently pending before the Court of Justice, based on the Habitat- and on the Bird Directives. Some complain that the hunting seasons are too vaguely defined and call for an amendment of the Directive.

A French hunter concluded advocating for a single European Biodiversity Law in which all the good things of the other texts would be embedded.

Corridor conversations are an important asset of such conferences: Yves Lecocq (FACE) asks me what happened in Slovenia, because BirdLife makes a big fuss about it claiming that they achieved a major victory against falconry. I explained that the situation has not been modified, we only failed to improve it. Niels Kanstrup (Danish hunters): falconers have done a very good PR work and their image is very positively



perceived by the public. He agreed with me that once a door has been shut, it is very difficult to reopen it, the public is ready for it, but only politicians will decide to reopen it.

European Commission: yes, they can do something for IAF to be admitted to the 25th Anniversary of the Bird Directive. I asked if, after a Guidance Document on Hunting, there will be such a document on Art.9 derogations: it has to be discussed the issue has not yet been addressed. What is that European Single Biodiversity Law about which I've heard several times? There is nothing.

Martin Lok (Dutch Ministry of Agriculture and Nature). Is there a possibility for the IAF to be "visibly" present at the celebration of the 25 Anniversary of the Bird Directive in November in the Netherlands? Participation will be only by invitation of the Ministry. There is no room for many. The Ministry has not yet decided who will be invited, NGO's etc...nor have they decided what will be the criteria. Hunters are already represented by FACE and... I claimed that the IAF is the only international (world) falconry association and that "falconry is explicitly named in the Directive. I applied officially for IAF's "visible" participation and said we are ready to give a presentation on falconry if they found it suitable. I greeted a good many of other people: IAF's presence was not unnoticed.

WG FACE - Christian de Coune

I intend to say a few words about what happened in the EU since my report published in the last IAF Newsletter. I shall make a short summary of the attached report.

Additional informations will perhaps come in shortly, I will keep you informed.

You may already add that :

Sweden.

Sweden has asked the EU Commission to put falconry on the agenda of an upcoming meeting of the Scientific Working Group. Recently they've asked to postpone the discussion of the said topic, because they are not yet ready with their set of arguments. The IAF would be invited when the issue will be put on the agenda. I insisted on the fact that we are very much interested to participate.

25th Anniversary.

2004 is the 25th anniversary of the Bird Directive 79/409. This will be celebrated in Holland (because they have the presidency of the EU). They chosen a church as the venue for their reception. There is no space for everyone who expressed the wish to attend. The Dutch authorities are still discussing who will be invited. Nobody knows yet who will be on the list.

WG Science Committee - Tim Kimmel IAF Science Committee Report 2004 AGM, Abu Dhabi

The IAF Science Committee was established in December 2003 at the IAF AGM, Jerez de la Frontera, Spain. Generally, the intended purpose of the Science Committee was to continue with activities and services similar to those fulfilled by the former IAF Research Coordinator (ably served by Dr. Robert Kenward for many years), but to include a broader range of individuals with a scientific background who collectively might provide a broader but unified committee approach. Members appointed in December 2003 included Dr. Hermann Dättlinger (Germany), Dr. Nick Fox (UK), Dr. Matthew Gage (UK), Dr. Robert Kenward (UK), Dr. Timothy Kimmel (USA, Committee Chair), Dr. Jevgeni Shergalin (Estonia), and Janusz Sielicki (Poland).

Limited email discussions among Science Committee members in early 2004 centered on a broad discussion of more specific roles the Committee might play in serving the IAF and its affiliated member organizations and nations. While those discussions might have been brought to a fuller and more complete conclusion, several aspects of how the Science Committee might best support falconry. First, it was recognized that the continued existence of falconry depends upon four factors: (1) falconers (individuals having an interest in hunting with raptors), (2) raptors (availability of birds of prey to be trained from captive-bred, but especially, wild stocks), (3) quarry (natural populations, except perhaps for limited captive-produced stocks for certain training activities), and (4) hunting grounds (adequate spatial distribution and availability of habitats that contain sufficient prey populations to support sustainable-use that is balanced with the demand). It was further recognized that the Science Committee could support falconry with credible, authoritative information relative to all these factors, but especially the last three. Second, there emerged several activities or concepts related to the role the Science Committee might play in support of these factors, including: (1) mapping and networking personnel and the particular expertise of networked individuals (both within and outside the IAF as an organization), (2) an obvious need for the "strong and more informed" to assist "the weak and less informed" in support of falconry, (3) the development of "toolboxes of information" targeted to particular issues (e.g., management based on sustainable-use, impact of hybrids and exotics on native populations, raptor-marking technologies, and conservation of declining populations of raptors/prey), (4) the distillation of the frequently complex array of technical information related to particular issues into a concise and simplified statement that is easily understood by lay public and policy-makers, and (5) appointment of individuals to take a lead on management of scientific information, capability-mapping and networking, public-relations responses, etc.

As the Science Committee might become more fully engaged in these potential roles, a considerable amount of time, energy, and resources will be required - much more than seems to have been available in the first several months of the Committee's existence. Nevertheless, during the first part of 2004, there have been some activities in which the Science Committee members (and/or the Committee at-large) have been involved that relate to the Committee and its purpose.

For example, chairman, Dr. Tim Kimmel, together with Science Committee member Janusz Sielicki and recently appointed IAF Public Relations Officer, Gary Timbrell, have developed a distribution list of individuals primarily affiliated with the



IAF. The list presently contains 204 records represented by the names, titles, affiliations, and email addresses of IAF representatives and others in member nations affiliated with IAF member organizations. This list will be expanded in time to include other individuals, and it would be a simple matter of including one or more fields of information related to the particular expertise of those in the database. As an Excel spreadsheet, the information then could be filtered or sorted in a matter of seconds and used to send messages to selected individuals in the list via the IAF email network or by using other email merge software. This kind of expertise-mapping and networking has the potential to become a valuable asset to the IAF, its member organizations/nations, and falconry worldwide.

The Science Committee needs to become better organized to serve as a more efficient and effective source of timely information as we utilize the strengths of some of our constituents to help defend others who may need our assistance. The recent plea from our Slovenian friends for documentation of evidence by which falconers have contributed to raptor and other wildlife conservation is one example. Unfortunately, at the time, we did not have a "packet" or "toolbox" of such information readily available. However, in the past couple of months the Science Committee has undertaken a project to list individual falconers from around the world and some of their relevant contributions to the scientific literature, natural resource conservation, and other human endeavors (e.g., the Arts). At the time of this writing, our growing list of falconers who have made such contributions contains approximately 120 individuals, most of whom are English-speaking. This list primarily has been compiled by Drs. Robert Kenward and Tim Kimmel as an extension of information in an appendix of Dr. Nick Fox's book, *Understanding the Bird of Prey*, in which many falconers were recognized for their contributions. Other members of the Science Committee presently are providing the names of other individuals whose primary language is non-English. The list of individuals and accomplishments should provide ample evidence of the kind of information that would have been helpful to our Slovenian friends recently. Soon, it will be available both in hard copy and electronic copy format, and likely also will be placed on the IAF website for display and immediate access by those who could use the information.

In advance of the spring 2004 CITES-Saker Symposium in Dubai, UAE, Science Committee member Dr. Matthew Gage prepared a document for presentation entitled Proposal for a 'Mark and Bank' Scheme to Regulate Trade and Traffic in CITES-Regulated Raptors Used in Falconry, which was a refinement of a document earlier drafted by Dr. Robert Kenward with involvement of others on the Advisory Committee.

Hybrids and potentially invasive alien species also continue to be an area of concern - if not biologically, then at least from a political perspective. A comprehensive document on the biology and potential threat of hybrid raptors prepared by Science Committee member, Dr. Nick Fox (together with Dr. Steve Sherrod, USA) several years ago as part of a NAFA initiative to explore the issue of hybrids likely will be central to the development of a "toolbox" on this issue. Such a toolbox would not only provide recommendations on the use of hybrids and other non-native raptors to safeguard native raptor populations, but would also dispel certain myths about the dangers of using such raptors in falconry.

Finally, it will be important for the Science Committee to become more proactive by identifying selected individuals

to take the lead on scientific information management and dissemination as related to particular topics. The earlier appointments of Science Committee member, Dr. Jevgeni Shergalin, as IAF Information Officer for the Advisory Committee, and IAF Delegate (Ireland), Gary Timbrell, as the IAF Public Relations Officer, are examples of the kinds of appointments that can provide a valuable service to the IAF, its Advisory Committee, and member organizations/nations in a more general way. It may be helpful for the Science Committee to appoint some of its members to play similar roles related to tasks that focus on the acquisition, management, and dissemination of scientific information on particular topics.

Respectfully submitted by
Tim Kimmel,
Science Committee Chairman

The Falconry Charter Working Group report for 2004.

Robert Kenward

This Working Group includes the entire advisory Committee, with co-chairing by José Manuel Rodríguez Villa and Robert Kenward.

The co-chairs produced a document by March 2004 for discussion by Advisory Committee. This document provided background information, aims and other considerations. Further development was pre-empted by the initiation of the "Save-The-Falcons" web-site at the end of March. The background and aims of the proposal are given below.

Background

The situation of falconry in Europe is delicate. On one hand there is a growing public awareness of cultural and conservation benefits from sustainable use of wildlife and of benefit from falconers for some raptor populations. On the other hand is renewed pressure on falconry from animal rights activism: issues with hybrids and trade in sakers keep erupting, as in the recent altercation from Bulgaria on the WWGBP newsgroup.

There is mention of falconry in European directives and conventions, as a reason to permit derogation from protective legislation. Each state enacts its own laws on falconry. Of 25 EU states, there is movement towards legalisation in one of the 3 that prohibit it. However, falconry is no longer recognised in Slovenian law and is under pressure in Germany.

IAF has built good relations through professional friendships and cooperation with the major international conservation organisations such as IUCN, WWF, CIC and Birdlife. Moreover, it has good relations with the European Commission. Council of Europe (CoE) links IAF with national environment ministries and proposes a Code of Conduct with IAF.

If falconers offend authorities or become perceived as a nuisance (e.g. through campaigns by protection organisations), adverse laws are proposed. Falconers, like other minorities, find it hard to communicate their benefits when faced with campaigns of misinformation. IAF has contacts to governments, but lacks resources to engage in every country.



Aims

The aim of a Charter for Falconry would be to exploit IAF's good relations at international level to obtain a document that would (i) recognise the benefits of falconry at European level, (ii) encourage national authorities to support falconry, (iii) promote regulations that enable falconers to improve their reputation and (iv) hinder campaigns of misinformation.

MARK & BANK SCHEME - Dr Matt Gage

The International Association for Falconry and Conservation of Birds of Prey (IAF) is committed to protecting both the interests of those legally practising the traditional pursuit of falconry around the world, and the conservation of endangered raptors and their prey. In order to maintain the recognised links between falconry and conservation, and adherence to CITES regulations, the IAF proposes a **Mark and Bank scheme** to identify individual birds for falconry against their legal origin and ownership, while removing incentives to trade in illegally-taken wild raptors. We envisage a system that uses an electronic marker (E-tag) that can be checked against a central (global) database, and which has the added protection of reference against that individual's DNA in a 'Bio-Bank'.

The E-tag system should use the continuously improving technology in microtransponders. Such 'microchips' or Passive Integrated Transponders (PIT tags) are used widely and successfully in research, and for marking animals against theft. Each E-tag has its own unique code, which can be read by a scanning device, and that identification code downloadable directly to a computer. The E-tag Mark should be easily referenced to a web-based database containing the primary data for that individual, allowing global cross-referencing from any web hub to each Marked individual's data. The microtransponder E-tag Markers can be attached to the individual either within the body tissue, or within a tamper-free closed ring that can only be fitted when the bird is a nestling. It may be possible to ensure that the transponder is encrypted within the ring, with any tampering allowing the E-tag to signal that at reading. This rapid and simple marking scheme will undoubtedly become more widely used as technology advances in a wide range of applications.

The Bank will store a sample of each Marked individual's DNA. Current molecular technology and the use of polymerase chain reaction (PCR) allows a minimally-invasive tissue sample (for example from a small live-plucked feather or a tiny tissue biopsy) to yield sufficient DNA for subsequent repeated sequencing. The tissue will be stored in 'bio-banks' either at one central international location (to benefit from the economy of scale), or within laboratories of each signatory country or community. (such as university or commercial research laboratories). Unique molecular markers (such as microsatellite loci) can be used that allow extremely high exclusion criteria such that individuals can be potentially matched against putative population and / or parental origin, and cross-referenced with the E-tag information. Again, molecular technology will become much more frequently used in the future in a range of applications, and is already an important forensic tool to limit breaches of wildlife laws. DNA sequencing is a relatively expensive and technically-demanding procedure so that the DNA Bank part of the scheme should act primarily as a deterrent for illegal trade that can be used as a last resort in the event of suspicion. It also provides protection / conservation authorities with direct access to material should concern arise, and indeed could provide

a research resource for exploring genetic variation and evolution in those regulated raptors. There are a number of molecular research laboratories with relevant expertise in microsatellite sequencing that could be contracted to act, in the event of suspicion, to sequence DNA. The laboratories should be independent of IAF.



IAF is committed to protecting international falconry within a CITES-regulated legal framework, and the conservation of endangered raptors. Today, international travel and movement is far less restricted and so a Mark and Bank scheme will allow a more efficient, and legally compliant, trade and movement of licensed birds in falconry. The Mark and Bank scheme will protect vulnerable wild raptor populations under threat from illegal wild take, and will render illegally-taken birds valueless in trade. In remote areas where direct action by authorities and / or corruption makes protection ineffective, a Mark and Bank scheme that effectively devalues unregistered hawks in trade, would rapidly act as a major deterrent to illegal wild-take at source. For further details see the full proposal downloadable at <http://www.i-a-f.org>

Dr Matthew JG Gage
International Association for Falconry and Conservation
9th September 2004





Europet passport and microchipping in rings - Dr Michel Schoffeniels

MANAGEMENT OF A FALCON DATABASE

ID Chips (www.idchips.com)

- Member of ABIEC - Belgian association for dogs identification & registration (www.abiec-bvirh.be)
- Member of European Pet Network (www.europetnet.com)
- All those associations are non-profit making

Short history

- 1983-1988 - start of electronic identification with implantable transponder (zoos)
- 1990 : creation of ID Chips association : recording of all animals identified by a transponder in partnership with IC Services (Information Systems)
- 1990-1998 : development of the databank and related services in partnership with IC Services
- 1998 : in Belgium, identification and registration of dogs becomes mandatory.

ABIEC (Ministry of agriculture) is in charge of this process

- after a European public invitation of bids, IC Services was selected to perform the whole process (> 180,000 dogs / year)

- ID Chips continues to register other animals in partnership with IC Services

- Belgium adopts 11784 & 11785 ISO standards like other European countries and most countries worldwide.

These standards make it possible to establish reliable controls on borders

- 1999 : on the initiative of the ID Chips association, creation of European Pet Network (Europetnet or EPN)
 - non profit making organization which links European databanks (& worldwide) to allow reconciliation of a lost animal and its owner using its identification
 - collaboration with transponder manufacturers and dealers
 - consolidation of member data

Products & Services

- Management of an integrated service of animal identification & registration and owner research
- On-line registration
- European passport for companion animals linked to their identification
- Electronically secured passport (international patent of IC Services)
- IC Services : quality management system ISO 9001:2000 certified
- ID Chips recognized by Belgian authorities

Identification & registration service

- Transponders traceability from manufacturer to end-user
- Data registration about owner, animal, implanter, association, ...

- Multilingual 24h/24h call center
- Data availability on websites : www.idchips.com, www.abiec-bvirh.be, www.europetnet.com

Legislation :

European regulations clearer and more restrictive than CITES regulations

CITES Resolutions

Resolution Conf. 8.13 (Rev.)

Use of coded-microchip implants for marking live animals in trade RECOGNIZING the increasingly wide use of coded-microchip implants for the individual identification of animals;

RECOGNIZING also the potential of this method of marking for the regulation of trade in live animals of species included in the Appendices to the Convention;

CONCERNED that any such method employed to identify live animals be standardized in its application;

BELIEVING that there is no reason to limit the use of coded-microchip implants to only live animals of species included in Appendix I or high-value species;

NOTING that Management Authorities may permit the movement of traveling exhibitions or circuses without permits or certificates pursuant to Article VII, paragraph 7, of the Convention;

CONSIDERING that the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) has adopted the standards ISO 11784 and ISO 11785;

MINDFUL that the provisions of Article VI, paragraph 7, allow a Management Authority to determine appropriate methods of marking specimens for the purposes of assisting in identification;

AWARE that the IUCN/SSC Conservation Breeding Specialist Group has already undertaken an extensive review of the application of coded-microchip implants, and that effective implementation of Article VI, paragraph 7, will result in increasingly wider use of coded-microchip implants for the identification of animals;

CITES Recommendation

THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION RECOMMENDS THAT:

a) Parties, where possible and appropriate, without excluding the use of other methods, adopt the use of implantable transponders bearing permanent, non-programmable, unalterable and permanently unique codes for the identification of live animals;

b) Parties take into account the findings of the IUCN/SSC Conservation Breeding Specialist Group regarding frequency, size and sterility of transponder;

c) microchip transponders be implanted where consistent with the well-being of the specimens concerned¹; and

d) the location of implanted transponders in each animal be standardized according to the advice from the IUCN/SSC Conservation Breeding Specialist Group; and

DIRECTS:

a) the Secretariat to consult regularly with the ISO Central Secretariat on this subject, and to urge it to resolve current problems with standards ISO 11784 and ISO 11785; b) the Management Authority of each Party to make contact with all known manufacturers of microchip-implants and associated equipment on its territory and inform them about the present Resolution, urge them to strive towards the production of compatible equipment that can be applied universally and ask them for information about their products compatible with CITES needs and to advise the Secretariat about the results, for the information of the Parties; and c) the Animals Committee to monitor developments in microchip-implant technology and application techniques and to advise the Secretariat about such developments, for the information of the Parties.

European Regulation

- Article 36
- 1. For the purposes of Article 34(1) the following points shall apply:

(a) captive born and bred birds shall be marked in accordance with paragraph 5, or, where the competent management authority is satisfied that this method can, because of the **physical or behavioural** properties of the animal, not be applied, by means of a uniquely numbered, unalterable microchip transponder conforming to **ISO standards 11784:1996 (E) and 11785:1996 (E)**;

(b) **live vertebrates** other than captive born and bred birds shall be marked by means of a uniquely numbered unalterable microchip transponder conforming to **ISO standards 11784:1996 (E) and 11785:1996 (E)**, or, where the competent management authority is satisfied that this method is not appropriate because of the physical or behavioural properties of the specimen/species, the specimens concerned shall be marked by means of uniquely numbered rings, bands, tags, tattoos and the like, or be made identifiable by any other appropriate means.

2. Article 34(1) shall not apply where the competent management authority is satisfied that the physical properties of the specimens involved do not, at the time of issue of the relevant certificate, allow the safe application of any marking method. Where this circumstance applies, the management authority concerned shall record this in box 20 of the certificate, or, where a marking method can be safely applied at a later date, include the appropriate stipulations therein.

3. Specimens that were marked with a microchip transponder other than one conforming to ISO standards 11784:1996 (E) and 11785:1996 (E) before 1 January 2002, or with one of the methods referred to in paragraph 1 before 1 June 1997, or in compliance with paragraph 4 before their introduction into the Community, shall be deemed to have been marked in compliance with paragraph 1.

4. The specimens referred to in Article 34(2) and Article 35 shall be marked in accordance with the method approved or recommended by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention for the specimens concerned.

5. **Captive born and bred birds** shall be marked by means of a uniquely marked seamlessly closed **legring**, i.e. a ring or band in a continuous circle, without any break or join, which has not been tampered with in any way, of a size which cannot be removed from the bird when its leg is fully grown after having been applied in the first days of the bird's life and which has been commercially manufactured for that purpose.

Means of identification

- Finger photograph = pedigree
- Implantable transponder
- Leg ring
 - open
 - closed
 - closed and electronic
 - closable
 - closable and electronic

Ultimate mean of identification: GENOTYPING

- The support of heredity is DNA
- Each individual inherits DNA from its parents and has its own genotype except for twins (very rare among birds) and clones
- DNA analysis of individuals by appropriate lab techniques (microsatellites)
- Making of genotype (or +/- genetic fingerprint)

Genetic analysis

MALE	FEMALE
1 5	9 13
2 6	10 14
3 7	11 15
4 8	12 16

YOUNG YOUNG

1 13	1 9
2 14	2 17
3 15	3 14
4 16	4 18

young 1 is from the pair
young 2 is NOT of this pair (14 and 17 alleles are not found in the parents)

Actual samples

Genetic analysis

- Confirms animal identity in all needed situations: sires exchange, stealing, authorities controls, ...
- Parentage : validation or invalidation of supposed family connection

Steps for the DNA Analyses

- Samples taking: feather, saliva or blood: caution! Sample ID!!!
- Samples conservation
- DNA extraction and conservation
- DNA analysis = genotype
- Data registration in databank and in the passport
- Use of results : profile comparison and parentage when requested



Genetic material sampling

- Blood : venous puncture, nail cut (?)...
- 1 blood drop is enough
- Buccal swab (variable results depending of sampling technique)
- Extracted feather (nobody knows how long feathers can be preserved)

Our Point of View

- Conformity to laws and regulations
- Production of an electronically secured passport linked to a closed ring (preferably electronic)
- Pedigree (finger photo)?
- Registration of all passport elements in an experienced databank management system
- Call center and Internet are essential
- Reinforce identification by a genotype analysis
- Near future: RW transponders or OTP transponders will allow to write genetic code in the microchip

Our Point of View for example

- Ordering of a "registration program" by mail or email
- Sending of a set of passports, rings and transponders
- Sending a filled registration form by mail (with feathers?) to the Database or
- Online registration
- Database send stickers to stick in the passport to confirm the registration
- When information is requested:
 - read the transponder number (near future: bluetooth readers)
 - telephone call
 - internet access
 - SMS by cellular phone

Labs

- 4 French, 1 German, 3 British and 2 Belgian labs have been contacted
- All of them have the capacity to develop a service
- Each has its own specificities (sexing, genotyping of specific species: cattle, pigs, horses, ...)
- Great variability in prices
- All international standards have to be defined
- Evolutionary selection of the best lab in skills, prices, experience and range of services

Key points in lab selection

- International certifications: ISO, ISAG (international society for animal genetics), ...
- Approved by governments of different countries
- Reliable
- Capacity to deal with new technologies
- Capacity to deal with big volumes
- Flexible services and prices
- Capacity to search microsatellites for new species
- Analysis in short time

Price depends on specifications

- Basic service: multilingual, 24h/24h call center and databank websites
- Data registration and issue of a passport (basic passport or electronically secured)

- Successive owners registrations with updates on passport
- Samples storage
- DNA extraction and amplification (without analysis) + DNA storage
- Genetic Code with a label to stick on in the passport
- Profile comparison
- Parentage
- Next future : R-W (read and write) transponders able to include standardized genotype
- ...

Our view on identification and registration of falcons as compared to Mattheuw JG Gage's

- Proposal in name of the IAF
- The IAF proposes a Mark and Bank scheme to identify individual birds according to their legal origin and ownership,
 - IAF has previously proposed a Falcon Passport which facilitates legal trans-border movements of birds.
 - The control system for trade should be easy to administer but hard to evade
 - E-tag Mark should be easily referenced to a web-based database containing the primary data for that individual, allowing global cross-referencing from any web hub to each Marked individual's data.
 - The Bank will store a sample of each Marked individual's DNA

Contacts

- ID Chips
Rue de la Presse, 4
BE-1000 Brussels
Tel. : +32 (0)70 233 147
www.idchips.com
- President
Dr. Marc Buchet
Tel. : +32 (0)2 731 86 37
marc.buchet@pi.be
- Secretary
Dr. Michel Schoffeniels
Tel. : +32 (0)495 500 919
michel.schoffeniels@skynet.be

Bibliography : Birds of prey - Medicine & management by M. Heidenreich





Saker resolution - presentation by Robert Kenward



Following a Powerpoint by Robert Kenward at the request of the President, a resolution was discussed by the delegates and observers. There was much comment, particularly from range state representatives and the subject became quite complex. After some debate it was agreed that a small working group (Nick Fox, Robert Kenward, Tim Kimmel, Christian de Coune, Hany Tatwani, Janusz Sielicki and Adrian Lombard) would develop the text outside of the meeting. They reported back within an hour with a text that was agreed and approved by a vote of the delegates. The text of the resolution is:

Resolution to Encourage Conservation of the Saker Falcon

Recognizing that populations of Saker Falcons have declined in some countries;

Noting that, when pesticides caused declines in populations of Peregrines and other raptors, falconers pioneered breeding and release techniques, worked successfully to restore raptor populations and helped to organize the regulation of falconry;

Welcoming the vision of the World Conservation Union (IUCN 2.29 and 2.74) and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD Article 10 and Decision VII/12) that encourages conservation through sustainable use of wild living resources and to benefit local people;

Appreciating cooperation from IUCN, CIC, WWF, Birdlife International, TRAFFIC and the secretariat of CITES; and

Applauding the strong engagement of United Arab Emirates with IAF, the falcon research conducted by ERWDA and the innovation of marking regulations by UAE;

At its 35th Annual General Meeting on 15th September 2004 in Abu Dhabi, the International Association for Falconry and Conservation of Birds of Prey (IAF) requests falconers in the Middle East and other range states to work urgently with IAF to help conserve and restore Saker Falcon populations, by:

- (i) adopting marking and registration systems that identify and encourage legal supplies of Sakers;
- (ii) encouraging scientific studies of all Saker populations to assess their status;
- (iii) working to restore populations of Sakers that have declined (e.g. by breeding for release);
- (iv) motivating authorities and local people in range states to maintain wild Saker populations, especially the breeding birds;
- (v) encouraging scientifically managed release, after use, of wild-caught Sakers that are suitable to enter breeding populations.

The IAF accepts its responsibility, within its available resources, to assist falconers and organisations with initiatives that fulfil the intent of this resolution.

Information Advisor report for December 2003 - September 2004

The main purpose of Information Advisor is to inform AC members about falconry-connected questions, appearing in the Internet and on numerous discussion group and mailing lists. IAF Information Advisor is subscribed to 33 such groups. For the last 9 months about 70 messages were sent to IAC AC members. The main accent - discovery of materials which criticize falconry and anti-falconry groups and individuals. Another aim - to inform AC members about Conferences, Meeting and Workshops, publications (books and articles) on the birds of prey, especially involved in falconry and hawking. About 30 messages of a.m. 70 were dedicated to this issue. Another direction of work - translation of some correspondence on falconry-connected issues in the countries of the ex-USSR, because not all leaders of clubs in this area are fluent in English unfortunately and describing of news in falconry from this area, first of all Russia, Ukraine and Belarus.

Being co-moderator of RaptorBiology discussion group and moderator of BirdsInRussia (Birds in Russia and adjacent countries) discussion group Information Advisor is active correspondent on about 12 discussion groups on birds of prey worldwide for circulation of information on birds of prey (announces, requests of information, appearance of new web-sites, societies, clubs and associations).

Besides that, information advisor helps some publishers, authors and co-authors of books on birds of prey by materials from the countries of East Europe and countries - former republics of the ex-USSR. For example, he participated in preparations of new editions of books "Birds of Prey of Europe" (in preparation by Dr.Theodor Mebs and Dr.Daniel Schmidt in Kosmos verlag in FRG), Field Guide on Raptors of the World" by Mr.James Ferguson-Lees and Mr.David A.Christie by A&C Black in the UK, correction and updating of distribution maps of raptors in Collins Field Guide on Birds of Europe by Killian Mularney, Lars Svensson, Dan Zetterstrom and Peter J.Grant by HarperCollins Publisher in the UK. He prepared also reviews of some books and internet resources on falconry and raptor biomedicine for annual collections of papers "Diurnal Birds of Prey and Owls in captivity" publishing annually by Moscow Zoo and circulating among zoos and breeding centers of the countries, incorporated previously in the former Soviet Union.

Jevgeni Shergalin
E-mail: shergalin@yahoo.com
zoolit@mail.ru
zoolit@hotmail.com

QUOD TOTUM PROCESUS IN AMORE



UNESCO presentation by Nick Fox

CIC had for some time been preparing a proposal to submit to UNESCO to declare falconry as a world heritage subject. For this to occur the proposal has to be supported by the government country. CIC had approached UAE for this support and were awaiting their response.

Nick Fox addressed the delegates saying that he had just heard of this possibility and asked delegates to submit a summary of falconry in their countries with all speed. The matter was then discussed in terms of the CIC proposal. It was agreed that delegates would be asked to gather cultural heritage falconry material to support the CIC drafted resolution to UNESCO as a joint proposal with IAF that it was hoped UAE would support. It was agreed that this will be managed urgently by JM as CIC falconry chairman and IAF Vice-president with a small working group.

Reports of the delegates

Emirates Falconers Club is disseminating the ethics of falconry, says Hamdan bin Zayed

ABU DHABI, 10 SEP. 04 - Emirates Falconers club is disseminating the ethics of falconry, says Hamdan bin Zayed - Since its establishment three years ago, the Emirates Falconers' Club has played a leading role in disseminating the ethics of falconry, thereby striking a balance between falcon protection and preservation of the popular sport of falconry.

"The inception of the club was in line with the vision of President H.H Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, pertaining to preservation of the wildlife resources on the one hand and promotion of the local falconry heritage on the other. Today, the club serves as a beacon of awareness, not only for the UAE falconers but also to others in the entire GCC region" said Sheikh Hamdan bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs and Chairman of the Emirates Falconers' Club.

Sheikh Hamdan said in remarks ahead of the inauguration of the Abu Dhabi International Hunting and Equestrian Show which will open on September 13th, that the falconer's club will continue to pursue its mission as envisioned by President Sheikh Zayed. This mission, noted Sheikh Hamdan is an integral part of the cultural identity and history of the people of the region. He pointed out that this mission is currently being pursued by the club through awareness programs on the species of falcons, their traditions, life cycle, habitats, migration routes, feeding, training and healthcare.

Some of these programmes are being conducted in conjunction with the Abu Dhabi's Falcons Hospital and the National Avian Research Center. There are also lectures presented by veteran falconers, whose rich knowledge is of great value to the younger generations of falconers.

"In just three years, the club has made significant strides in many respects. It is significant that the club has become a major resources center for both falconers and others who are interested in falconry. More importantly, it has succeeded in saving a large section of the falcon population from extinction through its ethics dissemination programmes", he said.

Sheikh Hamdan further noted that the latest of this awareness programmes was the launch of the Al Saggar Magazine, a specialized publication that has attracted a wide readership across the region and the world.



All the issues of the magazine will be displayed during the Abu Dhabi Hunting Show which is being organized by the Emirates Falconer's Club in conjunction with the General Exhibition Corporation, under the patronage of Sheikh Hamdan. Through first-hand and original scientific analysis, the magazine highlights the dangers besetting falcons and charts the way forward to the future. Aspects such as legislation, good practices, falconry ethics, healthcare, training, feeding and many more are all being highlighted through extensive scientific articles.

Having achieved many successes, the Emirates Falconers club is also engaging similar organizations. In order to reach out to a wider audience, the club opened up its membership to other GCC and Arab countries and appointed a representative falconer in many countries so as to liaise with clubs in their respective countries. Public personalities are also accorded honorary membership. The club also obtained the membership of the International Association of Falconers. By obtaining this membership, the UAE is the only country in the Middle East to belong to that international body.

The number of exhibitors at the Abu Dhabi International Hunting and Equestrian Show number has swelled to a staggering 166 firms from 21 countries around the world. Response from the exhibitors has been so overwhelming that the exhibition space had to be expanded by 96 per cent. Booking rate has recorded 196 per cent with the bulk of exhibitors coming from countries such as the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, Syria, Tanzania, South Africa, Zambia, Cambodia, India, Japan, Australia, USA, Germany, Russia, France, Egypt, Spain, Belgium, Italy and the UK. Around 4000 square meters of the total 11,000 square of the exhibition space has been built. Dubbed as the largest hunting show in the Middle East, the exhibition which will run from 13-16th September, 2004 is expected to attract 25, 000 visitors. It will serve as a venue for cementing professional and business relations among exhibitors.



REPORT STATUS ON UK FALCONRY - 2004

Falconry is generally in good health within the United Kingdom. Raptor-keepers and falconers are more numerous than ever before. We have a number of Clubs within the UK, with the British Falconers' Club as the oldest and largest. The BFC indicates the popularity of falconry, with a recent increase in membership to almost 1500 members - about a 20% increase over the last 3/4 years. Despite this popularity and the relative stability of falconry in the UK, we remain aware of difficulties facing other countries in the EU, whose laws may affect us.

As an example of progressive falconry relationships, the BFC has established an excellent working relationship with the North York Moors National Park (a regional but quite large conservation authority in the UK) who have allowed falconry on some of their, land subject to concurrent management for conservation purposes, and even provided a maintenance grant to support a gamekeeper to manage the ground. This arrangement shows that low-take hunting from falconry and active conservation can work in clear harmony; it's important that falconers and Clubs try to develop more of these schemes.

In general, by comparison with most EU countries, the UK sees relatively open falconry freedom. We do not have any wild take, but a number of traditional indigenous falconry species (especially peregrines and sparrowhawks) are in excellent ecological health.



Politically, a number of concerns have arisen in the year: The UK's Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981, amendment 1993) effectively prohibits the taking of about half of UK traditional falconry quarry species (crows, rooks, magpies, pigeons, starlings etc) unless the falconer is doing so to protect people, crops, livestock, aviation etc. It is currently illegal to hawk such quarry for falconry purposes (=leisure) which stands in stark comparison to game and / or angling laws that allow hunting 'for hunting's sake'. (A recent court case convicted a man for shooting starlings under such legal protection.) The UK's Hawk Board responded against a recent consultation to the WCA and I am also grateful, on behalf of UK falconers, for IAF's support in also voicing a response against the UK WCA with regard to inclusion of falconry as a reason to take these species under the general licence. We await a response to the consultation from government.

CITES Fees. A recent increase in the fees payable for certain CITES-registered raptors and some confusion over legitimate reasons for import of CITES registered (e.g. gyrs) species has been opposed by the UK Hawk Board. The CITES management authority (DEFRA) has been called to the CITES secretariat to justify the higher registration fees; we await a change.

An Animal Welfare Bill consultation has occurred which may affect falconry (for example through the definition of what constitutes 'tethering') and the UK and Scottish hawk boards responded.

This very day (15th Sept 2004) the (Wild Mammals) Hunting with Dogs Bill is being read in the House of Commons. This amended version of the original 2002 Hunting Bill seeks to rule for a complete ban of fox hunting with hounds (previous versions allowed for licenced hunting). The law will affect falconers directly who use dogs to point or flush mammals. This law also affects falconers indirectly as it is a further step against another form of hunting. British Falconers have given their full support against this Bill. The bill will probably be voted IN by the House of Commons, and then opposed by the House of Lords (the second parliamentary House). However, the House of Commons may use an exceptional law 'The Parliament Act' to overthrow the Lords' vote. There will be some very important developments on this issue in the coming year. (Postscript 29th Sept 2004: MPs voted by 339 to 155 votes in favour of the Bill, which now proceeds, amidst much public debate and unrest, to the House of Lords).

Matthew Gage

Falconry in Belgium.

In Belgium we have a 5 yearly hunting law decision, at the moment the laws 2003-2008 are implemented and ongoing, so everything remained the same as last year, we can fly or hunt with any species of raptor we want, as long as the birds are legal obtained, this means, bred in captivity, closed ring and CITES documents. All European species must be registered on a central database, with the information of the breeder and the keeper on it. We have to update this database every year.

For Belgian breeders there is sometimes a DNA fingerprinting test from the parents and the offspring.

Game we can hunt on are rabbit, hare, pheasant, partridge, some species of waterfowl, crow, magpie. We have the same season times as gun hunters.

Falconry is in Belgium implemented in the hunting law.

In Flanders you do not need to pass the hunting examination from the authorities as a falconer, although most of us do, as you can perform pest control (rabbits, crows, gulls, pigeons) then. In the French part of Belgium, you do need to pass the hunting examination to practise falconry.

At this moment we have in Belgium about 7 or 8 clubs. A lot of people are now raptor keepers, especially owls.

The hunting members of the clubs are mostly austringers, flying shortwings like goshawk, Harris hawk and redtail hawk and few falconers, flying longwings.

We have also a huge increase of birds of prey displays in Belgium, and few months ago the first falconry fair in Belgium was organised as well.

Gunter Daes
September 2004



The Hungarian Falconry in 2003.

The Hungarian Falconers Club founded at 1939. At present the club members are 150. Every year we have 3-4 new members. Every falconer has to make a state hunter-falconer exam and a nature conservation state exam too. This exam organized by the Nature Conservation Ministry and contents the conservation law. The hunter-falconer exam hold by the Agricultural Ministry according to the hunting law.

We can use goshawk, sparrowhawk, mousebusard, kestrel from the wild for falconry with permission. The peregrine, gyrfalcon, lanner falcon, golden eagle we get only from captive breeding. It is not allowed to use exotic birds of prey, saker falcon, imperial eagle and any kind of hybrids for falconry purpose. The two most popular birds are the goshawk and peregrine falcon. The hunting season starts with the duck hunting in the middle of august and finishes at the end of February, with the end of the pheasant hunting season. Most of the falconers catch pheasants and hares, but some of them hunt on ducks, rabbits, partridges, magpies, crows, gees, foxes, deer. The club members keep about 400 different birds of prey for falconry and breeding. There are some falconers who keep invalid birds of prey and cure insured birds from the nature. Some of these invalid pairs have young ones regularly which are released back to the nature. There aren't commercial breeders in Hungary, only so called family breeders, who have some pairs and they produce small number of young ones. The home breeding covers the 90 percent of the new bird demand of the club, some special birds we import every year from abroad.

The club have two General Meetings, one in March and an other in September. In the hunting season there are club hunts three times a month. These hunts are three days, Friday, Saturday, Sunday and the game paid by the club. These events are the main scene of club life. Every year the club holds International Falconer Meeting, which become a tradition, the celebration of falconry. We developed the meeting to a city event with some interesting programs, for example, the bagging we hold in the main square of Orosh-za, we have bird shows, falconer exhibitions, march with coaches and horses. It is a very good advertising of falconry.

The club publishes some newsletters to inform the members and a year book regularly. We have a home page with general information about the Hungarian falconry and the for

the news. www.magyarsolymaszegyesulet.hu The Hungarian Falconers Club represents the Hungarian falconry in the IAF and CIC too.

Unfortunately we lost some old falconers, to keep them in our memory, the club put up wooden headboards at their favourite hunting place. The club hunts organised at their home land we named for our old falconer friends.

With the join to the European Union the transport of the hunting birds became free and very simple. The keeping and hunting regulations didn't change.

In spite of the extreme dry weather the 2003 was a successful year for the Hungarian falconry, our club became stronger and more recognized.

Best regards
János Toth

REPORT ON THE FALCONRY AND HAWKING PRACTICED IN EL SALVADOR, CENTRAL AMERICA SEPTEMBER 13, 2004

Overview

Falconry does not have a recorded history in El Salvador prior to 1985, when a couple of interested persons met by coincidence in the streets of San Salvador buying a pair of eyass White Tailed Kites (*Elanus leucurus*), in order to try and train them for the purpose of practicing the sport.

These two persons had previously started on their own, and with no literature or anyone guiding them, were able to "fly" their birds to the fist at distances over 80 meters. This was more than enough, we were hooked!

The same year we both got hold of two books: Phillip Glasier's *Falconry and Hawking* and Humphrey & Evans' *Falconry*, from then on it has been a very long road in order to get to where we are at this stage, which actually is not very far!

On this quest we tested many different species of native raptors, ranging from small buteos like the Road-side Hawk (*Buteo magnirostris*) and Grey Hawks (*Asturina nitida*), to the much bigger but not very impressive Great Black Hawks (*Buteogallus urubitinga*). We had the chance to fly extremely exotic species (to the eyes of traditional falconers), like Laughing Falcons (*Herpetotheres cachinnans*), and to be "terrorized" by the untamable spirit of a couple of passage Collared Forest Falcons (*Micrastur semitorquatus*) that came in our way. All these birds were available for sale in the streets of San Salvador along with many other species of wildlife which were sold as "pets"! And it was not until our country became a member of CITES (around the year 1987), that this activity became illegal and the trade came to a dramatic halt. At around this same period of time, we came across our first Harris' Hawk. This, along with the experience obtained in handling the other species of raptors gave us that extra "push" in our quest to become falconers, and before we knew it we were hunting rabbits and nightjars with the aid of powerful lamps.

Ten years passed before we had our first opportunity to meet other falconers (we had only read about them in books), as I signed up for a Beginners' Falconry Course at Emma Ford's British School of Falconry at The Equinox in Manchester, Vermont. The main idea was to ask as many questions as I could in order to clear all the doubts that we had, and to determine if we were actually on the right track or not. I was very pleased to find out that we were!





In the year 2000 we had the privilege to become a member of the IAF and I was invited to attend the 32nd Annual General Meeting in Amarillo, Texas on November 2000.

At this moment there are still only two active falconers in El Salvador, Dr. Julio Pérez which is a Veterinarian at our National Zoo and who has been training raptors for over 18 years. He is actually flying an eyass female Grey Hawk (*Asturina nitida*) at small birds and rabbits, and also working on a pest control project designed to eliminate pigeons from factories. The other one is myself, who's been flying a captive bred tiercel Harris' Hawk at rabbits, nightjars and the occasional quail. The hawk was imported from Oregon in 1997.

Regarding Falconry Laws and Regulations

Even though we are only two falconers in the entire country, we have been pretty lucky regarding the laws that regulate this activity. Falconry regulations have never been officially established, and therefore the activity has never been prohibited either. Our wildlife authorities have only requested us to register our birds as "pets", and we have proceeded accordingly.

We have been continuously urging the authorities to start elaborating a Falconry Regulation since 1998, primarily to have something officially established; this way we can reduce the possibility of a future law that might threaten to prohibit us from practicing the sport. We are also interested in acquiring a formal falconry license that would enable us to buy captive bred raptors from other parts of the world.

It was only until this year that the authorities have finally started elaborating these regulations. We have been called to several meetings in which they have actually requested us to help them elaborate them, as they actually do not know how to proceed. We have also provided them with some information that will help them with the process (e.g. the IAF's Code of Conduct and a couple of falconry manuals from the state of New York and Florida). So far they have already sent us a copy of the proposed regulation in order for us to revise it and make any necessary observations.

I would like to mention that even though the regulations have not yet been approved, our wildlife authorities have agreed to provide Dr. Pérez and myself with the requested licenses. We are sure that this collaboration on behalf of the authorities is primarily due to the fact that we have always been willing to help them with the raptors that have been taken to their rescue centers, and have on occasions actually taken these birds in order to rehabilitate and later released them in the wild.

We have requested permission to capture passage raptors from the wild, and it is this the only aspect in which we have encountered some resistance. They argue that there is not enough research to determine the state of wild populations and until this research is performed they will not allow us to take any birds. Nevertheless they have suggested that this research can actually be performed by ourselves (with our own funds), which to us seems perfectly reasonable.

So far the future of falconry in our country looks promising.

Roy Beers
IAF's Delegate for El Salvador

Turkmenistan Report

The club was founded in 1998 as a National Falconers Club of Turkmenistan, but in 2004 it was renamed in Association, and now days it exist as National Falconers Association of Turkmenistan. There are 78 active members in the Association. We have 3 working gropes in our Association. They are:

- "Ornithology",
- "Turkmen hunting dog - Tazy",
- "History, ethnography, style of life and customs of the Turkmen people".

In 1999 Association won the Falconers show-festival in Khazakstan. In 2000 Association was accepted in the International Falconers Association IAF. In 2001 Association organized and held a competition among local falcon hunters. The members of the Association regularly register the aeries of the falcons and breed turkmen hunting dog - Tazy. The main goal of the Association is to keep the principles of national falcon hunting in its original way. To achieve this goal our experienced tutors train the young members during the hunt camping. Young falconer can take a bird after 6 months of training with a tutor, and have to take a Permission to keep a bird from the Ministry of Nature Protection of Turkmenistan. Each year this permission has to be re-registered. Also Association prepares materials about falcon hunting to the foreign press.

Thank you once again.

Sincerely,

Ata Eyeberdiev -
National Falconers Association of Turkmenistan

Report on Falconry in Zimbabwe for AGM of IAF in Abu Dhabi, September 2004.

While falconry is still active and functional in Zimbabwe, it has not escaped the ravages of the socio-economic malaise prevailing in the country. A principal factor is the loss of human resources within and from the country. Dr. Peter Mundy retired as Chief Ornithologist in the Department of National Parks and Wild Life Management (DNPWLM) in May 2003. Peter established the Ornithology Research Unit (ORU) in DNPWLM in 1984. He developed an excellent working rapport with the Zimbabwe Falconers' Club (ZFC) over his tenure and actively fostered the conservation ethic and practice that had developed amongst the falconers from the inception of the club as the Rhodesian Falconers' Club (RFC) in 1970. This ethic was formalized by DNPWLM warden and Falconry Coordinator Ron Thomson in 1976 when he established the DNPWLM Falconry Policy, which has served as a model for falconry in the region. Ron left Zimbabwe for South Africa in 1983. In December 2002 past president of the ZFC and DNPWLM Falconry Coordinator, Dr. Arthur Dunkley, emigrated to the UK. In March 2003 doyen Zimbabwe falconer Rudi Giesswein emigrated to the Cape in South Africa. In July 2003 A grade falconer Willie Gau emigrated to the Cape. Both Rudi and Willie were important members of the captive breeding project, while Willie also did considerable fieldwork in the research programme. In July 2004 I emigrated to the Cape. However, as The Peregrine Fund Project Manager for Zimbabwe and Research Coordinator for the ZFC, I will continue to operate in Zimbabwe from my external base.



While John Grobler in Bulawayo will take over as Falconry Coordinator, this has not yet been formally ratified as there is no **DNPWLM ornithologist!** The ecologist that took over from Peter Mundy in May 2003 has since resigned and moved to a university as a lecturer. While the DNPWLM Chief Warden Research assured me in June that they would find a suitable replacement this has not yet happened. The ORU is in disarray as several of Peter's assistants have left. Few quality professionals are prepared to stay in Zimbabwe at present, so that the future of the ORU is in jeopardy. This may make the running of formal falconry as we have known it somewhat different and possibly more difficult.

A key strength in Zimbabwe falconry has been the **school clubs** at Falcon College and Peterhouse. While neither have a full-time teacher-falconer in charge volunteer B grade falconer Craig Mirams travels to Peterhouse to supervise their young falconers. Headmaster, ZFC President and A grade falconer Reg Querl currently overseas the Falcon College Falconry Club. However, Reg is heavily committed elsewhere and he is trying to recruit a suitable falconer to replace me. Unfortunately the government has put unreasonable pressure on private schools in Zimbabwe, even closing them in May 2004 for a week and forcing the schools to reduce their fees to levels that are un-economic. Some, or even many, of these schools may not survive.

Despite these problems the ZFC had an **excellent annual fieldmeet** at the Matopos Research Station in August. There was abundant quarry and the quality of falconry was typically high with a good number of quarry taken.

I have attached a list of ZFC officials and graded falconers with hawks held. Founder member of the RFC, South African Falconry Association secretary and representative at the IAF AGM, Dr. Adrian Lombard, has kindly presented this report on our behalf. My grateful thanks to him.

Report on 2004 First Half-year from JFC

Keiya Nakajima, Ph.D.
The Japan Falconiformes Center (JFC)

For over 40 years now we at JFC have been actively promoting the protection of birds of prey by making the fullest use of our nation's traditional art of falconry, in particular, that practiced during the Edo Period (1603 - 1868), achieving positive results in the treatment, rehabilitation training, and release of injured birds of prey.

In Japan, since capturing and raising birds of prey is prohibited by law, it is necessary to secure a special capture permit by the Ministry of Environment Agency and a breeding permit by the prefect governor even for the rescue of injured birds. At the time of releasing such birds, we usually ask officials of the Environment Agency or local governments, and people who first rescued those injured birds to personally release those birds as witnesses of their return to nature. We do not conduct mass publicity, for instance, by inviting media people, on the release of birds. It is all right as long as wild birds of prey increase in number, and there is no need for our organization to become famous. Besides, if places of release are publicized, birds may fall prey to poachers. Birds of prey have their own natural habitat, and since they keep living and breeding by their own within that habitat, their species can be preserved.

Ten species of injured birds of prey, totalling 20, were brought to our center via the Environment Ministry from various places located in central to western parts of Japan in the first half of this year. Problems suffered by these birds are mostly fractures of a wing or leg. Partly because of the spread of bird flu in the winter, every time a sick bird was brought in, we found ourselves subjected to additional tension.

Living creatures have a modality they form over many years in the ecology to which they select and become used to in each habitat, and a group of living creatures that universally own a system to perfectly balance the both may be called a species.

For preserving, not only the falconiformes, but also the broad range of species, the substantial and concrete measures of preservation should consist of handling those creatures and their natural habitat as one in complete harmony.

From this viewpoint, we at JFC provide on-site guidance and support to activities to preserve the natural habitat of birds of prey, in addition to providing treatment and releasing. This year we have so far been consulted by public works contractors regarding 25 locations, and we provided on-site guidance on the work methods and work periods so that the execution of development projects should not interfere with the natural lifestyle of birds of prey. In some cases we successfully guided them to drastically modify plans that we deemed to cause negative effects to the birds of prey. We also continue with our effort of converting man-made coniferous forests into copses where birds of prey may live.

We mentioned in our 2003 Report that 14 kinds of foreign species of falconiformes were found outdoors. Owls also are popular species as pets, and Tawny owl (*Strix aluco*), Rock Eagle-owl (*Bubo bengalensis*) and other owls presumably let loose by some pet owners have been spotted many times. As for the falconiformes, although the number of species spotted did not increase, the number of birds found was on the rise in many new places, and increase in the number of Harris Hawks spotted in various places causes concern.

Although we have so far not confirmed Harris Hawks nesting in the wild, there exist reports of a number of males and females being spotted within a radius of about 30 km, suggesting the possibility that they may be paired at some point.

Wild animals are an independent existence not related to human being, and they have been living in nature longer than men. Pets are fed by men, and they exist by depending mostly on men for their daily life. Pets are the animals that were remade by minimizing wild elements so as to become part of man's life. Treating the birds of prey like pets would be inhibiting their capabilities with man's selfish wish.

It should be strictly regulated for man to knowingly move the falconiformes around between areas which would never occur in the natural status, in other words bringing in foreign species or artificially breeding foreign-born falconiformes for commercial purposes. Profit-making activities won't fit in with the falconiformes. Besides, the mercenary approach from man's side is totally irrelevant to them. Wild animals should not be evaluated by the amount of money they can bring in, and they have more value than what money represents.



Falconry in Lithuania.

As I wrote in previous reports about falconry situation in our republic, I writing once more, that law basis is very positive to this type of hunting.

Falconry determinate only few points in Lithuanian Republik territory hunting rules.

We have enough big quantity of hunting games species:

European hares, some species of ducks, some species of geese, coots, blackcock, partridges, pheasants, wild pigeons, wood cock, snipes, cormorants, grey herons, all species of corvidae.

We haven't many pheasants. Only in some places hunters keep this birds in aviaries. They release pheasants in nature at hunting period.

LIETUVOS SAKALININKU KLUBAS-LIHUANIAN FALCONRY CLUB - this autumn celebrated 7th birthday.

We are small club with 8 members, which keep 3 goshawks. And we till today hunting only corvine birds. These birds we could hunt in Lithuania all the year round.

Falconry law basis is very good in our country, but the way to become falconer is very long.

Person , which decide to begin falconry, at first must become the hunter. After that he can make falconry.

I explain it briefly:

- probationers studies (2 years) of hunting;
- take exams of hunting;
- take exams of shoot guns security;
- permit from police;
- permit from medical;
- permit from environment system.

And others points especially are only for falconry:

- veterinary permit to build aviaries;
- environments permit to build aviaries;
- environments permit to keep birds of prey.

I think, that our achievement will depend in future on the correct our Hunting Rules about falconry.

That is:

- make falconers like separate category of hunters;
- let to learn falconry from 16 y.o. (new hunter could be only from 18 y.o.).

This correction will help to avoid the points, which mention above.

Questions now are in discussion between falconers.

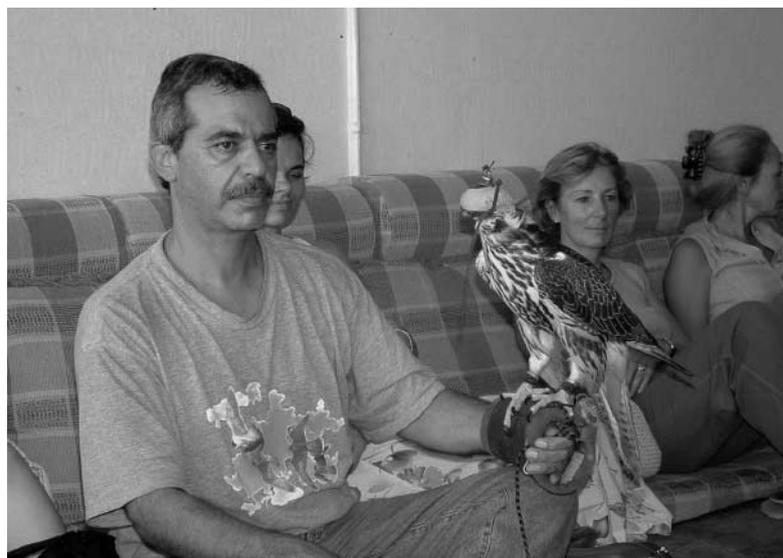
Maybe we could discuss about it with new Environments ministry employees. We will have new Parliament very soon.

So our club propagate falconry in TV, radio , newspapers and magazines.

We hope in prosperity of falconry in Lithuania.

Darius Daugela

President of Lithuania Falconers Club



Falconry in México 2004

In México, there are about 300 falconers, 25 falconry associations and five breeders. Of these breeders, two are breeding Harris-hawks (*Parabuteo unicinctus*) and the other three are breeding *Falco peregrinus anatum*.

Last year on December 18 through the 21st, our national meeting took place in the state of Zacatecas, (central part of México). We camped in the middle of the desert along with plenty of hares, rabbits, ducks, quail etc. One hundred and fourteen falconers and austringers attended with har-hawk, peregrines, goshawks, redtails, coopers, and aplo-mados, most of them hunted many hares, rabbits, quails and a few ducks. Four days in a great falconry atmosphere.

This year, Grupo Cetrero del Valle de México A.C. is organizing the second Field Meeting in the same location and will be held on December 16 through 19th.

Illegal Trade and the law

México, as a developing country, has many worrisome aspects. Odd situations are happening and it's hard to believe that they are taking place in the XXI century, I want to mention this, because it might be a disappointment to those who have not yet visited our country.

What concerns us the most is the "black market" of wild animals. Each year nests of many species of raptors are sacked and sold without pity, I think the same situation occurs in other Latin American countries. (such as Argentina, Brasil, Peru, Chile etc.)

Eventually, this ilegal trade of raptors decreased considerably after 1998 when the Méxican government invited falconers and associations to participate in several meetings to regulate falconry. This created conscience in the falconers. At the same time, we became inspectors which also helped control the situation. As inspectors, our duty is to denounce to the authorities the people that are acting improperly and the places where raptors are sold. Once the authorities detect these illegal procedures, they take in their control the birds and canalize them to the corresponding associations, this is because the authorities do not have the adequate knowledge or the budget to handle the situation. Once the corresponding associations have the birds, they either rehabilitate them or take advantage of them for falconry. We are in constant coordination with the government to help out in these issues but there is still a lot to be done. Today, falconry in México is going on the right way.

Juan Carlos Rojo



Report on the Status of Falconry in Ireland

"Falconry is legal in Ireland and we have about 150 falconers. Falconers must be licensed by the authorities who check your premises and husbandry from time to time. Each bird you own must also be licensed. We are allowed to use native, non-native and hybrid birds of prey and can take sparrowhawks, kestrels and peregrines from the wild under strict licence.

About 20 sparrowhawks and a similar number of kestrels are taken each year and usually either hacked back or lost in the field. Five peregrine licences are issued under a lottery system (about 20 people apply).

Main quarry species are rabbit, magpies, crows, rooks, pheasant, snipe. Other species that are occasionally hunted are hare, various ducks and reared partridge (wild partridge and grouse are too uncommon to be hawked regularly). We have a good relationship with the wildlife authorities and the protection of animals people and have worked very hard to achieve this. Irish Hawking Club is involved with two conservation projects, one for golden eagles and one for grey partridge."

Gary Timbrell,
Director Irish Hawking Club,

Kilnagnady, Upton,
Co.Cork, Ireland.
Tel: 00353 21 7330298
or Mobile: 00353 87 6650619

North American Report, 2004

It is our great pleasure to report that the harvest of wild nesting peregrines has taken place this year in the continental United States. This was the culmination of many years work by North American Falconer's Association. NAFA Director-at-Large, Ralph Rogers I spearheaded the effort and IAF Vice-President and NAFA Legal Council, Frank Bond is, as always, pivotal to our success. Frank not only handles the lawsuits that arise from the harvests but also imparts his great influence at all levels. The states of Arizona allowed 6 to be harvested, Colorado 3, Utah 6 and Washington 3. We have at least one lawsuit to contend with before embarking on the final push for the Holy Grail, the passage peregrine harvest.

Also of great importance to us, and following the recommendations of all states in the USA, NAFA soon expects to see a proposal from the Federal Government for falconry regulations that have been simplified, clarified, and liberalized under the treaty governing our sport. We also expect the proposal to include the elimination of our duplicate (state and federal) permit system so that falconers will be able to make appropriate changes to regulations through state management agencies. We expect resistance to these proposals but are prepared to motivate our membership and make our opinions known.

The West Nile Virus has spread east to west across the continent and has now reached California. 300 human cases have been reported and it is present in all counties there, but as yet there are no confirmed raptors cases although a few wild passerines have been affected. Nationwide, the virus has had localized hot spots of infection correlated with weather and the presence of certain species of mosquitoes. North American falconers have been using the Fort Dodge equine vaccine and it is recommended that we vaccinate every six months although the efficacy is not certain. There is a new DNA vaccine being tested at the San Diego Zoo and we are awaiting results. We are fortunate to have Dr. Pat Redig on task as he has not only delved into the pathology of the disease, but the dynamics of the epidemic as well. Having the most comprehensive overview and sample size to draw upon, we expect new recommendations soon.

On behalf of the North American Falconer's Association and its President, Darryl Perkins, it is our honour to extend an invitation to the International Association for Falconry & Conservation of Birds of Prey for the 2006 meeting to be held at the NAFA Field Meet in Colorado during the last week of November. Colorado is one of our most beautiful states with stunning scenery and a great variety of quarry for longwings and shortwings alike.

Alberto Palleroni
United States Delegate





THE SITUATION OF FALCONRY IN SWITZERLAND - 2004

Switzerland is a confederation of 23 states (like USA) with a federal authority and 23 state authorities. It does not belong to European Union, what means problems for import and export of birds of prey.

In Switzerland, falconry is not specified by federal laws and we need a special permission from Federal Authorities (game and veterinary offices). In addition, other authorizations are required in each state, what means plenty of papers.

Situation

At the present time, about half of the states do not have veterinary or hunting law for falconry. The others tolerate falconry with special permission or have laws about the practice of falconry.

Game:

Rooks and magpies

Species of birds allowed for hunting:

No restriction, except they have to be captive bred and ringed. No CITES required for Swiss born birds.

In 1996, the Swiss Association for falconry spontaneously banned the use and detention of hybrids to his members, preceding Germany. However, this is an internal decision and it is not specified in any official law or rule.

Captive breeding:

Each year, peregrines, saker and gyr falcons are bred in captivity.

Swiss association:

About 70 members, only seven to 10 of them are flying peregrines or goshawks.

At present:

The Swiss Association has been living for 40 years and it was a founder member of the I.A.F. in Düsseldorf. Finally, like in other countries, we hope falconry will survive the anti-hunting pressure.

Pierre Basset



*Emma Maxwell
and Ansata Nile Pasha
Photo: Maxwell*



JAPANESE FALCONRY - PAST & PRESENT

reported by
National Conference for Japanese Falconry

With more than 1600 years history of Japanese falconry, 10 or more falconry societies are known as active, surviving time and tides. While keeping unique tradition in methods and tools, Japanese falconers have coped with modern social requisition, including captive breeding (with success in 16 species). We have also to tackle legislative issues while making proper ecological consideration.

Falconry is now under general regulations of hunting law, without examination-license system, due to low hunting pressure and small population involved. Since 2002, a birdwatchers' association has made anti-falconry arguments on government hearing or commission meetings, to restrict or ban falconry in coming amendment of hunting law in 2005 as well as for the purpose of making negative image of falconry on biodiversity issues, which shall be handled by another new statute.

While no falconer were selected as a member for the Commission for new hunting law, some falconers noticed the menace, and appealed to other falconry clubs or individuals for cooperation to save legal hawking in February 2004. At a preliminary meeting in March, on 26th June 2004, National Conference for Japanese Falconry (NCJF) started as a conference unit to discuss common interests of Japanese falconers and to make joint lobbying action. Memberships are open to any sincere individual falconer or hawking club in Japan, with majority, if not all, of Japanese falconry groups participating.

In early July, NCJF had talks with relevant officers of Ministry of Environment (MOE), filing a written Plea and Exhibits. The Plea requests for hearing with NCJF on case of any statutory enactment/amendment which may affect falconry, and states

our willingness to cooperate on possible introduction of license system. Exhibits rebut issues to be argued by anti-falconry people, and show social merits of falconry and supporting messages from scientists and celebrities. MOE orally accepted our Plea and promised to offer hearing with NCJF on relevant occasion.

The request by the birdwatcher commissioner for investigation on falconry, at the substantially last Commission meeting on 29th July, could not gain support of others, and MOE dismissed further discussion on the matter. On hunting law, legal status quo is expected to remain for falconry. Above developments has been reported to Mr. Morel, the President of IAF. Thank you for great support from IAF on the matter.

On the other hand, to prevent naturalization/genetic contamination, NCJF has established communication and service networks to search and recover escaped raptors as well as studying effective bird ID systems. To date, no record has been filed with either MOE nor the Ornithological Society of Japan on naturalization/genetic contamination by escaped raptors. We have also set forth duties to be complied with by individual falconers.

NCJF, representing majority of Japanese falconers, will continue to serve as front body with Japanese Government, and to make efforts to improve Japanese falconry, so that falconry can be legally practiced and handed over to coming generations. We hope 2004 will be recalled as starting point of Falconry Renaissance in Japan.

- Any other business
- AGM 2005 (place and date) Opovcno (Czech Republic) - AGM 2006 - Colorado USA
- Close of business

Attendance AGM 2004 Abu Dhabi		
Austria	Oesterreichischer Falknerbund	Dr. Igor Tavcar
Bahrain	Observer poss. future member	Shaikh Abdulla bin Hamad Al Khalifa Prof. Ismail Medany
Belgium	IAF AC Belgian Falconry Association "Mariae Bvrgvndiae" Belgische Vereniging van Vlaamse V's en H's Boefenaers Vluchtbedrijf De Valkeniers	Christian de Coune, President Patrick Morel Eddy Demol, Theo Spee, Nico Ruttens, René Mottmans, Gunter Daes, Yvan Verhelle, Werner Huyben, Brigitte Westerlinck
Brazil	Asociacao Brasileira de Falcoeiros	Mark Petroff
Bulgaria	Bulgarska Asotsiatsia za Zapazvane na Grablivite Ptitsi	Pavel Yakimov
Czech	Klub Sokolniku	Bohumil Straka, Petr Svolanek
Denmark	Dansk Falkejagt Klub	Tage Jessen, Frank Skarup Hansen
Estonia	Zoolit	Dr Jevgeni Shergalin
France	Association Nationale des Fauconniers et Autoursiers	Philippe Justeau
Georgia	Georgian Section of Falconry Ajara Falconers' Club Observer poss. future member	Givi Chogovadze, Irakli Goradze
Germany	Deutscher Falkenorden	Dr Hermann Döttlinger



Hungary	Magyar Solymasz Klub	János Toth
Indonesia	Bali - Asia-Pacific Birds of Prey Sanctuary	Dr Phillipe Hoyois
Iran	Observer poss. future member	Abdolali Yazdani, Mahdi Malak Shahabi
Iraq	Observer poss. future member	Al-Shemery Saba
Ireland	Irish Hawking Club	Gary Timbrell , Tony Smith
Japan	Japan Falconiformes Center Japan Falconers' Association National Conference for Japanese Falconry Observer	Keiya + Tomaya Nakayima Hatano Fujita, Asaoka, Ozaku
Kuwait	Observer poss. future member	Tariq Al Nouri, Dawoud Salman Al Dabbous
Lithuania	Lietuvos Skalininku Klubas	Darius Daugela
México	North American Falconers Association	Juan Carlos Rojo
Morocco	Association Marocaine de Fauconnerie	Nour-Eddine Fatehi + Ismail El Biyaz
Netherlands	Nederlands Valkeniersverbond Adriaan Mollen Valkerij Equipage Jacoba van Beieren	Simon Smith, Thijs Fleskens, Harry Wagenaar
Pakistan	Observer poss. future member	Mahmud Rizvi
Poland	Gniazdo Sokolnikow and Polish Falconry Order	Janusz Sielicki
Portugal	Associacao Portuguesa de Falcoaria	Antonio Carapuço + Carlos Crespo
El Salvador	Club y Escuela de Cetreria de El Salvador	Roy Beers
Saudi Arabia	Observer poss. future member	Prof. Abdul Aziz bin Hamid Abuzinada, Dr. Hani Tatwani
Slovenia	Slovenska zveza za sokolarstvo in zascitno ptic ujed	Bojan Naralocnik, Roman Savic
Serbia	Observer poss. future member	Tibor Buza
South Africa	South African Falconers Association	Adrian Lombard
Spain	AECCA	JM Rodriguez-Villa+ Lorenzo Machin + Bernabé Gómez + Carlos Bernabéu + Luis Larran
Switzerland	Schweizerische Falkner-Vereinigung	Dr Pierre Basset
Turkmenistan	National Falconers Club of Turkmenistan	Atadurdy Eyeberdiyew + Rzov Hemrayev
United	Arab Emirates Emirates Falconers' Club	Mohamed al Bowardi + Majid al Mansouri + Dr. Nick Fox, Abdalla Zamzam, Maysa Al Nowais, Dr. Ahmed Bashir,
United Kingdom Hawk Board	UK Members of IAF AC British Falconers Club Scottish Hawking Club, IAF AC	Anthony Crosswell + Dr. Robert Kenward Dr. Matthew Gage, Andrew Knowles-Brown, Martin Jones
United States	North American Falconers Association	Prof Alberto Palleroni, Frank Bond, Dr. Timothy Kimmel
CIC	Observer poss. future member	Dieter Schramm + Peter Sapara
Guest Speaker	Europet	Dr Michel Schoffeniels



Proposal For A 'MARK AND BANK' Scheme To Regulate Trade And Traffic In CITES- Regulated Raptors Used In Falconry

**The International Association for Falconry
and Conservation of Birds of Prey**

INTRODUCTION

*The International Association for Falconry and Conservation of Birds of Prey (IAF) is committed to protecting both the interests of those legally practising the traditional pursuit of falconry around the world, and the conservation of endangered raptors and their prey. In order to maintain the recognised links between falconry and conservation, and adherence to CITES regulations, the IAF proposes a **Mark and Bank scheme** to identify individual birds against their legal origin and ownership, while removing incentives to trade in illegally-taken wild raptors. IAF is committed to working against any illegal laundering or trade in CITES-regulated raptor species, while protecting and easing the rights of falconers who adhere strictly to CITES laws. Accordingly, we propose a system that uses an electronic marker (E-tag) that can be checked against a central (global) database, and which has the added protection of reference against that individual's DNA in a 'Bio-Bank'.*

Birds used in falconry are derived from either modern captive breeding, or the traditional wild-take from legally-decreed sustainable sources. CITES-regulated taxa are protected under both methods according to each signatory country's own regulating authority's assessment of the vulnerability of their CITES-scheduled species. Since falconry is a global pursuit, Mark and Bank could consolidate the different regulatory systems in a more efficient and unified scheme, and allow direct scrutiny in the volume and importance in this trade. IAF has previously proposed a Falcon Passport which facilitates legal trans-border movements of birds. The Mark and Bank scheme is a logical development of the Passport, but applies stricter criteria to CITES-regulated hawk ownership AND will feed back to protecting vulnerable wild stocks by devaluing non-registered birds. We propose that the scheme will make it much more difficult to trade illegally in protected taxa, while freeing up more stress-free and legal movement of hawks under a more efficient system that limits bureaucratic costs in a world where trans-border travel is increasingly common.

PRINCIPLES

The control system for trade should be easy to administer but hard to evade. The Falcon Passport will be a positive move towards unifying registration of CITES-controlled birds and allowing more unencumbered movement. Here, we propose an E-tag system that uses the continuously improving technology in microtransponders. Such 'microchips' or Passive Integrated Transponders (PIT tags) are used widely and successfully in research, and for marking animals against theft. Each E-tag has its own unique code, which can be read by a scanning device, and that identification code downloadable directly to a computer. The E-tag Mark should be easily referenced to a web-based database containing the primary data for that individual, allowing global cross-referencing from any web hub to each Marked individual's data. This rapid and simple marking scheme will undoubtedly become more widely used as technology advances in a wide range of applications.

The Bank will store a sample of each Marked individual's DNA. Current molecular technology and the use of polymerase chain reaction (PCR) allows a minimally-invasive tissue sample (for example from a small live-plucked feather or a tiny tissue biopsy) to yield sufficient DNA for subsequent repeated sequencing. The tissue will be stored in 'bio-banks' (such as university or commercial research laboratories). Unique molecular markers (such as microsatellite loci) can be used that allow extremely high exclusion criteria such that individuals can be potentially matched against putative population and / or parental origin, and cross-referenced with the E-tag information. Again, molecular technology will become much more frequently used in the future in a range of applications, and is already an important forensic tool to limit breaches of wildlife laws.





PRACTICALITIES

The microtransponder E-tag Markers can be attached to the individual either within the body tissue, or within a tamper-free closed ring that can only be fitted when the bird is a nestling. It may be possible to ensure that the transponder is encrypted within the ring, with any tampering allowing the E-tag to signal that at reading. (Currently, the closed ring is a popular and reliable marker, but the ID code must be recorded and checked manually.) We propose that, wherever possible, the closed-ring E-tag is used, as this will minimise any practical limitations claimed for microchip implants into body tissue. Bird microchips are usually positioned through subcutaneous ventral implantation, offset slightly from keel. This technique is routinely conducted by vets and is considered safe. However, it has been claimed that microchips can migrate out of or around the body, and/or that tissue damage may take place. Although these risks appear to be extremely small, damage or false negative identification must be minimised to protect birds and legal owners. Therefore, the closed-ring E-tag is recommended for captive-bred birds and / or wild-take nestlings.

In populations where there is a licensed and sustainable wild-take of CITES-regulated species, adult passage or haggard hawks are trapped and then trained which precludes use of the closed-ring E-tag (as this can only be fitted to juvenile birds). In these cases we propose either (1) a standard ventral subcutaneously implanted microchip (routinely used to protect against theft in many countries) subject to full health and safety evaluation, or (2) a closable ring that can be fitted to an adult hawk which, on fitting, either activates the transponder permanently, or is attached within a closable ring that cannot thereafter be tampered with. Both techniques could produce rings that are either physically or electronically tamper-proof, thus preventing illegal transfer of the E-tags between individuals. Development of such closable rings could revolutionise the marking of falconry birds, allowing some flexibility (for example if a ring becomes damaged) while preventing illegal tampering.

The E-tag rings would be supplied to breeders and trappers by the relevant licensing authority for each CITES signatory country. One international authority, possibly commissioned between the CITES Secretariat and IAF (and who have no significant commercial interests), could centrally control the provision of rings. Provision of the E-tags for wild-take will be regulated, such that a direct control on numbers of hawks taken can be assured by the number of E-tag rings supplied. Under implantation, qualified veterinarians would be used for implanting. Each E-tag will be issued with a requirement for return data (either by post or direct into the database via the WWW) so that information on species, sex, age, captive- or wild-bred, ownership history, date and location of birth / capture, breeder / captor name, parentage, offspring produced etc can be stored and cross-referenced. These data will be logged by the central international management authority and made directly available via the WWW to relevant national and international authorities (e.g. CITES, wildlife law enforcement agents and / or customs offices) so that fast and efficient cross-checking can be achieved at any time. As well as the internet-based checking system, the identification data will be associated to a Falcon Passport. The Passport provides a paper-based registration system as a back-up in the event of technical limitations in urgent situations (for example malfunction of microchip readers at customs), while the Mark and Bank system generates much more stringent controls throughout.



There may be a possibility of issuing 'non ownership' markers to trappers which can be fitted to trapped hawks which were unsuitable and released. Such marking would allow recapture rate (by biological researchers) to monitor population changes and check for sustainability and other ecological information. This additional marking of released hawks would involve trappers directly in appreciating the importance of sustainability in wild raptor populations for acceptable wild take.

DNA will be banked either at one central international location (to benefit from the economy of scale), or within laboratories of each signatory country or community. The DNA sample (either a tiny (muscle) tissue biopsy or a small, live-plucked body feather) will be posted with the return data form, and then onto the laboratory for long-term storage under -80oC or in ethanol (for tissue) or in air-dry storage for feathers. DNA sequencing is an expensive and technically-demanding procedure so that the DNA Bank part of the scheme should act primarily as a deterrent for illegal trade that can be used as a last resort in the event of suspicion. It also provides protection / conservation authorities with direct access to material should concern arise, and indeed could provide a research resource for exploring genetic variation and evolution in those regulated raptors. There are a number of molecular research laboratories with relevant expertise in microsatellite sequencing that could be contracted to act, in the event of suspicion, to sequence DNA. The laboratories should be independent of IAF.

BENEFITS

- A Mark and Bank scheme will globally unify CITES-regulated raptor ownership and trade protocols.
- A Mark and Bank scheme will act as a powerful deterrent against illegal wild take, or illegal laundering of wild-taken birds through captive-breeding schemes.
- A Mark and Bank scheme will allow low-cost and efficient trans-global movement in CITES-regulated raptors that have been either bred or taken from the wild under full legal compliance with CITES laws.



- A Mark and Bank scheme will enable rapid identification of stolen or (under those rare occurrences) lost falconry birds, thus allowing re-unification with owners.
- The Mark and Bank scheme could be incorporated into a hawk's veterinary or vaccination record, reducing risks of disease vectoring through trade.
- The Mark and Bank scheme has the potential for encouraging ground-based conservation initiatives by residents who will recognize the value of sustainable use of local, wild raptor populations.
- The Mark and Bank scheme could provide a regulated and internationally consistent system for formalising breeding pedigrees, important when specific genetic lines are recognised to be superior for falconry.

COSTS

- A Mark and Bank scheme will require set-up costs for implementation; especially the development and provision of E-tags, electronic readers, the bio-bank and centrally-managed ownership database. These difficulties may be overcome more readily by piloting in countries / unions where such technology is more readily accessible.
- A Mark and Bank scheme requires full evaluation of the efficiency of E-tags to avoid false-negatives.
- A Mark and Bank scheme requires full evaluation of the safety of E-tags if implantation is required.

CONCLUSIONS

IAF is committed to protecting international falconry within a CITES-regulated legal framework, and the conservation of endangered raptors. Today, international travel and movement is far less restricted and so a Mark and Bank scheme will allow a more efficient, and legally compliant, trade and movement of licensed birds in falconry. The Mark and Bank scheme will protect vulnerable wild raptor populations under threat from illegal wild take, and will render illegally-taken birds valueless in trade. In remote areas where direct action by authorities and / or corruption makes protection ineffective, a Mark and Bank scheme that effectively devalues unregistered hawks in trade, would rapidly act as a major deterrent to illegal wild-take at source.

Dr Matthew JG Gage

International Association
for Falconry and Conservation

9th September 2004

The significance of Houbara bustard in Arab Falconry

Patrick Morel

Brief description of birds used in Arab falconry:

Shortwings (Goshawk, Sparrow-hawk) and broadwings (Eagle, Harris-hawks or Busards) are not used in Arab falconry.

Only longwings (falcons) are flown by Arabs, mainly Saker falcon (Hurr) meaning noble or free, Peregrine falcon (Shaheen) and recently Gyr falcon and hybrids between these different species. The Bedouin love their sakers for being robust, tough and courageous birds, well adapted to desert life and showing a great stamina when pursuing their quarry.



In traditional or classical falconry, longwings are flown in different ways:

Waiting-on flights:

In Western falconry, a falcon may be got into a position of advantage high in the sky over a spotted game or over a dog on point which then flushes quarry which in level flight would be too fast for the hawk. The falcon trained to do this is said to 'wait on' and this is the tactic used in hawking upland-game such as grouse or partridge.

The waiting on flights, however, is not known to the Bedouin, nor is it available as it is best used with dogs.

Flights 'out of the hood':

In Arab falconry falcons must be flown at quarry which they can fly down.

Hunters often unhood their birds as a way of scanning the ground for game. When a houbara is seen, the falcon chosen



for the chase is straightaway unhooded and slipped. It flies straight towards its prey with powerful wing beats, keeping close to the ground. At the last moment, the falcon will throw up into the air and then stoop onto the houbara, in order to seize its prey with its talons. In Western falconry too, falcons are flown 'out of the hood' - in the past flights on herons and kites were cherished and crow or rook hawking is still popular.



An indication of the scale of cultural barriers between Western and Arabs is the Arab's view of hawking in the West. Waiting on flights, highly praised in the West, are considered by Arabs as easy and even unfair. An Arab will never fly small hawks as the sparrowhawk or Merlin mainly because it can't catch big preys. Falconry furniture remains rough but functional and spare. Arab falconry has always a spirit of pragmatism.

Roots of Arab falconry:

Falconry is an integral part of desert life which has been practiced in the Gulf regions for centuries. Since pre-Islamic times, falconry has played a major part in the calendar of Arab life.

With the cold winds of autumn came the passage falcons on their migrations from breeding grounds in the north. The Bedouins would send word that the Houbara bustard had arrived, local populations supplemented by great numbers arriving from further north.

Wild Falcons were trapped on their southerly autumn migration, trained for about two months and flown in the traditions of Arab falconry, through the winter months when the natural quarry found in the desert became available. Although the legacy of falconry still survives, it has changed greatly since the arrival of oil wells.

Bedouins (nomadic tribesmen of the desert regions of the Middle East) were first hunting in order to provide some additional meat to their ordinary thin diet. The Arabs flew their hawks because they wanted to hunt and eat. They did not go hunting because they wanted to see their hawks fly.

Desert countries are poor in game and only four traditional preys were available: houbara bustard, desert hare, stone curlew and in former time gazelle.

After vital or at least necessary, food is not longer the primary aim of the hunt and falconry became a leisure action. Nowadays, falconry is practiced purely for sport and the houbara remains the favourite target as it is a challenging bird for the falcons to catch.

In the past, falconry was practised on a 'natural' way -while on foot or on camel or horse-back and with a limited number of passage falcons and on a natural time scope.

In the last 50 years or so, the nature of hawking in Arabia has changed. The firearm has to some extent replaced the falcon, and the motor vehicle has replaced the camel. Both have greatly extended the range of the hunter. Consequently the numbers of quarry in Arabia have been drastically reduced.

Along with oil came all-terrain vehicles that opened up the great deserts of Arabia and vast lands, once almost unvisited except by drifting Bedouin with their flocks and herds of camels, goat and sheep were now all within easy reach of any falconer in search of more houbara. Increase in number of cars and firearms in the desert have tipped what was previously a natural balance over to the advantage of the hunter.

In addition to the changes in quarry numbers, falconry has also seen changes in the use of hawks.

- In earlier times hawks were kept in smaller numbers (mainly due to food reasons) and were trained to a greater degree of obedience. After all, disobedient hawks were all too easily lost if the falconer was mounted on a camel or horse, or following on foot.
- Captive-bred hawks are available in great number and produce very valuable falconry birds perfectly capable of taking houbara along with the best of the wild-caught hawks.
- Modern civilisation, better supply in food, medicine, and air-conditioning allow keeping falcons during the moult which was rarely done in former times.
- Today with fast-driven all terrain-vehicles and the use of radio telemetry, with which a lost hawk can be traced over many kilometres, it is possible to fly hawks that are nearly wild with the consequence that distant houbara which in earlier time would have been disregarded, are by now flown at.



The rhythms of falconry changed, facility to get food for falcons allowed an increasing in the number of falcons and abundance of prey dropping, Arabs started to go further and



to fly their hawks during falconry camps in neighbour countries of the Gulf area and in North Africa.

In the nineties, after the disappearing of the Soviet wall, new countries were open and hunting camps were organised North and East in Asia.

Falconry has had a central and respected place in Arab society for at least a thousand years and probably much longer. It was, and still is for many, a part of the way of life in the Arab countries.

For many generations, hunting with falcons has provided a test of skill, and a great deal of enjoyment. It has become a revered pursuit and a truly remarkable drama between men, falcons, the quarry and the harsh desert environment.

The roots of Arab life lie deep in the deserts, bound up in the nomadic lifestyle of camel herds and people in tents and around campfires. On the contrary of the Arab of the past, the Arab of today (often enjoying a sedentary urban life) lives in contrast with an environment where others within memory used to survive in harmony. Falconry is nevertheless a bridge between the past and the present.

Arab hawking is rarely done alone. It is a joint venture in which participants share the simple pleasures of hawking - its excitements and disappointments. Arab falconry is a 'social event' and the hawking camps of today brings together a group of men; which may include prince, sheikh and ordinary falconer, to enjoy companionship and communal daily life.

Reasons of the diminution of houbara populations:

New horizons and an increase pressure on Houbara can only partly explain the diminution in Houbara bustard populations.

Wealth allowed a new generation of young falconers to practice a sport backing them to their Bedouin roots. The number of falconers increased

We could estimate the number of falconers in the Gulf region at about 10.000 - each of them flying one to two falcons.

Even if the houbara is no more the main prey for all of them, most of them have the ambition to kill one or a few houbara in the season - this could explain the high demand of Houbara used as released game and the poaching in countries as Pakistan. Very few of these Houbara are alive or in good condition when arriving in the Gulf countries.



Despite prohibition of shooting Houbara, bad habits still remain - some hunters like to 'fill a target' and shoot houbara with a rifle just to prove they are good shots.

Today, the traditional Arab sport of falconry faces a black future due to over-hunting, poaching and illegal trade in its natural and favourite prey, the houbara bustard.

Solutions and proposals to diminish the pressure on wild houbara:

IAF strongly believes that, if managed professionally and scientifically, hawking or falconry tourism may prove to be a factor of development for rural regions. It may also make a significant contribution to rural tourism, ecotourism, job creation and the preservation of local traditions.

Poaching of wild houbara could be stopped by increasing the controlling measures for the import of live houbara and offering captive bred houbara on the market at lower prices.

The IAF encourages Arab falconers to get organised in associations. It is very difficult to educate individuals - the only way to convince people is to have reliable interlocutors dealing with their members.

The prime objective is to educate Arab falconers to accept the notion of wise or sustainable use: this is very difficult as the Arab mentality is the old Bedouin or nomadic mentality versus a "settled" or sedentary.

What is a normal practice for a Bedouin? : setting up a camp and letting sheep and goat grazing around the camp. When there is no grass anymore, they move the camp and go a few miles further. Arabs tends to do the same for falconry: they hunt all the available game and move when there is no more game. Sedentary people as opposed to the nomadic have to act differently - they are condemned to sustainable use.





Bringing awareness of the problem that houbara populations are now verge on the point of extinction.

How can this be remedied?

By encouraging stringent conservation laws but the difficulty will always lie at the executive level and in the general population's readiness to acknowledge the point of sanctions.

Restriction on falconer's bags will probably be necessary. We promote the philosophy that already exists amongst some Arab falconers that the true heroes of Arab falconry are not the men at the end of the day who have the largest number of captured prey, but the men who have shown the wisdom leaving some until tomorrow.

Nevertheless, mentalities are changing in the Middle East. I would like to point out and praise the huge efforts for conservation made by The United Arab Emirates.

The example of the UAE:

I will not give details on the programs of ERWDA concerning protection and restoration of habitats and studies of captive breeding of Houbara bustards as other will do it. Better habitat conditions and intensively managed protected areas will motivate Arab hunting parties not to go to other countries and also other desert wildlife will be benefiting from protected areas.

UAE founded the first Arab falconry association, the Emirates Falconers Club (EFC) under the umbrella of ERWDA. The first objective of this association is to promote and support sustainable hunting methods.

The Club also aims to provide information and advice for its members on various aspects of falconry and keep them up to date on hunting regulations and guidelines.

The EFC informs members about the houbara life cycles, migration patterns, ecological diversity, threats to its environment and ongoing conservation.

It encourages the use of other bird species as "entering bagged preys".

Government authorities adopted strict customs policies concerning the control of importing live houbara.

I would like to praise all the efforts the UAE do for conservation - if other Gulf countries would adopt same measures, the survival of Houbara Bustard would probably be less uncertain.

Conclusion:

Conservation of falconry and falconry for conservation.

The survival of Arab falconry is not linked to the availability of suitable hawks but in the sufficiency of quarry.

Without houbara, there will be no more traditional Arab hawking.

So, it is to the survival and possible increase in the widespread populations of the houbara that energy must be turned, to ensure their future and the continued practice of Arab falconry. Already much time and money are being spent on houbara research, but there will only be sufficient interest in this effort if falconry survives. In that way, dependent on one another, the houbara and the traditions of Arab falconry will continue to exist, and the magic of the hunting camps will continue to be special experience, a moment in time, for many years to come.

I would like to remember the wise words of the late HH Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan al Nayan - these words were written 25 years ago!

'The traditional sport of falconry was passed down to us from our fathers, from a time when we were close to nature and life was more simple. It is a constant reminder to us of the forces of nature, of the inter-relationships between living things and the land they share, and of our own dependence on nature. Falconry depends on healthy populations of the quarry, such as the Houbara, and they in turn depend on the continuing health of their breeding and wintering grounds. Falconers thus have a concern for natural habitats and for the sustainable use of resources.

During my own lifetime I have seen many remarkable changes and achievements occur in the Middle East. Oil has brought immense benefits for the welfare of our people. But progress can also pose problems for nature - pollution of land and sea, unwanted development and spoiling of natural areas, and disturbance of quiet places which once gave refuge to wildlife. Some of the prey species have suffered from loss of habitat, and from persecution or over-hunting. It is important for us to take steps to turn the tide before it is too late, in order to safeguard the future.

All of us share a common goal: the sustainable, balanced use of resources. We wish to leave the Earth as good, or better, than we found it.'



UAE - The National Avian Research Center

The main goal of the **National Avian Research Center**, established in 1991 near Sweihan - Al Ain, is to conjointly ensure the sustainability of the Houbara Bustard in the wild and the harmonious practice of falconry. Its activities hinge on 2 main parts: the ecological studies and monitoring of wild Houbara populations and the captive breeding. The development of indoor, climate-controlled Houbara housing and a better understanding of the Houbara breeding parameters has lead NARC to successfully increase its production of Houbara chicks in the last 3 years.

From 49 chicks produced in 2002 and 121 in 2003, the number of captive bred chicks adds up to 223 at the end of this last 2004 breeding season. Part of these chicks will be added to the captive breeding population, so that, in accordance with implementation of new facilities and on-going scientific research, NARC will continue to develop and increase its captive breeding and Houbara production. A second part of the chicks, raised in a different way, will be released in the Abu Dhabi Emirate, as an experiment to establish a resident population.

The National Avian Research Center (NARC) became fully operational in 1993 and so is the longest operational center in The Environmental Research and Wildlife Development Agency. (ERWDA) was established in 1996, under low no.4 of 1996 and the modifying low no. 1 of 1997, by H.H. Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al. Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi.



The Mission of NARC is to promote bustards, Falcons and bird conservation and reconcile the tradition of Arab Falconry with a sustainable use of the resources throughout the bustard and falcons range. The mission is to be achieved through breeding in captivity, research, advice, international co-operation, habitat conservation and co-operation with falconers, in order to preserve the natural and cultural heritage and save falcons, bustards and other birds species from extinction.

The ultimate quarry of Arab falconers, the houbara bustard, is seriously threatened by a combination of detrimental factors including excessive hunting on the wintering grounds, heavy illegal trapping and a worrying increase in the hunting pressure in Central Asia in the last few years.

NARC's flagship species are the houbara bustard and the saker falcon. For centuries, falcons and falconry have played an essential part in Arabian culture and heritage. Houbara bustards are the favored target species for Arabian falconry, but Houbara numbers are falling because of inappropriate hunting and poaching, and habitat degradation area most oh their range.

To achieve its goals, NARC activities are organized into three main programmes:

1 - ECOLOGY AND CONSERVATION

The Ecology Programe aims to Research and monitoring of wild houbara throughout Asia via satellite tracking of wild birds and regular surveys to monitor long-term trends in Houbara numbers. also as Proposing advising on conservation measures.

As an indicator of the health of the Asian houbara populations, the National Avian Research Center (NARC) has been monitoring trends in the houbara population of Kazakhstan





with the help of the Kazakh Research Production Association. Surveys are conducted in Spring and in Autumn across about 20,000 km of potentially suitable houbara habitat distributed from the north of the Caspian Sea to the east of Lake Balkash. Kazakhstan hosts the majority of the breeding houbara in Asia and is used as a stopover by all houbara migrating to breeding grounds further east. Kazakhstan is thus a key country in the biological cycle of the Asian houbara and trends measured in this country are undoubtedly a good indicator of the health of all the Asiatic houbara populations.

Since the project started in 1998, we observed a constant and important decline in the houbara population of Kazakhstan. Between autumn 1998 and spring 2001, the relative density of breeders and migrants has dropped by 48% and 49% respectively suggesting a decline of approximately 15% per annum.

The results of this wide range survey in Kazakhstan are further confirmed by our estimate of hunting and poaching pressure via satellite radio-tracking of wild birds. The birds were captured either on their breeding grounds in Kazakhstan (Taukum Desert and Buzachi Peninsula) and in China (Jungar Basin) or on their wintering grounds in Pakistan (Cholistan Desert) and in the United Arab Emirates (Baynunah area).

Overall, from 1994 to 2001, 41 satellite-tracked birds were followed for a combined total of 10,965 days and had travelled all over the distribution range of the species in Asia. The causes of mortality were assessed from interpretation of the data relayed by the sensors embarked on the transmitters (ARGOS satellite system). The total mortality rate of adult-sized houbara was 28.3% per year and 73.5% of this could be explained by hunting and poaching pressure. The mortality rate during the hunting season (in autumn and winter) was 11.2 times higher than during the breeding season (spring and summer).

Based on mortality estimates and breeding success estimates calculated following NARC's work on the Chinese breeding grounds since 1998, the maximum sustainable hunting yield (the percentage of birds that could be lost annually without damaging the future of the species) was estimated at 7.2% of the adult-sized population whereas as much as 20.8% is currently taken. This calculation indicates that the actual level of hunting and poaching will lead to the disappearance of houbara in the wild in the near future. A computer simulation confirmed that, under current hunting and poaching pressures, a severe decrease in the houbara population of about 10 to 12% per annum could be expected. A reduction of the population to 50% of the current size can be anticipated for 2006-2007. We can further anticipate that the hunting with falcons of wild houbara will not be possible anymore when the populations will reach too low a level, in 2009-2010.

The two different sources used by NARC to compute these estimates, including the population monitoring in Kazakhstan and the model of population dynamics derived from satellite-tracking and study of breeding success, show a strong agreement in their predictions. This clearly indicates that the current hunting and poaching pressure are not compatible with the survival of the species in the wild and the continuation of falconry as currently practised. Concerted conservation measures between all stakeholders must be taken immediately to reduce the pressure on these birds and allow a bright future for the art of Arab falconry.

The NARC Conservation strategy for the Houbara Consist of:

- (1) Eradication of Houbara poaching
- (2) Management of hunting activities
- (3) Management of the wild populations
- (4) Role of falconers and their responsibilities for the decline in houbara numbers.
- (5) Role and action of the range states

The Falconers can help reduce pressure on the wild houbara by using captive-bred birds for training falcons to hunt. Large numbers of wild houbara are trapped by poachers (mainly in Pakistan and Iran), to be sold in Arabia for use in training falcons to hunt. An estimated 6,000 to 7,000 are taken every year. These birds are lost to the wild population and are thus not available for hunters. NARC is committed to a programme of captive breeding houbara and related species to provide good quality, disease free and affordable birds for use in training falcons.

By providing an alternative source of birds for falcon training the aim is to eradicate the illegal poaching and trade of houbara. The UAE is a signatory to the CITES convention (Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species) which forbids the international trade of live or dead endangered species - including the houbara.

2 - CAPTIVE BREEDING

The Asian houbara population suffers from hunting and poaching pressures high enough to explain the massive decline that NARC has been monitoring for years. It is NARC's mandate to define the paths by which some future for quality falconry and for the houbara in Asia can be secured. NARC has proposed in this respect the implementation of a series of conservation measures. The NARC houbara strategy targets a substantial reduction in the hunting and poaching pressure on wild birds on a global scale through management of the breeding and hunting grounds and through management of the wild houbara populations. To complement this, NARC proposes to produce houbara and other bustard species in captivity for put and take (release and hunting) and for falcon training purposes. Our ultimate objective is clearly to cut the illegal trade of houbara, and hence its impact on the wild houbara populations, by proposing to meet the needs of the market with birds produced in captivity.





However, breeding houbara bustard in captivity is a difficult task. The bird is shy, exhibiting a strong intolerance to man unless sufficiently imprinted, and has not been found to breed naturally in captivity. Moreover, houbara kept year round in UAE are severely challenged by environmental conditions because UAE lies outside their normal breeding range. Since NARC was set up in 1989, the production of houbara bustard has been low or even nil in 1997 and 1998.

An analysis of the performance of captive breeding at NARC over the years is currently being written. In the last few years, concentrated efforts were put into the production of houbara bustard at NARC. A new stock of birds was acquired from the National Wildlife Research Center of Taif (Saudi Arabia) in 1999 and 2001. To overcome the problem of high temperatures prevailing in the UAE during the houbara breeding season, it was decided to put the birds inside climate controlled buildings. This was an entirely new concept and a new challenge for the birds and bird care staff. After a few years of adjustment in the buildings and the implementation of improved husbandry techniques, the houbara chick production at NARC boosted from 0 in 1998 to 121 in 2003.

This report presents in a concise manner the results obtained during the 2003 breeding season. It is an up to date overview of the current protocols in place and an evaluation of the results they bring. This is not a scientific document and does not go into full detail in all the areas that deserve attention. The NARC houbara captive-breeding operation is still too small to bring scientific answers supported by hard statistics on many questions. However, specific areas which required particular research and evaluations will be the subject of specific reports.

NARC has been in operation since 1989. NARC's mission is to conserve bustards and falcons so as to sustain the tradition of Arab falconry. The captive breeding of houbara is an integral part of this mission. However, captive breeding is only a minor part of the solution for conservation of the houbara.

The role of the Captive Breeding Programme is to maximise cost-effective, quality breeding. There are many factors that determine the captive birds' well-being and breeding success. NARC's experts work to ensure that these requirements are understood and fulfilled.

The 2003 breeding season has been very successful for the houbara chick production at NARC. The objective set at 72 chicks for the season 2003 was passed by 68%. A total of 121 chicks hatched from 202 incubated eggs making a hatching rate of 59.9%.

A very good recruitment rate was observed in the generations 2001 and 2002. As much as 85% of the males aged 1 year or less displayed at some time during the season, we were able to collect semen samples from more than 40% of them, and from 18% of this generation of males, the semen collected was sufficiently concentrated to be used for insemination. Similarly, 15% of the females aged 1 year or less laid eggs this season and 53% of the females aged 2 were recruited into the breeding pool.

A good level of breeding was observed in completely environmentally controlled buildings under artificial photoperiod. It is the first year that male houbara developed breeding activity in this artificial environment. This is very encouraging for houbara breeding under these latitudes where the climate is not appropriate. This success opens the door to intensive houbara breeding under controlled conditions.

Captive breeding is often seen as the solution to the houbara population decline. Whilst captive breeding offers certain hopes, it is by no means a miracle solution for the Asian houbara. No captive breeding can maintain in its entirety the genetic diversity and specificity of long-migrant houbara populations, together with their migratory behaviours. The extinction of these birds in the wild would be irreversible. However, a combination of goals for houbara captive breeding can be described as follows:

- * Re-stocking / reintroduction
- * Reinforcement
- * Put and take

3 - QUARANTINE AND REHABILITATION

NARC is the designated facility to receive Bird confiscated by UAE customs authorities after being illegally smuggled into UAE.

Birds undergo full quarantining procedures and are dealt with in compliance with internationally recognised guidelines, which include the destroying of diseased and injured birds and release of rehabilitated birds back into the wild.

The Veterinary Science Department is responsible for the health, welfare and husbandry of the birds housed at the Quarantine Station

During the quarantine period the healthy birds are dewormed , and vaccinated against Newcastle and Pox virus

The quarantine period for most of the birds is 45 days, which is the minimum natural incubation period of Chlamydia and extended if the new arrival has a health problem

In all range countries, control of import and re-export trade in houbara must be improved, through CITES implementation by all signatory parties (CITES = Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species).

In all falconry countries of the Arabian Peninsula, significant efforts should be made to eradicate the demand for wild houbara by providing a captive-bred alternative.





Convention On International Trade In Endangered Species Of Wild Fauna And Flora

SC51 Doc. 13

Fifty-first meeting of the Standing Committee Bangkok (Thailand), 1 October 2004

Interpretation and implementation of the Convention

TRADE IN FALCONS FOR FALCONRY

1. This document has been prepared by the Secretariat.

Background

2. It has been recognized for a long time that the trade in falcons for falconry involves considerable illicit trade and that this, combined with what appears to be an unsustainable legal trade, may have had an adverse impact upon some populations of falcon species in the wild. In compliance with Resolution Conf. 12.8 (Review of significant trade in specimens of Appendix-II species), the Animals Committee, is currently reviewing the trade in *Falco cherrug* because of concern expressed regarding declining population numbers. The Committee has also expressed concern regarding illicit trade but noted that this is not a matter for it to consider.

3. During its activities in Asia, the Secretariat discussed the trade in falcons with a number of relevant Parties and it was thought desirable to convene a consultative meeting on the trade in falcons for falconry involving States where the following activities take place:

- breeding of falcons in captivity for international trade;
- removal of falcons from the wild for international trade;
- import of falcons for use by falconers; and
- hunting by falconers from other States.

4. The idea of organizing this meeting was fully supported by the Parties of the Asian region at their meeting in Mongolia in August 2002.

5. The Animals Committee was advised that such a meeting was proposed and believed it would provide an opportunity to discuss illicit trade issues. It also believed that the subject of illicit trade in falcons should be brought to the attention of the Standing Committee.

Consultative meeting

6. The Management Authorities and the Scientific Authority of the United Arab Emirates offered to host a meeting and this was held from 16 to 19 May 2004. Financial support to help sponsor the attendance of delegates was received from the Governments of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United Arab Emirates. Invitations were sent only to States that were indicated to be the most important falcon trading countries according to annual report statistics. A small number of non-governmental organizations also attended.

7. The meeting was facilitated by the Secretariat and enabled delegates to discuss a wide range of issues related to this trade. A summary record of the meeting is attached as an Annex to this document.

Conclusions and recommendations

8. As will be seen from the summary record of the meeting, delegates believed that further work requires to be done to address problems related to trade in falcons for falconry. These are primarily of a technical or enforcement nature.

9. The Secretariat recommends that the Standing Committee consider referring the issue of trade in falcons for falconry to the clearing house on technical implementation issues to recommend how this should best be dealt with. The issues to be considered specifically relate to the marking of birds and the storage of data regarding such marks. It is believed that a small group of experts in this field should be tasked, preferably working electronically or by teleconference, to consider formulating recommendations regarding the standardization of marking systems, the information to be included in any mark and the storage of such information.

10. It also recommends that the Standing Committee endorse the concept of ad hoc CITES Enforcement Task Forces, referred to in document CoP13 Doc.23 on enforcement matters, and accept the suggestion of the consultative meeting delegates that illicit trade in falcons would be a suitable subject for such a task force. If the Committee so agrees, the Secretariat will report accordingly to the 13th meeting of the Conference of the Parties. The Secretariat is of the opinion that a one-off meeting of such a task force should bring together enforcement officials from those Parties most affected by illicit trade in falcons. At such a meeting, information regarding recent seizures and other enforcement-related information could be exchanged. The meeting would also enable the establishment of a network of officials that would, thereafter, be responsible for continuing exchanges of information and that would facilitate cooperation and coordination of actions following the future detection of illicit trade incidents. The Secretariat would report to the Standing Committee on the outcome of any such meeting and subsequent work by the task force network.



SC51 Doc. 13 Annex

The trade in falcons for falconry

1. A consultative meeting, hosted by the CITES Management Authorities and Scientific Authority of the United Arab Emirates, was held in Abu Dhabi from 16 to 19 May 2004 and was attended by representatives of the following Parties, non-Party and observer organizations: Canada, the Czech Republic, Egypt, Germany, Hungary, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Mongolia, Pakistan, Qatar, the Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Turkmenistan, Birdlife International, Greifvogelzuchtverband and the International Association for Falconry.

2. Delegates noted that falconry has been practised for hundreds of years and that it has an important traditional and cultural place in many countries, especially in the Gulf States. They recognized the efforts being made by many countries to ensure that the use of falcons for falconry is conducted in a sustainable manner and believed that it was important to develop and expand further such efforts, in all States of import, export, re-export and transit.

Establishment and management of catch and export quotas.

3. Delegates believed it was necessary to remind some countries that authorize the capture and export falcons from the wild of the requirement to make non-detriment findings prior to authorizing exports. Concern was also expressed that, in some countries, insufficient information is available regarding the population sizes of falcons, and that it was therefore difficult to make the findings required under Articles III and IV of CITES relating to the survival of the species in the wild. Delegates encouraged the use of the guidance relating to the making of non-detriment findings that has been produced by IUCN.

4. Delegates encouraged range States of Falco cherrug affected by the current Review of Significant Trade of this species to cooperate with the Animals Committee and CITES Secretariat in providing information about the scientific basis upon which they determine the level of export of falcons that can be authorized. They also expressed their belief that this was an important process to help safeguard wild populations of Falco cherrug.

5. Delegates expressed their desire that all Parties and non-Parties authorizing exports of falcon species should do so in a transparent and fair manner, especially with regard to the disbursement of quotas to traders and believed that this was a matter for CITES Management and Scientific Authorities to determine. All Parties and non-Parties that authorize exports were encouraged to supply detailed quota information to the Secretariat for posting on the CITES website.

Enforcement matters

6. Delegates noted that illicit trade in falcons was of great concern and that it threatens the survival of wild populations of some species, in particular Falco cherrug.

7. Delegates believed that there is a need to raise awareness among falconers of the provisions of the Conven-

tion, the seriously low levels of Falco cherrug populations and the significant impact of illicit trade on wild populations of birds, in order to encourage compliance with CITES. They also believed there was a need for awareness-raising and training for law enforcement officials who are involved in implementing the Convention, enforcing national legislation and combating illegal capture of falcons from the wild.

8. The need was also noted for all countries of import, export, re-export and transit of falcons to ensure that airport security, airline company and all border control staff are aware of CITES and of the potential role that they might play in the detection of the smuggling of falcons, e.g. during the examination of vehicles, vessels and passenger baggage.

9. Delegates noted the important role that the Gulf Cooperation Council could play in facilitating a harmonized approach to the regulation of trade in falcons by Gulf States.

10. Delegates welcomed the initiative of some Parties to engage in national schemes to register the ownership of falcons and encouraged the implementation of such schemes by all Gulf States and other countries where there is significant private ownership of falcons. They believed that mandatory registration schemes, where there is a requirement to demonstrate the legal acquisition of individual falcons, provide for the ready identification of illicitly-acquired and illicitly-traded birds and act as a deterrent to those that might wish to import or acquire falcons illegally.

11. Delegates recalled, as stated in Decision 9.15 of the Conference of the Parties, that there is no immunity from the provisions of CITES regardless of a person's diplomatic or social status. They believed that the actions of some persons holding diplomatic, VIP or other high social status, who fail to comply with the requirements of the Convention and national legislation, risk undermining the efforts of CITES Management Authorities and law enforcement agencies to implement CITES and domestic law and set a very poor example to others in the falconry community. Additionally, delegates discouraged the governments of countries where hunting with falcons is prohibited or regulated from waiving such prohibitions or regulations for persons holding diplomatic, VIP or other high social status, as this has often been associated with violations of the Convention. It was suggested that specific awareness-raising for persons with diplomatic, VIP and other high social status may be appropriate.

12. Delegates stressed the need for countries to exchange information regarding illicit trade in falcons. In particular, countries seizing falcons being smuggled cross-border should advise the relevant countries of origin and transit so that such cases can be fully investigated with a view to identifying and taking action against the persons engaged at each stage in illicit trade.

13. Delegates noted the proposal, to be made at the 13th meeting of the Conference of the Parties, that ad hoc CITES Enforcement Task Forces should be established. They believed that, if this was adopted at CoP13, illicit trade in falcons should be the subject of such a Task Force.



Use of certificates of ownership (including falcon passports).

14. Delegates noted that the concept of certificates of ownership offers some positive gains in facilitating the authorization of frequent cross-border movements of personally owned falcons. They also believed that, when combined with national registration schemes, the use of such certificates could help deter illicit trade and was an additional measure in confirming the legal origin of falcons. However, they believed that there are matters relating to certificates of ownership for falconers that Resolution Conf. 10.20 does not adequately address and that either it should be amended or consideration should be given to the drafting of a resolution related to trade in falcons for falconry.

15. Delegates encouraged the inclusion in documents authorizing cross-border movements of falcons of information additional to that provided in existing falcon passports and travel documents. In particular, they encouraged the recording of the country of origin of the falcon, its source (wild or captive-bred), and a reference to the proof of legal acquisition (e.g. the number of the relevant export permit or re-export certificate, captive-breeding operation or licence for removal from the wild). It was also suggested that the term 'passport' be avoided in future, as it had caused some confusion regarding the scope of such documents and their acceptance by countries of destination.

16. Delegates stressed the need for all Parties to inform the Secretariat of their willingness to accept trade in falcons authorized by certificates of ownership and their use of such certificates.

Captive-breeding

17. Delegates expressed their concern that, although some States regulate captive breeding of falcons strictly and carry out regular inspections, some captive-breeding operations are not adequately monitored and are used by unscrupulous traders to 'launder' falcons that have been taken from the wild. An additional concern was that falcons taken illegally from the wild or illegally imported are sometimes used as breeding stock. The benefits of using DNA profiling to confirm parent-offspring relationships was acknowledged.

18. Delegates noted that increasing the use of captive-bred falcons in falconry helps reduce the pressure on wild populations. They recognized that, when appropriately operated and regulated, and provided other conservation measures are also implemented, such breeding might be particularly beneficial for those countries where wild populations have seriously declined, especially if operations include a release element that meets existing IUCN reintroduction criteria. At the same time, they believed that it was important for local communities in range States to participate in and benefit from the conservation of wild falcon populations. The success achieved in using artificial nesting sites to encourage breeding in the wild was noted and, together with other in situ conservation measures, its potential for the future was also acknowledged.

19. Delegates noted that there may be a threat to the genetic purity of wild falcon populations caused by the accidental escape of hybrid falcons. They encouraged fal-

coners using hybrids to use means to assist the tracking and recapture of birds that escaped.

Marking

20. Delegates expressed their wish that a harmonized approach to the marking of birds be adopted. It was noted that the EC Regulation and Canadian and United States' regulations currently require the use of a closed ring. If, for some reason, this is not possible, microchips can be used. The relevant CITES resolution accepts the use of either a ring or microchip. Delegates noted the existence of such procedures as ID CHIPS and 'Mark and Bank'.

21. Delegates believed it would be useful for the Conference of the Parties to make recommendations regarding the standardization of sizes of leg rings and format of the information they include. It was suggested that this could include the ISO code for the country in which the ring was issued. The use of closed rings in sizes relevant to the species and sex of the bird, which can only be fitted to chicks, was encouraged for captive-breeding operations.

22. Delegates acknowledged, however, that the ringing or microchipping of birds cannot totally exclude the possibility of 'laundering' and recalled that the use of DNA profiling may help prove or disprove claims relating to the origin and source of birds.

23. It was suggested that the subject of the databases in which marking information would be stored should be examined.

24. The Secretariat undertook to bring these matters to the attention of the Standing Committee which could direct them to the appropriate body as a technical implementation issue.

General matters

25. Delegates noted that Birdlife International, as the listing authority for birds on the IUCN Red List, in evaluating the status of the Saker falcon, had found that it now qualifies for threatened status with the category Endangered, owing to the high rate of overall decline in the recent past.

26. Delegates noted that, as a result of the contacts made during the consultative meeting, attempts would be made to establish a European action plan for the conservation of Falco cherrug.

27. Delegates requested that the summary record of their discussions be provided at the 51st meeting of the Standing Committee and also to the diplomatic missions in Geneva of Parties and non-Parties.

28. The United Arab Emirates suggested that, when assessing quotas for a harvest of wild falcons, the quota be balanced between the sexes and not include adult birds. However, owing to the late stage at which this point was raised and the absence of some Parties that establish quotas and which had been present during previous discussions on quotas, the meeting agreed that this matter, although important, could only be noted.



Workshop For The Conservation Of The Saker In Its European Range

Csakvar (Hungary) 11-13 February 2005
Christian de Coune

The Bern Convention entrusted to BirdLife International the working out of an action plan for the conservation of the European population of the Saker Falcon.

With the cooperation of the Hungarian Government and with funds of the Slovak Government, BirdLife and its Hungarian partner, organised a two-days workshop with 34 specialists from 11 countries.

Janos Toth representing the Hungarian Falconers Club and myself representing the IAF were invited to participate in that workshop.

I am happy to say that both of us were perfectly integrated in the group and that we did not meet any negative attitude towards falconry. All our remarks and advices have been welcomed without any unfavourable prejudice against falconry. The first part of the workshop analysed the current situation of the Saker in its European range, then all possible threats and causes of decline were recorded and were given scores of their seriousness, from "critical" to "unknown". Mitigation and conservation measures were considered. Finally goals and objectives set.

The working method was that of a very open brain storming. A questionnaire had been sent to the countries concerned, not all of them have replied.

A draft action plan will be compiled and distributed to the participants for possible corrections, it will then be submitted to the governments of the countries parties to the Bern Convention and ultimately adopted by the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention in November or December.

My aim was to avoid undue criticisms against falconry and to obtain some sort of a statement about sustainable use of raptors for falconry.

The Chairman of the Workshop, Szabolcs Nagy in his opening declaration expressed the wish of a cooperation between Conservation and falconers.

The first step was to evaluate the population of sakers in its European range, the figure of 478-598 breeding pairs resulted from the questionnaires that had been sent to the European countries of the breeding range of the Saker Falcon.

Threats quoted by the questionnaire were in decreasing importance :

Habitat loss, reduced prey base, illegal trade, disturbance, electrocution and shooting.

There has been no reply to the questionnaire concerning the threat that might result from the escape of hybrids.

Janos Toth objected against the statement that Arabs pay high prices for eyases and complains about the very negative impact of press articles quoting unrealistic prices paid for falcons because people take young from nests believing that they will sell them, he obtained that a statement be added about "misinformation on high prices of falconry birds".

Janos Toth and myself insist on the negligible impact of falconry on the decline of the saker ; the chairman says that the discussion will be opened on that topic and that he wants that no non reliable data be introduced in the Action Plan.

Hybrids : Nick Williams says that in the UK no breeding case of hybrids in the wild has been proven ; he points out that falconers make every possible effort to avoid losing their birds.

I said that hybrids do not constitute a conservation problem, but maybe a philosophical or esthetic problem, because the probability of loss is low, survival rate in the wild must be low too and the probability of those birds mating with wild birds is even more unlikely ; hybridation exists in the wild, for instance between *Aquila clanga* and *A. Pomarina* and still the latter species has a favourable conservation status in Europe. Slovakia says that there is one proven case of a hybrid breeding with a Saker, it produced one young in four years. Janos Toth says that hybrids are mostly produced for business.

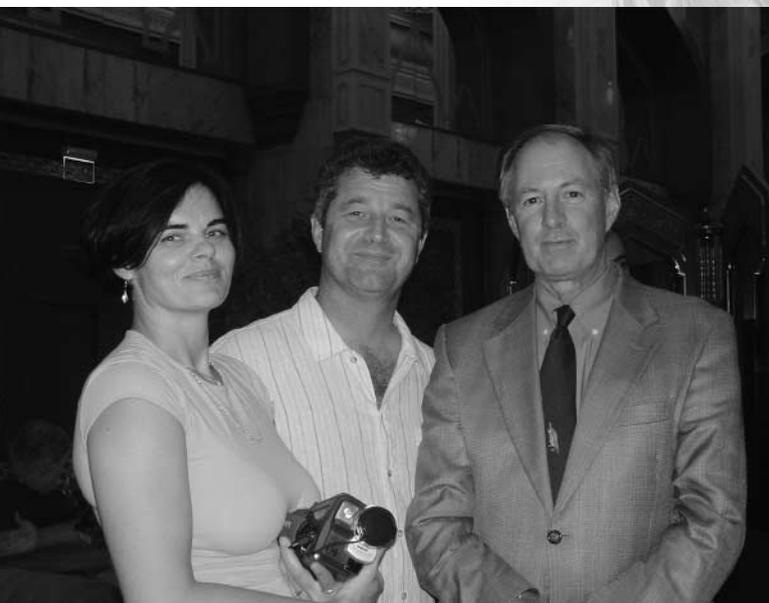
V. Galushin says that hybrids reduce the demand for wild birds.

Conclusion : there is no sufficient time during this workshop to go deeper into that topic, it was then decided to set up a working group on hybrids and prepare a strategic document within 2 years after the adoption of this Action Plan, it was agreed that the IAF would be involved in the said working group.

I proposed to include a statement saying that properly regulated falconry should pose no threat to the conservation of the species ; it was accepted. I also proposed a statement about sustainable harvest, it was not rejected.

Our participation in BirdLife's Workshop on the European Saker was a good opportunity for introducing the IAF, showing its involvement in conservation and offering explanations on falconry when need arose. BirdLife deserves our sincere thanks for their openmindedness.

Christian de Coune.





Japanese Falconry - Past & Present

**Reported by
National Conference for Japanese Falconry
[Historical Summary]**

According to written record, a Korean refugee transplanted falconry in Japan in 355 A.D. Archaeological findings support practice of falconry in eastern and central parts of Japan in fifth century. While Japanese falconry was linked to political or religious rituals from the outset, there existed two lines: official hawking by central power and private one by local lords. In 818 A.D. was edited "New Edition of Hawk Canon", the oldest surviving falconry textbook in the world. Under the rule of the Tokugawa taikuns, the two lines were integrated, with falconry monopolized by upper samurai class. In the meantime, technical accumulation brought about unique methods and equipments as well as over 1000 titles of texts.

After Meiji Revolution in 1867, while some of taikun's falconers was taken over by Imperial Court, falconry methods were disclosed to the public by others, with some lead to hawking with mountain hawk eagles in northeast region. After World War II, Imperial Court ceased hawking at live games, and poorer hunting fields caused by urbanization and lack of successors had fallen falconry, with some methods and ritual aspects lost.

Nevertheless, thanks to efforts by the few falconers who made the art open and trained successors, currently several clubs and individual falconers preserves the art of falconry and practices hawking during hunting season. The falconer population is supposed to be at least 100 active falconers, with more than 200 latent falconers to be. 10 falconry societies are listed in Table 1. Currently captive-bred raptors are 16 species (Table 2). For traditional and current gamehawks, see Table 3. Shortwings have been most popular throughout history.

Legal Situation

Since 1895, Japanese hunting law has adopted a black list, not white list for legal hunting methods throughout several amendments, i.e. it sets forth general catching regulations, examination-license system for particular methods and listing of prohibited methods. Before introduction of license system, falconry was expressly listed in the definition of hunting (1892-1895). Due to little population involved and low hunting pressure, falconry has been free from license system since 1895 and covered by general restriction of quarry, zone and season. Native raptors may not be caught for falconry now, and we use one imported according to CITES or domestic CB descendants. As game, 29 species of birds (Table 4) and substantially 10 species of mammals (Table 5) can/could be hunted with hawks. Hawking is in fact feasible only in "shooting-free huntable zone", not to encounter shooters. Hunting season is limited to 4 months in Hokkaido area and 3 months in the rest of the country. Overall amendment of "Act on Avian/Mammal Conservation/Management and Proper Hunting" (hereinafter Avian/Mammal Act) is scheduled in 2005, and Ministry of Environment (MOE) has made a special Commission discuss the matter since 2002.

Formation and Activity of National Conference for Japanese Falconry

In May 2002, a birdwatchers' association began attacking against falconry at a government hearing. At the Commission for amendment of Avian/Mammal Act since 2002, with no falconer selected as a member, a commissioner from the birdwatchers' association has demanded for investigation on falconry, asserting it should be banned or restricted. Some falconers noticed the menace, and appealed to other falconry clubs or individuals for cooperation to save legal hawking. In March 2004, representatives held a preliminary meeting.

On 26th June 2004, National Conference for Japanese Falconry (NCJF) started as a conference unit to discuss common interests of Japanese falconers and to make joint lobbying action. It is modelled after the Hawk Board of UK. Memberships are open to any sincere falconer or hawking club in Japan, with majority, if not all, of Japanese falconry groups participating.

In early July, NCJF had talks with relevant officers of MOE, where we filed a written Plea and Exhibits adopted at the first NCJF general meeting. The Plea requests for hearing with NCJF on case of any statutory enactment/amendment which may affect falconry, and states our willingness to cooperate on possible introduction of license system. Exhibit I rebuts foreseeable issue to be argued by anti-falconry people and shows social merits of falconry on the other hand, while Exhibit II compiles supporting messages from scientists and celebrities (See Notes 1 & 2). MOE orally accepted our Plea and promised to offer hearing with NCJF on relevant occasion.

At the Commission meeting for last substantial discussion on 29th July, the birdwatcher commissioner restated request for investigation on falconry, but MOE dismissed further discussion on the matter. On the Avian/Mammal Act, legal status quo is expected to remain for falconry. Above developments has been reported to Mr. Morel, the President of IAF. Thank you for great support from IAF on the matter.

On the other hand, to prevent naturalization/genetic contamination, NCJF has established communication and service networks to search and recover escaped raptors as well as studying effective bird ID systems. To date, no record has been filed with either MOE nor the Ornithological Society of Japan on naturalization/genetic contamination by escaped raptors. We have also set forth duties to be complied with by individual falconers. Joint events for public relations and mutual friendship are being planned, while contribution to rehabilitations of wild raptors and to ecological education are being pursued by respective member societies/individuals. NCJF, representing majority of Japanese falconers, will continue to serve as front body with Japanese Government, and to make efforts to improve Japanese falconry, so that falconry can be legally practiced and handed over to coming generations. We hope 2004 will be recalled as starting point of Falconry Renaissance in Japan.

Table 1 Japanese Falconry Organizations with open data

Name	Members	Contact	NCJF Membership	Notes
Atlier Falconoid Falconry services	2	sugisaki@peach.ocn.ne.jp	YES	
Happy Friend (Japan Hawking Society)	25	happyfriend-jhs@yahoo.ne.jp	YES	
Japan Falconry and Hawking Network	40	fujipet@technowave.ne.jp	YES	



Name	Members	Contact	NCJF Membership	Notes
Japan Falconry Culture Preservation Society	7	y-matuda@pj8.so-net.ne.jp	YES	
Nippon Falconers Club	11	tachiro@topaz.ocn.ne.jp	YES	
The Japan Falconers Association	48	info@jfa.gr.jp	YES	
The Japanese Falconers' Association	84	officejfa@yahoogroups.jp	YES	IAF Member
The Japan Falconiformes Center	42	jaface@ylw.mmtr.or.jp	NO	IAF Member
Traditional-style Falconry Club	6	m-mayumi@beige.plala.or.jp	YES	
World Falconers Club	62	moukinya@mbh.nifty.com	YES	

* NCJF Contacts: Secretary (white-gos@ps.sakura.ne.jp); IAF Liaison (shadowfax@u01.gate01.com)

* There exist other groups and individuals.

Table 2 CB Bird of Prey

Type	Species
Shortwings	goshawks, sparrowhawks, and hawkbuzzards
Longwings	peregrines, lanners, sakers, American kestrels, and kestrels
Broadwings (M)	Harris hawks, redtail hawks and buzzards
Broadwings (L)	golden eagles, Stella's fish eagles, white-tailed eagles, bald eagles and mountain hawk eagles

Table 3 Past and Current gamehawks

Type	Past	Current
Shortwings	goshawks (A.g.fujiyamae, A.g.schvedowi A.g.albidus), sparrowhawks (A.n.nisosimilis) Japanese sparrowhawks (A.gularis)	and goshawks (A.g.schvedowi, A.g.gentilis, A.g.buteoides, and A.g.albidus) sparrowhawks (A.n.nisus), shikras and black sparrowhawks
Longwings	peregrines, merlins, hobbies, cessionary Gyr	peregrines, merlins, American kestrels and hybrids
Broadwings (M)	NONE	Harris hawks (P.u.harissi and P.u.superior)
Broadwings (L)	mountain hawk eagles (S.n.orientalis)	golden eagles (A.c.chrysaetos)

* A.g.fujiyamae - Winter weight from resaerch: Female 1050 to 1150 grams. Male 600 to 730 grams

* A.g.schvedowi - Depending on its origin, of similar size to A.g.fujiyamae or lager.

* A.n.nisosimilis - Larger than Europeans (A.n.nisus). Female weight up to 350 grams.

* A.gularis - Female, 200 to 220 grams. Male, 100 to 120 grams.

* peregrines - F.p.japonensis (of similar size to F.p.peregrinus) and F.p.pealei were used, also might be used F.p.hartert.

* S.n.orientalis - Female 2600 to 3800 grams, male 2000 to 2500 grams.

Table 4 Past and Current Statutory Quarry, Birds

Type		Past	Current Statutory
Heron and Egrets	Night Heron	Nycticorax nycticorax	Y
	Grey Heron	Ardea cinerea	Y
	Great Egret	Egretta alba	Y
	Intermediate Egret	Egretta intermedia	Y
	Little Egret	Egretta garzetta	Y
Stork	White Stork	Ciconia boyciana	Y
Ibis	Japanese Crested Ibis	Nipponia nippon	Y
	White-fronted Goose	Anser albifrons	Y
Goose and Swans	Bean Goose	Anser fabalis	Y
	Snow Goose	Anser caerulescens	Y
	Whooper Swan	Cygnus cygnus	Y

Type		Past	Current Statutory	
Marsh Ducks	Bewick's Swan	Cygnus columbianus	Y	
	Mallard	Anas platyrhynchos	Y	
	Spot-billed Duck	Anas poecilorhyncha	Y	
	Common Teal	Anas crecca	Y	
	Falcated Duck	Anas falcata	?	
	European Wigeon	Anas penelope	?	
	Pintail	Anas acuta	?	
	Common Shoveller	Anas clypeata	?	
	Bay Ducks	European Pochar	Aythya ferina	Y
		Tufted Duck	Aythya fuligula	Y
Greater Scaup		Aythya marila	Y	
Common Scoter		Melanitta nigra	Y	
Moorhen Cranes	Moorhen	Gallinula chloropus	Y	
	Common Crane	Grus grus	?	
	Manchurian Crane	Grus japonensis	?	
	Hooded Crane	Grus monacha	Y	
	White-naped Crane	Grus vipio	Y	
lowland gamebird	Hazel Grouse	Tetrastes bonasia	N	
	Japanese Quail	Coturnix japonica	Y	
	Copper Pheasant	Phasianus soemmerringii	Y	
	Japanese (Green) Pheasant	Phasianus colchicus	Y	
	Bamboo Partridge	Bambusicola thoracica	N	
Snipe and Woodcock	Common Snipe	Gallinago gallinago	?	
	Woodcock	Scolopax rusticola	?	
Rook and Claws	Rook	Corvus frugilegus	?	
	Carion Crow	Corvus corone	?	
	Jungle Crow	Corvus macrorhynchos	?	
Dove	Eastern Turtle Dove	Streptopelia orientalis	?	
	Brown-eared Bulbul	Hypsipetes amaurotis	?	
small birds	Grey Starling	Sturnus cineraceus	Y	
	Cinnamon Sparrow	Passer rutilans	Y	
	Tree Sparrow	Passer montanus	Y	
	Skylark	Alauda arvensis	Y	
				Y

*1 Lives in only Hokkaido.

*2 Except P.s.ijimae.

*3 Male only.

*4 Alien species.

Table 5 Past and Current Statutory Quarry, Smaller Mammals

Type		Past	Current Statutory
canine	Raccoon Dog	Nyctereutes procyonoides	Y
	Red Fox	Vulpes vulpes	Y
	Japanese Marten	Martes melampus	Y
	Japanese Weasel	Mustela itatsi	?
	Siberian Weasel	Mustela sibirica	N
	American Mink	Mustela vison	N
	Masked Palm Civet	Paguma larvata	N
hares	Mountain Hare *4	Lepus timidus	N
	Japanese Hare *5	Lepus brachyurus	Y
rodents	Oriental Tree Squirrel	Callosciurus erythraeus	N
	Japanese Giant Flying Squirrel	Petaurista leucogenys	Y

*1 Except M.m.tsuensis

*2 Male only.

*3 Alien species.

*4 Lives in only Hokkaido. Same size as Europeans

*5 About 2.0 to 2.5 Kg..

Note 1

Exhibit I discusses and rebuts 4 risk claimed by anti-falconry people: (1) hunting pressure, (2) mistaken catching of non-hunttable bird, (3) poaching of domestic raptors, and (4) naturalization/genetic contamination by imported rap-



tors, as well as pointing out 5 social merits/standings: (a) sound outdoor activity, (b) traditional culture, (c) educational contribution, (d) falconers' personal involvement in raptor research/conservation, and (e) circulation of knowledge and apparatus usable for raptor research/conservation.

Note 2

In Exhibit II come supporters: 13 from veterinarians, 13 from liberal arts experts, 10 from agrobiologists, 9 from biologists (including 3 raptor researchers), 8 from zoo people, 5 from writers and other celebrity.

The Japan Falconiformes Center

We have recently received an inquiry from IAF officer (Mr. José Manuel Rodríguez-Villa Matons, Vice President Eupope-Asia-Africa-Oceania) about the fear that falconry may be banned in Japan, to which Kinya Nakajima (Vice president of JFC) replied as shown in the following.

Dear Mr. José Manuel Rodríguez-Villa Matons

In the very first place I should like to express my most heartfelt gratitude for your sincere expression of fear that the Japanese falconry may be doomed to extinction. In connection with this recent incident, I regret that the fears expressed in my report entitled Concerns about the future of falconry in Japan presented to the 2003 IAF finally became a reality.

As mentioned in the said report, our nation at present has no law on falconry, which means that there does not exist even a law to ban falconry. Since the legal aspect is in such a terrible status, ordinary people and mass media as well totally lack understanding about falconry or falconers, and people generally tend to regard anyone who has a falcon a falconer. And, needless to say, anyone who owns a falcon gladly self-proclaims to be a falconer.

In this past April, three main figures, including chief director and directors, of a group recognized as an NPO for the merit of preserving the traditional falconry, were detained for suspicion of poaching the goshawk, protected as rare specie, for 15 years or more. In this case, the stance of the relevant government agency is also criticized for having easily granted the NPO qualification to such a group merely by checking the papers.

A harris hawk was stolen from a pet shop in May of this year, and the owner of the pet shop filed a notification of theft claiming its value to be five million yen, becoming quite a topic of conversation. In other instances, scenes of a self-proclaimed falconer capturing a protected bird were televised nationwide, leaving many serious persons frowning at.

Incidentally, the government is now planning to introduce a new hunting law that more positively features the concept of nature protection, and there is a movement to include an item on falconry in this law.

Since general public are now looking askance at incidents involving falcons or falconers, and there exist people who hate falconry, there indeed are found voices claiming for total ban on falconry. But, I also hear that some members of the council more or less agree to support the idea of taking advantage of this movement in order to put certain limitation on falconry that has so far been left totally uncontrolled outside the framework of the law.

As far as I am concerned, I am of the opinion that certain qualification system with legal backing should be introduced in order to maintain the skill of the Japanese falconry at a high level so that falconry may be practiced as a legal hunting method even though it may be placed under certain restrictions. This may end with the rampant freewheel falconry, and at the same time it will allow falconry to maintain the character as elegant sport as in many other countries.

The legal position of falconry in Japan is still at such a low level, therefore the risk entailed is in a dimension totally different from, say, the EU nations where some people are moving towards reviewing the law in order to totally ban falconry that has long been recognized as a legal hunting method.

Please understand the subtle difference lying between the both cases - if one tries to handle this issue in our nation with the feeling like "Let's join our forces to oppose the law designed to ban the falconry that is allowed to continue under stringent regulations in Europe," one may end up instead speaking for falcon poachers or promoting sales of non-native species.

The trial for the poachers will start sometime this week, and the way of thinking of the judicial authority may surface in the course of a series of hearings. I think I will be able to talk about it during the upcoming IAF Meeting.

Sincerely yours,
Kinya Nakajima
Vice President
The Japan Falconiformes Center

As for the judgment of the "falconers" who poached goshawks as mentioned in the last part of the reply, although the trial has not yet been concluded for all culprits, so far a penalty of imprisonment of ten months with sentence suspended for three years was given on the ground that "it is a selfish crime by using the preservation of tradition as a pretext." If one claims to preserve traditional cultures, one should be more loyal to the traditions of this nation. One should succeed in the spirit of Samurai to more strictly control oneself and exercise moderation.

For the traditional art of falconry of Japan, due attention is paid so that the hawk or falcon should not get used to a specific person, and the hawk or falcon is trained with utmost care so that it can keep maintaining the wild spirit without becoming excessively used to human beings. For this reason, even these days many of its skills and tools can be applied to the treatment of injured birds of prey or training for their return to the natural habitat. By using materials found at an antique shop or equipments restored according to old documents, one can promptly realize how convenient they are.

Traditional techniques have been handed down by our fore-runners after many resourceful improvements. Since they have been completed after a series of trials and errors and the process of selection, even if one happens to hit upon a seemingly brilliant idea, the results have in many cases already been known.



Falconry Status In Brazil

Estimated Falconers

First of all, the Brazilian Association of Falconers and Preservation of Birds of Prey (ABFPAR) would like to thank the Emirates Falconers Club and the Directors Board of IAF for the opportunity to participate at the 35th IAF Meeting held in Abu Dhabi - UAE. Thank you very much.

Brazilian Falconry still stands on an embryological stage, with a known history of twenty-five years. The ABFPAR was founded in 1997, by three friends: Leo Fukui (President), Jorge Lisboa (Secretary) and Guilherme Quieroz (Treasurer). Our office is established in Niterói, City in Rio de Janeiro. Our Association lives only with the member's annuity. Since the beginning, we have annual meetings and our Bulletin is published twice a year. One of our proposes is to rehabilitate injured raptors brought to us by citizens, Municipal and Military Police, and Fire Departments, with Falconry practices. We also attain to Zoological Foundations and Rehabilitation Centers.

ABFPAR will accept anyone that likes raptors and is willing to learn more about Falconry and raptor's conservation. We have around 40 members (number that oscillates every year) spread through some States of Brazil and Argentina, Portugal and Holland. Some of our members are veterinarians, biologists, agronomists, zootechnicians, engineers (professionals, students and researchers). 25% of them actively are flying raptors for rehabilitation proposes.

Our Association is divided into Director's Board: President, Secretary, Treasurer, Scientific Director, Technical Director and Marketing Director; Consultants Board; Honor Members Board; and Members Board divided into professional and student members.

The National Falconry School is located in Uberlândia City (Minas Gerais State - Central-East). Our Treasurer Ronivon da Silva is one of the owners, and responsible for teaching Falconry with Aplomado Falcons (*Falco femoralis*) and an imprinted female White Tailed Hawk (*Buteo albicaudatus*). All of our raptors are close ringed. Besides being a Falconry Scholl, ENFALCO is legalized as a Breeding Center for Aplomado Falcons in his State Environment Department. Last August two couples of Aplomado's started demonstrating incubating behaviors. On August the first Aplomados eggs started hatching. Two days later, all six eggs were hatched. This was the first breeding attempt in Brazil, each one laid three eggs, a 100% of success by a Brazilian Falconer.

Brazil has two kinds of centers: breeding and conservation (rehabilitation) centers. Each one with it's own legislation. For a citizen to keep a wildlife animal, he must get a special license at the State Environment Department, after demonstrating that he has the knowledge, ability and infra-structure to keep a wildlife animal. The same license also permits his transportation inside the State. To travel out of the State with a raptor, the holder also must get permission from the Environment Department of the visiting State.

After a reunion in 2002 between the Federal Environment Ministry, representatives from some Environment Conserva-

tionists Associations (Anti-Falconry Groups) and ABFPAR, the first Brazilian Falconry Normative started to be study by our Federal Environment Departments. Today it's in phase of conclusion and approval. This normative will establish the practices of Falconry for rehabilitation and to control airport's wildlife in an attempt to avoid more airplane-birds crashing accidents.

Even with the final approval, each State Environment Department has the autonomy to agree with the practices of Falconry. Unfortunately, some Environment Departments, for example Sao Paulo, don't agree that Falconry can be used to rehabilitate injured raptors, on the other hand, this autonomy helped us to prove to some Departments the benefits that Falconry brings to injure raptors, resulting in partnerships with their rehabilitation centers. Brazil has 88 species of raptors, and 16 of them can be used for Falconry. Those raptors are listed below:

Species	Handling Degree	Abundance
<i>Rupornis magnirostris</i>	1	Common
<i>Falco femoralis</i>	1	Common
<i>Falco sparverius</i>	1	Common
<i>Buteo albicaudatus</i>	1	Common
<i>Spizaetus ornatus</i>	3	Uncommon
<i>Spizaetus tyrannus</i>	3	Uncommon
<i>Spizaetus melanoleucus</i>	3	Uncommon
<i>Geranoaetus melanoleucus</i>	3	Uncommon
<i>Harpia harpyja</i>	3	Uncommon
<i>Buteo brachyurus</i>	2	Uncommon
<i>Parabuteo unicinctus</i>	2	Uncommon
<i>Falco ruficularis</i>	2	Uncommon
<i>Falco peregrinus</i>	3	(?)Uncommon
<i>Accipiter bicolor</i>	3	Uncommon
<i>Accipiter erythronemius</i>	3	Uncommon
<i>Micrastur semitorquatus</i>	3	Uncommon

This Falconry Normative will also establish the degrees of falconers:

1st Degree - Apprentices Falconer: to obtain this degree the person has to make a one year trainee period assisting a Senior or Master falconer. After that, the falconer can handle common species of first degree difficulty, and the year after he will learn to train 2nd degree difficulty species.

2nd Degree - Junior Falconer: Who already have two years of experience with a 1st and 2nd degree training difficulty raptors.

3rd Degree - Senior Falconer: Who has at least four years of experience with 1st and 2nd degree training difficulty raptors, and had demonstrated enough ability to handle 3rd degree raptors;

4th Degree - Master Falconer: Who has at least seven years of experience on Falconry capable of handling and training 4th degree raptors (rare species). He can also participate of re-introduction programs.



We have Laws about capturing, keeping, using and studying wildlife. To preserve the remaining natural habitats, the Brazilian Government has been creating several Federal and State Conservation Units to protect our remaining bio-diversity from man itself, where any kind of hunting, chasing and catching is illegal, and depending on the Environment status, any man's activity.

Even representing one of the biggest tropical weather bio-diversity, we have several of wildlife species in danger of extinction and in phase of extinction. Because of that, several committees were created by our Federal Environment Department to elaborate conservation protocols for some of our most endangered ones, for example the Spixii Protocol, the Hyacinth Macaw Protocol and the Marine Turtles Project - TAMAR. Bird's researchers have demonstrated that some of our raptors are locally endangered because of illegal deforestation, intentional burns, illegal gold mining, and enlargement of our cities, and even with three raptors species endangered of extinction, we still don't have a raptor committee.

In general terms, we can say that the Brazilian Association of Falconers has constructed along these years a good relationship with some Associations and State Departments related to environment issues. Know that our Association is one of the newest member of IAF, the kind support of IAF, CIC and NAFA will help us to discuss the future of Falconry as a sustainable hunting sport with our Environment Departments.

Best regards

Marc Petroff

Marketing Director
and Strigiformes Consultant
Brazilian Association of Falconers
and Preservation of Birds of Prey - ABFPAR

rhinoptynx@yahoo.com

An Overview Of Falconry In South Africa

The status and standard of falconry in South Africa is better now than it has ever been. Whilst we do not have a falconry utopia, the efforts of many years are paying off and we are seeing the benefits in a variety of areas. The South African Falconry Association is a national umbrella organisation that embraces the Provincial falconry clubs.

South Africa has nine Provinces. Each Province has a legislature that answers to the Central Government. State functions are either centralized or devolved to the Provinces.

The function of 'Nature Conservation and Environmental Affairs' is one devolved to the Provinces and thus each Province has its own legislation and policies that relate to this. The South African falconers are obliged to work with their Provincial authorities to establish Provincial Falconry Policies. These must be workable and satisfy the rules and regulations of that particular Province.

Currently, of the nine Provinces, six have established falconry clubs and a seventh is in the process of formation. These clubs represent a total of 196 falconers at the last count. Falconry policies are in place in six of the provinces. SAFA has been active in attempting to standardise and coordinate these policies. With respect to these policies, there has been general acceptance of the following principles:

1. A sustainable wild harvest of suitable raptors based on a negotiated quota. Both conservation authorities and conservation NGOs have been surprised by the small number of birds that we actually take from the wild and the fact that they are often released at the end of one or more seasons.
2. Self-regulation of falconry by falconry clubs based on a standardised grading system and a code of conduct.
3. Acceptance of the principle that raptors hunt all year round and that the total quarry 'bag' of falconers is very small. Thus, within reasonable constraints, a 'closed' hunting season for falconry is inappropriate.

The correct and efficient application of the policies by provincial authorities can be problematic. Issues that require streamlining and further negotiation remain, such as:

1. The temporary transfer of falconers' birds between provinces (CITES regulations refer to a falconry passport).
2. The export of wild taken birds from one province to another.
3. Attitudes towards exotic raptor species and sub-species.





There is ongoing work necessary to overcome bureaucratic problems and cautious attitudes, but we can report that, by and large, relations between falconers and conservation authorities are excellent.

Another area where efforts are bearing fruit is the relationship between falconers, conservation NGOs and rehabilitators. The most relevant conservation NGO is the Bird of Prey Working Group (formerly the Raptor Conservation Group). This is a working group of the Endangered Wildlife Trust, which, in turn represents the World Wildlife Fund in South Africa. After years of mistrust and antagonism, we have finally found acceptance within this organization and we will be represented on all of its committees.

With respect to Raptor rehabilitation, we have achieved a measure of cooperation. In the Western Cape we have established a rehabilitation forum with a protocol that writes falconers and falconry methods into the process of rehabilitation.

For those unfamiliar with South Africa, we fly a wide variety of raptors. These are principally indigenous species. While a range of exotics is flown, the number is limited by availability and expense. The types of bird flown are determined by the terrain and available quarry. The central area of South Africa is sub-tropical grassland with a variety of smaller - partridge like - spurfowl. This is ideal long-wing country. My own home is in the mountainous Cape Fynbos region, which, whilst interesting botanically, is somewhat challenging to the long-wing flyer and we have a preponderance of austringers. The quarry available ranges from geese and ducks to guinea fowl and a variety of spurfowl to small birds. We have no suitable 'furred' quarry except hares and these are nocturnal.

In most provinces we are permitted to take suitable birds for falconry from the wild. This take is based on a negotiated quota and is very conservative but, fortunately, we require very few birds each season. We have a number of captive breeding projects. African peregrines have been successfully bred for a number of years and the surplus birds, not required for falconry, are released to the wild. Other species bred have included Lanner falcons, Red-necked falcons, Red-breasted sparrow hawks, African goshawks and, recently, Black sparrowhawks. Some exotic species are also bred including Saker falcons.

We have a number of events, the principle of which is the SAFA Field Meet. This is held in July, in the central sub-tropical grassland region and incorporates a Sky Trial. There are also Field Meets held by the Provincial Clubs.

We cooperate with and involve ourselves in a variety of scientific studies and activities. Few of these are specifically driven by falconers, as in Zimbabwe, and I believe that this is an area where more must be done.

Finally I would like to express my concern for the plight of falconers in our neighbour, Zimbabwe. I am a founder member of the Zimbabwe Falconry Club and it is with mixed feelings that I report that my old friend Ron Hartley has re-located with his family to the Western Cape Province where I live. Land grabs, personal threats and fuel shortages are making life difficult for falconers in Zimbabwe and they deserve all the support we can give them.

Adrian Lombard.
Secretary and IAF Representative for SAFA
Chairman - Cape Falconry Club

Future Conservation Of Raptors In Southern Africa

Zimbabwe Falconers' Club raptor research and conservation programme.

**For The Raptor Conservation Group
of the Endangered Wildlife Trust
WORKSHOP**

On the

**FUTURE CONSERVATION OF RAPTORS
IN SOUTHERN AFRICA**

At Aventura Gariep Dam

FREE STATE PROVINCE, 23 March - 25 March 2004

BACKGROUND

Falconry can assist raptor conservation, especially in Africa with its meagre financial resources and expertise. In Zimbabwe falconers have assisted by:

- monitoring nest sites,
- ringing raptors,
- establishing captive breeding programmes for endangered species,
- assisting with raptor rehabilitation,
- running educational programmes and
- providing specimens (mainly raptors and selected prey, but also unhatched eggs) to the Natural History Museum of Zimbabwe.

This has been applied successfully for the past 28 years in Zimbabwe, as a result of the government falconry policy, consisting of a formal arrangement between the Zimbabwe Falconers' Club (ZFC) and the Department of National Parks and Wild Life Management (DNPWLM).

A vital component in this relationship has been the linkages between a ZFC research coordinator and a senior ecologist (DNPWLM). The ZFC established a Raptor Conservation Unit (RCU) in 1989, which has also worked in joint programmes with The Peregrine Fund Inc.

Falconry has been a legal pursuit in Zimbabwe (Hartley 1993) for some 40 years and the special falconry policy established in 1976 by the Department of National Parks and Wild Life Management (DNPWLM) has led to a systematic and concerted to conserve both raptors and their prey by the falconers.

The Zimbabwe Falconers' Club (ZFC) conservation strategy has four components:

- education and public awareness through talks and demonstrations by experienced falconers and also from two falconry clubs at private schools;
- veterinary care and rehabilitation;
- a research data base on raptor nest sites used for studies of populations, comparative ecology, DDT impact and the prey base of hawks;
- and a captive breeding and release programme mainly on the African Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus minor* and Taita Falcon *F. fasciinucha*



Guidance and professional input on the conservation programme was achieved by regular linkage between the Chief Ornithologist of DNPWLM and the Club's Research Coordinator, as a consequence of official policy and also the commitment of the respective personnel concerned. A cornerstone for the success of the programme has always been the falconers' access to birds from the wild.

The Raptor Conservation Fund was established by the ZFC in 1989 to provide financial support to the research programme. A separate breeding fund was established by the ZFC thereafter as well. TPF has provided most of the financial and material support, but additional help has come from the Endangered Wildlife Trust of southern Africa (EWT), the National Birds of Prey Centre (UK), while the Ecological Risk Section Centre for Ecology and Hydrology (UK) has sampled eggshell contents for pesticide residues.

ROUTINE ACTIVITIES

- Annual monitoring has continued, with the maintenance of the nest record card system, which has continued to burgeon.
- Numerous specimens (eggs and shell fragments; dead birds) have been measured and submitted to the Natural History Museum of Zimbabwe (NHMZ) in Bulawayo.
- Data on prey taken by trained hawks included weights and measurements (including gonads), moult and location and was collected almost exclusively by RH at the Falcon College Falconry Club. This has amounted to over 3500 individuals of over 140 species.
- Furthermore RH has also compiled a prey catalogue which now represents 132 species of birds, useful in the identification of prey remains.
- The monitoring of the raptor community around Falcon College in the Esigodini area has continued for 21 years.
- Over 300 raptors have been ringed by the ZFC and
- numerous raptors have been successfully rehabilitated, including considerable veterinary work done by Dr. A. Huelin. Post mortems have revealed incidences of avian tuberculosis in a few free living and captive Peregrine and Lanner Falcons, and a possible vulnerability to aspergillosis in some captive Black Sparrowhawks.
- Education - since its inception in 1983 Falcon College Falconry Club has produced 70 fully fledged falconer-conservationists, all of whom have spent a minimum of two years of intensive activity in the unit. They have also hosted many groups of visitors, instructing them on the raptors at the facility and on aspects of raptor conservation. As many as 20 groups from visiting schools make organised trips to the facility each year.
- A similar service has been provided at the Peterhouse Falconry Club.
- Several falconers have put on posters illustrating the ZFC conservation and research programme at conservation workshops and at game fairs held in Harare. They have also given flying displays with trained raptors.

SPECIAL PROJECTS

These include research and captive breeding, which are described in turn:

Research

Under direction from RH, ZFC members and students conducted the following work, supported by The Peregrine Fund Inc

- **Batoka Gorge.** While monitoring has focused on the Taita Falcon, an inventory on all raptors has been conducted from Victoria Falls to the proposed dam site about 60 km downstream. Habitat - gorge cut by Zambezi River. A long-term project started in 1983.
- **Bubiana Conservancy.** The role of hyrax on a population of six pairs of Black, three pairs of Crowned and four pairs of African Hawk Eagles in a 100 km² study area. Habitat - domed inselberg terrain in lowveld near West Nicholson-Beit Bridge. Project started in 1999.
- **DDT impact study.** Periodic collecting of raptor eggs, especially specialist bird and fish eating species i.e. Peregrine, Lanner, Black Sparrowhawk, African Goshawk and African Fish-eagle. We try to repeat studies at 10-year intervals. Analyses conducted by Ecological Risk Section Centre for Ecology and Hydrology, and also by the Macaulay Land Use Research Institute, UK. Project started in 1976.
- **Egg collection.** RH is documenting Fin O'Donoghue's registered egg collection, which contains multiple clutches of a number of raptor species. A comprehensive report is under way which will accompany the collection, which is destined ultimately for an appropriate museum/institution. A selection of this information will be published. Project started in 2002.
- **Esigodini.** Raptor community study. Some data available from P. Steyn (1961-1970). Monitoring focused around Falcon College and done in conjunction with Falcon College Falconry Club and Senior Natural History Society. Habitat - mixture of broad-leaf savanna woodland (on sandveld) and fine-leaf (acacia-combretum) bushveld (on clay). Project started in 1983.
- **Malilangwe Conservation Trust.** Raptor community project, which has focused largely on eagles. 49 species of diurnal raptors and 11 species of owls. This is integrated into the overall environmental research programme of this conservancy, which includes habitats and all trophic levels where the emphasis is on research that will compliment wildlife management. Habitats varied and include sandstone hills with miombo and thickets, riparian, mopane woodland and acacia woodland in the south-eastern lowveld. Data plotted onto GIS. Project started in 1995.
- **Marula (Matobo Hills).** Focused on the Black Eagle on private land to compliment long-term studies in National Park and Communal Lands by Black Eagle survey team of Birdlife Zimbabwe. Habitat - kopje terrain, ranchland and wildlife conservancy. Project started in 1996.
- **Marondera-Mvurwi.** Monitoring of accipiters primarily viz. Black Sparrowhawk, Ovambo Sparrowhawk, Little Sparrowhawk, African Goshawk, Little Banded Goshawk.



Other species include Long-crested Eagle, Wahlberg's Eagle and Crowned Eagle. Habitat a mosaic of miombo woodland, open grassland savanna, domed inselberg terrain, intensive commercial croplands (mainly tobacco, maize, soya beans and winter wheat) and patches of agro-forestry (eucalyptus). Project started in 1978.

- **Mbalabala.** Raptor community project, including Crowned and African Hawk-eagles and Black, Ovambo and Little Sparrowhawks mainly. Habitat - domed inselberg terrain in eastern Matobo Hills. Project started in 1995.

- **Raptors in Harare and Bulawayo.** There are a variety of raptors in these two cities, which reflect the interesting dynamics between raptors and human landscapes. Species include Bat Hawk, Ayres' Hawk-eagle, African Hawk-eagle, Black Sparrowhawk, Ovambo Sparrowhawk, Little Sparrowhawk, African Goshawk, Little Banded Goshawk, Gabar Goshawk, Peregrine and Lanner. Habitat - urban and sub-urban with urban-rural fringe including intensive cultivation around Harare. Project started in 1989.

- **Save Valley Conservancy.** Raptor community project focusing largely on eagles, especially Crowned Eagle. 51 species (24 sp. breeding) diurnal and 10 sp. of owls (4 sp. breeding). In 2003 work started on monitoring invaded areas. Varied habitats including kopje, riparian, mopane woodland and Acacia tortilis woodland in south-eastern lowveld. Project started in 1984.

- **Status and distribution of Taita, Peregrine and Lanner Falcons in Zimbabwe.** Nest site characteristics, productivity, prey, nesting densities and ecology are being studied. We have data on 155 Peregrine sites, 22 Taita sites and 256 Lanner sites. Project started in 1976.

- **Triangle.** While the original focus of this study was on the effect of sugar cane farming on the distribution and abundance of large winter breeding eagles at Triangle, it has the added component of land degradation from widespread land invasions. Habitat of mopane woodland, riparian areas and extensive patches of irrigated fields with sugar cane in the south-eastern lowveld. Project started in 1992.

- **Miombo woodland study at Karoi.** 30 species of diurnal and nine species of owls. Key species include Cuckoo Hawk, Lizard Buzzard, Little Sparrowhawks, Little Banded Goshawk, Gymnogene, Wahlberg's Eagle, and African Fish, Eagle Barn Owl, White-faced Owl, Spotted Eagle Owl. As war veterans and settlers are an increasing problem in that area, it may not be easy to sustain the study. Habitat typical of large parts of the miombo biome of central Africa and includes mosaic of emergent miombo and cultivated land, typical of Zimbabwe's intensive farming region. Project started in 2000.

CAPTIVE BREEDING

This has involved Peregrine and Taita Falcons. High levels of DDT and its metabolites in eggs of Peregrines, plus the desire of falconers to develop expertise in captive breeding, stimulated this programme in 1978. TPF collected four Taita Falcon chicks from two sites in Zambia in 1983 for captive breeding and the ZFC gave them an injured male in 1984. In 1988 TPF collected two chicks from a site in Zimbabwe and in 1991 we collected four chicks from three different sites.

Peregrine.

The first successes were in 1981. 27 pairs of captive Peregrines produced 265 young. Three females produced young at 14 years of age, and one at 15 years. No females bred successfully after this time, according with patterns at TPF. One male fertilized a female at 21 years old. 78 Peregrines were released to the wild. Each released falcon was ringed and 13 were recovered. There was a tendency to drift to towns and to cereal croplands near Harare, usually within 100 km of the release sites. The longest distance recovery was at Pretoria west, for a falcon released at Marondera. A five and four year old falcons were recovered respectively, while another falcon bred successfully at a dominant, traditional Peregrine site in the Matobo Hills in 1997.

Taita.

In 1993 four pairs of Taita Falcons were constituted from three females and one male taken from the wild, and three males bred in captivity by TPF. One pair has died. Two pairs have produced 12 chicks and seven pairs are currently held in captivity. The goal of the project is to establish at least 10 pairs and release their progeny to the wild.

CONFERENCES

The ZFC has long been recognised as a valuable contributor in the field of raptor and gamebird conservation in Zimbabwe, and it has contributed to several conferences: Perdix VI gamebird symposium (Hartley & Mundy 1992, Mundy 1996); VIII Pan Afr. Orn. Congr. 1992 (Hartley 1993, Hartley et al. 1993 - extended abstract); Raptors and Man symposium (Hartley et al. 1996); Our Endangered Environment (Hartley 1996); Migrating Birds Know No Boundaries (Hartley, R.R. 1998); V World Conference on Birds of Prey (Hartley 2000a,b) and the IOC Conference in Durban (Bell et al. 1998).

PUBLICATIONS

Publishing the results and sharing information with stakeholders is an important goal of our programme. ZFC members have published over 150 papers, short notes and popular articles over the past 30 years and these have been carefully archived. Each of the projects above has been the subject of at least one publication. Many key papers and notes have been used in standard works on birds and conservation, including the Handbook of Birds of the World Vol 2 (1994), the Atlas of southern African Birds (1997), Gamebirds of southern Africa (2000), Raptors of the world (2001), and Robert's seventh edition (in press.).





Species used in falconry in Zimbabwe.

- Note that there are 66 species of diurnal raptors recorded in Zimbabwe

Herewith the list of species that have potential for use in falconry in this country:

Table 1. Species of raptors that have potential for falconry in Zimbabwe. s = Specially Protected. Optimum species for falconry in bold.

Species	Status	Comments
Black Eagle	s	Too large for most falconers, difficult to hunt and not permitted on general licence
Tawny Eagle	s	Not as rapacious as African Hawk Eagle. Not permitted on general licence
African Hawk Eagle	s	B grade hawk and hunted mainly at Scrub Hares
Ayres's Hawk Eagle	s	Little success recorded. Not permitted on general licence.
Martial Eagle	s	Occupies super-territory and use not justified. Not permitted on general licence
Crowned Eagle	s	Too large and dangerous for most falconers. Not permitted on general licence
Augur Buzzard		Rarely used, but has some potential for novices mainly
Redbreasted Sparrowhawk		Although unprotected, recommended for experienced falconers only
Ovambo Sparrowhawk		Although unprotected, recommended for experienced falconers only Little Sparrowhawk Although unprotected, recommended for experienced falconers only
Black Sparrowhawk Little Banded Goshawk	s	B grade and excellent gamehawk. Rarely used and not as rapacious as other accipiters
African Goshawk		Excellent hawk for beginners and takes wide range of quarry
Gabar Goshawk		Rapacious and suitable for experienced falconers
Pale Chanting Goshawk <i>Melierax canorus</i>		Not used yet in Zimbabwe, but used successfully by falconers in SA on gamebirds
Dark Chanting Goshawk <i>Melierax metabates</i>		Rarely used and not with success yet on quarry
Siberian Peregrine Falcon <i>Falco peregrinus calidus</i>	s	Rarely encountered, but one has been used with great success
African Peregrine Falcon	s	A grade and excellent at wide range of quarry
Lanner Falcon	s	B grade and excellent at gamebirds, doves and Grey Louries mainly

Hobby Falcon <i>F. subbuteo</i>		Rarely used, but a couple have been trained to take quarry
African Hobby Falcon <i>F. cuvierii</i>		Rarely encountered and only one has been trained. Marginal use.
Sooty Falcon		Rarely encountered and only one has been trained. Marginal use.
Taita Falcon	s	Several trained but not yet hunted seriously on quarry as reserved for captive breeding for conservation project
Rednecked Falcon		Only two have been hunted seriously and excellent at quarry
Rock Kestrel		Useful for beginners and will chase quarry
Greater Kestrel		Useful for beginner and will chase quarry
Dickinson's Kestrel		Useful for beginner and will chase quarry

(from Hartley, R.R. 2001. Zimbabwe Falconers' Club information booklet, constitution, regulations. Revised edition. Zimbabwe Falconers' Club, Harare. 61 pp.)

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Falconry in Italy and the Italian Federation of Falconers (FIF)

The art of Falconry in Italy, which was considered in the past one of the most important country for this art, is no longer so widespread. The crisis began at the beginning of last century or even before when fire weapons almost eliminated this Art, which is a real pity. In addition to this, while in the first half of last century Falconry was in a certain way protected by small groups, and limited to an elite, it was later extended to other social classes by some falconers and the FIF and in these years number of falconers reached the total number of about 200-300 falconers in all Italian territory.

The activity of falconers in Italy is very fragmented and there are different ideas about its meaning. This is probably due to the increased diffusion of falconry and the easiness to know falconers and the loss of true falconry values. The biggest problem in Italy is in fact the loss of important values, culture and philosophy of Falconry.

The Italian Federation of Falconers is composed of about 50 falconers. Its aim is to inform all other associations about the activities of IAF no matter what their ideas are. The Italian Falconers Federation is the oldest and the most important federation that gathers falconers in Italy. Its idea is that falconry is an important Art to be kept alive (and a patrimony of the humanity) because of its history and its values.

The federation does not admit the use of falconry for profit, except for the activities connected with Bird Control (use of falcons in airports, big factories etc.) as well as for their use in very well organized didactic centres. Moreover, the federation does not accept affiliation of those people who use falconry in shows and for personal profit.

The exhibition of falconers is admitted only at historical festivals but always under two important conditions:

1. total absence of a profit
2. safe flying conditions for falcons

This because the FIF considers the flight of falcons and hunting differently from what is generally thought by people who do not know the original meaning of Falconry. That is why it is necessary to create a correct idea of this Art that does not simply consist in the exhibition of someone who has a falcon. These people are free to do this with their falcons, but the FIF does not consider them Falconers. They are surely trainers but not Falconers.

FIF think that in Italy there is a big confusion about this point. Recently, a group of Italian falconers has decided to affiliate with the Italian Associations of Hunters (Federaccia, FIDC). We cannot accept this because it would mean losing our independence in order to get some legal advantages. On the contrary we have decided, like other Italian falconers, to follow a different way to reach our objectives. For instance,

cooperation with groups of environmentalists and with scientific organizations is for us a better even if a longer way to follow.

Our decision to affiliate the Italian Falconers Federation (FIF) with the International Association for Falconry (IAF) is another step in this direction as we consider the IAF a serious organisation to work with because we share the same ideas, values and culture to defend and protect Falconry.

In conclusion, we hope in this way to increase in the future the importance of falconry in Italy as it was in the past.

Giovanni Goj
IAF delegate for Italian Federation of Falconers (FIF)





Slovenija

Falconry in Slovenia is increasingly being better organised through the SZS the Slovenska zveza za sokolarstvo in zascito ptic ujed.

Our association has a steadily growing number of young members who are fascinated by the marvellous insights, knowledge, passion and nature conservation potential falconry has to offer.

In 2004 the efforts of our falconry group SZS and those from DOPPS, the leading Slovenian organisation for the observation and conservation of birds and a partner of Birdlife International were published in the Slovenian publication Sokolarstvo DA ali NE - Falconry Yes or NO by the Ecological Forum of Slovenia. This forum encourages decision-making based on expert opinion in the best interests of the Slovenian environment and its people in a transparent democratic process.

The authors, Bozidar Flajsman and Romana Erhatic-Sirnik, are to be congratulated for their sincere effort to illustrate all of the aspects for and against falconry.

In the past two years the Slovenian Falconers Association has intensified its information of the public and legislators as to the characteristics of falconry in Slovenia. Our efforts have focussed on communicating the best standards in falconry practice and the legal regulation of falconry in Slovenia. Following the advice of the IAF we proposed a regulation of falconry that can be effectively supervised and controlled with a minimal waste of national resources. Our other main objective was to establish useful collaboration with other interest groups concerned with the conservation of endangered birds of prey and their habitat.

Our aspirations and actions are being opposed by other organisations supported by officials from outside the country. We are responding to dogmatic interest groups and demonstrating on a practical level to the public and the legislators that our specific skills enable people to see and appreciate unique and beautiful natural phenomena.

We are convinced that anybody who has seen a falcon flying up to the clouds from a human hand and then swooping down from above to catch its prey, a climactic instant in state of the art falconry, will treasure this unforgettable moment of nature's awesome beauty and perfection as long as they live. Witnessing good falconry results in a pure admiration of nature and very often awakens a sincere desire to care for and understand the natural world better. The falconry skills and knowledge of natural history of our members are highly beneficial for the awareness and practical management in raptor and environment conservation in Slovenia.

With regard to populations of birds of prey in Slovenia it has to be clarified that species of diurnal birds of prey that are not used for falconry are the most threatened in Slovenia, apart from the common buzzard and the kestrel. A similar pattern of reduction in bird of prey populations that are not used for falconry and an increase in the numbers of species that are used for falconry has been observed in developed democratic countries where falconry is well regulated, for example in the United Kingdom, Spain or the United States.

It is a fact that Slovenia once again has a stable population of wild peregrine falcons, goshawks, sparrow hawks and golden eagles, birds traditionally used in falconry. The number of wild raptor species in Slovenia proves clearly that present falconry practice in Slovenia has no obvious effect on wild populations of birds of prey.

The scientific world agrees that the most significant threat to bird populations nowadays is habitat destruction. It is a commonly accepted fact among leading international nature conservation interest groups that significant problems with the exploitation of natural raptor populations occur in countries with critical social problems and poor law enforcement systems.

Following independence Slovenia's economy is booming with a high employment rate and good law enforcement systems. Modern Slovenia is climbing up the ladder to be part of the world's most developed countries fast. Slovenians are determined to move far away from the farmer image of their ancestors not really noticing much of the disappearance of Slovenia's colourful wild flowers and the sweet song of birds (to name only a couple of examples) as their senses and minds are far too occupied with winning the race for a better future. I of course share this wish for a better future, but if we want our future to be really better we need to make sure that we do not lose the living things that are perfect already along the way. The falconers of Slovenia are delighted with the economic progress in their country, however they are concerned about the progressive destruction of natural habitat, the consequences that this will have on nature and mankind and are calling for a more wildlife-friendly development of habitat: The measurable decline in biodiversity, the general loss of wild animals and plants, is the result of unsustainable habitat destruction in Slovenia.

Slovenian falconers regret that informed specialist groups have failed to stress to our public the important fact that loss of habitat through unsustainable land development is primarily responsible for the loss of biodiversity including some Slovenian bird of prey populations. In agreement with leading experts on the sustainable use of natural resources we are stressing that falconry presents one of the lowest impact ratios among the activities using natural resources. Our enemies do not hesitate to dangerously divert attention from the real problems in nature conservation.

In addition to diverting from the real problems in nature conservation some Slovenian ornithologists and animal rights activists are creating a bad image of falconry by focussing upon the killing aspect of falconry and hunting, triggering an emotional response in a passive public often lacking first hand experience of nature. Our enemies claim superior expertise in ecological or ethical matters, increasingly challenging the competence of falconers and hunters with emotional arguments. Attacks against falconry seem to suffice in Slovenia to justify professional positions in nature conservation funded by corporate and public donations or taxes.

Wise use, that is the controlled and compassionate use of natural resources, is in our opinion the best guarantee for conserving our natural resources in Slovenia. Falconry and hunting are committed not only to ensuring the survival of Slovenian wildlife and natural spaces but to increasing biodiversity through habitat improvement thanks to personal commitment and on an economic basis through the profits of sustainable use.



Under the pressure of extreme nature protection groups who associate falconry or hunting only with suffering and the killing of animals, the public is increasingly being encouraged to forget the well-documented tradition and *raison d'être* of many responsible falconers, hunters and anglers to feel for nature thanks to the careful management of its resources. Honourable falconers, hunters and anglers are reminding the Slovenian public of this important age-old truth explaining that killing and death are normal events in nature accounting only for a fraction of a moment in our interaction with nature, in the same way as death is only a moment in the cycle of our own life.

In future falconers and hunters will increase awareness among the general Slovenian public with a positive message about the virtues and values of sustainable hunting. We will try to ensure that the public which has been conditioned to question hunting once again starts to understand that non-consumptive nature users also benefit from an environment kept alive, wild and diverse thanks to the interest, knowledge, activity and financial resources of falconers, hunters and anglers.

Our sincere admiration goes to everybody who is making a personal effort in the conservation of nature and to everybody acting to increase biodiversity, be it scientist, professional conservationist, recreational naturalist, hunter, angler or falconer, they are needed now more than ever.

Good falconry is a noble endeavour - not so much because aristocrats enjoyed it in the past and it is commonly understood to be the sport of kings, but because of its human ideals of good observation, care, loyalty, discipline and freedom.

Submitted on behalf of the Slovenian Falconry Association, *Slovenska zveza za sokolarstvo in zascito ptic ujed.*

Dr. Igor Tavcar MD

Delegate to the IAF

VP of the Commission of Falconry and protection of birds of prey in the CIC



Field Meet of Ukrainian Falconers

At the middle of August 2004 the 4th traditional field meet of falconers of Ukraine took place. In contrast to previous field meets this meet had more modest character by number of foreign guests and by species composition of birds. Only Ukrainian falconers participated exclusively with the Goshawks.

Field Meet was conducted in the south-east of Ukraine in Donetsk Region and in the Crimea. Main object of falconry was the Pheasant, also several Grey Partridges, Rock Doves, Rooks and Magpie were captured.

As the status of falconry in Ukraine is not determined till the end, and this meet was unofficial. Falconry took place in some hunting farms (near Mariupol, Donetsk, Feodosia) according to agreement with their guidance, with personal participation of a.m. persons.

During discussions of falconers in the regular time the question about necessity of development of unions of admirers of birds of prey in Ukraine was raised. An ideas about establishment of club under the aegis of Ukrainian Society of bird conservation (UTOP) was finally refused, it was decided to be united on the base of Kiev falconer's club "Corax" (President - Alexander Vlasenko).

The special concern was caused by relation to birds of prey from the side of the population of Ukraine and local authorities. Though officially and legally all species of the birds of prey in the country are situated under law protection, in reality their endless extermination goes on. The cases of extermination of nests and killing of Saker Falcons are known in Sumy, Kirovograd, Poltava, Odessa Regions, Peregrine Falcon and Saker Falcon in Nikolaev Region and the Crimea. The Goshawk is a subject of persecution much more, especially in the agricultural regions, where the real war is declared against the Goshawk.

Forces of falconers alone and only are not enough for actual protection of birds and carrying out of actions on their support - if such works goes somewhere, so it is irregular and little effective.

Also the problem with illegal trade by rare falcon species exists. Large females of the Saker Falcon are suffering especially strongly, which in a number are exporting to the countries of the Middle East.

Therefore, by opinion of majority of falconers participated in this field meet, the time of consolidation of forces has come.

In completion we would like to recall especially successful hunt, when with 5 Goshawks (3?, 2?) from under two dogs, (Kurzhaar Kerri and Drathaar Deia) for 3 hours of falconry 8 pheasants, partridge and magpie have been caught. Many thanks to organizer of field meet Mr.Kirill Ivanov, all falconers and admirers of birds of prey from Donetsk, and also to the President of club "Corax" A.Vlasenko, partly financed this undertaking.

Rostislav Sorish

Translated from Russian into English

from: http://www.hot.ee/molnia/rus/ukr_2004.htm

By Jevgeni Shergalin



Austria

Austrian falconers are pleased to have intensified contacts with the IAF.

Falconry is a firmly established and recognised hunting practise with a rich history continuing its enthusiastic presence in the Austrian hunting culture.

Falconry is regulated in the hunting legislation in all Austrian states.

In contrast to many other middle European countries a good part of Austria's countryside can pride itself on quite dense small game populations thanks to a well developed hunting and conservation culture and supportive farmers who are responsibly managing its natural resources.

With regard to the harvest of wild raptors in Falconry, wildlife management authorities of several Austrian states implement the principle of the sustainable use of natural resources issuing permits to falconers to capture Goshawks for their personal use.

The contribution to nature conservation of falconers with expertise and permits in the rehabilitation of wild raptors is widely recognised.

The breeding of birds of prey for use in falconry has become a wonderful routine in Austria and falconers are focusing on quality breeding. Marvellous hunting birds are currently being bred by Austrian falconers.

The Oesterreichischer Falknerbund, the most prominent falconers association in Austria comprises dedicated falconers who practice falconry with hawks, falcons and golden eagles. Falconry practice ranges from purist to refreshingly innovative, with Austrians often among the first in the world to try new training techniques. Falconry in Austria is practised passionately, it is diverse and covers a wide range of practices and philosophies.

In spite of the organised and responsible attitude of falconers, Austrian falconry was in danger to being totally stopped.

The abolition of the falconry way of keeping and caring for birds of prey had been called for by extreme animal rights activists and their anti-falconry convictions were drafted in the process of establishing the new animal welfare law.



The legislators had the best intentions and were following the recommendations of experts since a new animal welfare law has become necessary after responsible Austrians wished to improve many bad practices of keeping animals especially in agriculture and animal exhibitions. However, as far as falconry was concerned, **experts with no first-hand experience in falconry practice made unsuitable recommendations regarding keeping birds of prey in the best physical condition.** Experts associated Falconry equipment like hoods, jesses, blocks, perches with cruel methods and suggested to stop the use of falconry methods in keeping of birds of prey.

Can you imagine a falconry practice of maning and flying hawks, falcons and eagles getting them fit for hunting without falconry equipment like hoods, jesses, blocks, perches. Hmm... We all agree that a good physical and mental condition is synonymous with welfare and can also be called health. Falconers make great efforts for best health and fitness in their birds. If the abolition had gone through in the form suggested it would no longer have been possible in Austria to hood a falcon, to fit a falcon with jesses or to keep a falcon tied to a block on the weathering lawn and on perch





Bulgarian Association For Conservation Of Birds Of Prey

THE FALCONER'S ASSOCIATION

Sofia 1172, comp."Dianabad", 30/7/93;
Tel./Fax: 00359 2 68 39 07;
Mobile: 00359 888 98 98 88;
Mobile: 00359 886 31 74 46;
E-mail: bacbp@top.bg; cherrug@top.bg ;
cherrug_bg@yahoo.com; cherrug@abv.bg

REPORT

OF THE BULGARIAN ASSOCIATION FOR CONSERVATION OF BIRDS OF PREY IN ABU DHABI

INTRODUCTORY WORDS

Dear Sirs and Madams, dear falconers, dear friends,

First of all I would like to point out the enormous importance of my attendance to this forum. My love to this art - the hunt with birds of prey - has brought me here, on this fabulous land and made it possible for me to relish in this kind of entertainment that our colleague falconers - the Bedouins - have enjoyed for centuries. Touching these beautiful species is actually quintessence of each science studying birds of prey. That is the essence of communicating with nature. And the same way as every chain needs its loops, as the tree would not survive without its leaves, and as the tail of the bird cannot stay without feathers, so the hand of the falconer cannot go without a bird of prey. That is the senses of fulfillment and freedom.

Thanks to our wild brothers - the birds of prey - we have the opportunity to peep deeply into their nature and soul. Centuries on end we trod toward the horizon accompanied by our hunter partners. Deserts, savannas, steppes, tundra, forests - all places of those have been waded across by the falconers and their fellow birds being partners in an eternal dance: the flight of the falcon as the flight of life.

HISTORICAL NOTES OVER FALCONRY IN BULGARIA

Probably there are not many among you having heard about Bulgaria. It is a small country with ancient culture, famous all over the world mainly with its products of yogurt and rose oil. The country is also well known with its sports star-moments in football, wrestling, weightlifting, rowing, rhythmic gymnastics. Particularly of interest to foreigners is Bulgarian music, which has been enjoying, similar to Arab music, much of attention from the world music industry over the recent years.

Situated in South East Europe, with its territory of 111,000 sq km Bulgaria occupies a specific strategic place in the region - the central part of the Balkan Peninsula, on both sides of the Balkan Mountain Chain (where the name of the peninsula comes from). Most of our north border stretches alongside the Danube River separating the country from Romania, to the south Bulgaria borders with Turkey and Greece; to the west our neighbour is Serbia and Makedonia, and our eastern border is washed by the Black Sea.

during the flying season. The negative effects that a prohibition of the falconry way of keeping and caring for birds of prey would have had on falconry also beyond the Austrian borders are clear.

Thanks to the intense work of the Austrian Falknerbund with the advice and help of the Austrian hunters organisations, Animal welfare experts with falconry background, the expertise of IAF and CIC and not least many kind and supportive Austrians with an understanding for falconry, it was possible to ensure that trained falcons and hawks can also in the future be kept in the traditional falconry way during the hunting season - even if explicitly so only for falconry during the hunting season.

Although some strong objections remain with regards to how falconry practice has been regulated in flying displays and the prohibition of imprinting birds of prey for commercial breeding, many falconers are pleased with the result that legislators and consulted experts have acknowledged that the hunting practice in falconry complies with acceptable principles of animal welfare.

The Austrian animal welfare law regarding the regulations on the keeping of birds will be translated for your kind attention to allow international debate.

The lesson learned by international falconers from Austrian falconers on the process of animal welfare legislation is to become involved and demonstrate and explain exactly what you are doing. Without a good understanding of falconry practice among legislators and experts who have no falconry experience there is no chance of acceptance. Lesson number two is that even if everything is demonstrated and explained perfectly there is always somebody who will for a variety of reasons have difficulty understanding your point. Lesson number three: Be patient.

The Austrian Falknerbund hopes that the IAF will accept our invitation to host the AGM in 2007.

Dr. Igor Tavcar MD
IAF Delegate

for the Oesterreichischer Falknerbund VP Commission for Falconry and the Conservation of birds of prey of the CIC



Tourism is among the sectors enjoying fast development in the national economy. Bulgaria offers various types of tourism, including mountain, sea, ecological, hunting, etc. We have 90 reserves for wild game breeding and 12 national parks. I would like to draw your attention to the fact that the population of the saker falcon enjoys one of the best geomorphologic and climate conditions of living, which comes to explain the good genetic characteristics of the individual birds concerning their usage as hunting birds.

Probably few of you know that Bulgaria, which I have the pleasure to represent at this forum, is a country with century-long history in falconry. Its history dates far back 3,000 (three thousand) years ago. The interwoven tracks of Thracian, Roman and Byzantine civilizations has made the country an exciting and picturesque place to visit. Bulgaria has existed and developed on its present territories for more than 13 (thirteen) centuries.

Bulgaria knows falconry and practices since ancient times. According to old and reliable historical sources, including the Vatican library, old Bulgarian tribes migrated to the Balkan peninsula from the territories of modern Russia, Mongolia and China. During that migration, which started long before the new era, nomad tribes were relocating in search of new, more fertile lands, until they reached the lands of present Bulgaria, bring along with them sustainable knowledge about horse-breeding, hunting and falconry - crafts deeply imprinted in our genes and historic development.

There are two theories about the origins of Bulgarians. The first claims we originated from ancient Iranians; the other one insists that Bulgarians came from Asia. Both statements, however, have something in common and that is the fact that migration was part of our everyday life. There is historic evidence that still in I century, in 75, ancient Thracians - a tribe living along the banks of Maritsa River - practiced hunt/ing with trained falcons.

As migrators our ancestors have spent most of their time riding horses. For hunting they used eagles, falcons, hawks, lasso and the elongated, similar to piques spears names "rogatina", as well as one of the unique, multi-complex reflex bows the elements of which still preserve their secrets. The migration of old Bulgarians to the lands of modern Bulgaria has found place in the annals of those days. One of those say (quote follows): "...In 679, under the leadership of Asparukh, Bulgarians crosses the Danube River. According to an old legend, they were led by the sacred eagle flying in front of them, God Ikush, to whom they dedicated the bodies of dead. Old Bulgarians largely worshiped the eagle, as a symbol of mightiness and power. An evidence for that worship is the image engraved on one of the golden utensils in an old Bulgarian treasure found in Golemi Sveti Nikola, Hungary (nowadays stored in the Vieanna Museum). The image shows a naked woman grabbed in the talons of an eagle, the woman offering the bird from the sacred drink with one hand and carrying a torch with the sacred fire in the other hand. Eagles, mainly the golden eagle, called also "berkut", was trained and used by old Bulgarians for hunting bigger game, while falcons were used for smaller game. The hunt was not used prevalingly for collecting food for the Bulgarians - they had an abundance of it from the many herbs, rather they practiced hunting for pleasure and as good training of their human physical and spiritual characteristics: strong will, stamina, intrepidity, which laid the grounds of their insurmountable military and national might." (end of quotation).

Hunting was an everyday activity for Bulgarian man - whenever he was not on the battle field, he went hunting.



Belligerent tribes used to find serenity and joy in hunting trips. In the Middle Ages falconry spread widely across the country and acquired nationwide practice. An interesting fact to mention is that besides with falcons, Bulgarian and Byzantine nobles ("bolyars") used to go hawking with greyhounds, with the local breeds of dogs "palash" and "zagar", as well as with otters. In 14-19 century Bulgaria slides into Turkish slavery.

During that five-century period falconry became extremely popular across the country and Bulgarians were preferred for falconers as successors of sustainable traditions in care and training of falcons. Because of their cares for the birds of prey, those Bulgarians turned into a privileged category - they enjoyed relatively more freedom than their country fellows; they were exempt from paying some taxes, they could hold guns and were remunerated more generously. In the Ottoman Empire falconry was grounded and on the military practice organized in two main groups: the first group occupies with caring and training of falcons and hawks for hunting. They received their salaries directly from the Sultan's court. The second group comprised falconers who served in exchange for some tax alleviations or for remuneration of small provincial land estates, exempt from taxes. Bulgarian falconers were called "dogandzhii" (those occupying with falcons), "kruguyari" (or "karaguyari") "athmadzhadhzhii" (those caring after hawks). Depending on the activities accompanying the hunt, another groups of falconers were formed, including people who search for the nests and stay on vigil to guard them until eyasses grow, change plumage and start to learn how to fly. Other categories are those of "transporting" the birds of prey and of "care-after" of those birds. A separate group included the hunters who caught birds of prey for hunt training in the Sultan's court.

The supreme power established the falconry as an institution with hereditary character. Thus sons, brothers and grandchildren of Bulgarian falconers also became falconers. In the course of centuries falconry regions also took shape across the country where families and kinships of falconers lived centuries on end. Falconry existed mainly in Eastern Thracia, Aegean region, the south part of Vardar Makedonia (along the Vardar River), and Northwestern Bulgaria. It is also very well developed in several regions in North and Northeastern Bulgaria. There is a special register of the regions with predominantly care and training of falcons and hawks preserved since 15 century. According to the register, along with the



Thracian and Aegean region, two more regions in Northern Bulgaria were specifically active in falconry. In 18-19 century the semi-armed wealthy falconers became the people to finance the revolutionary-liberation movement aiding for the formation of first detachments - the so called "haiduk-chetta" (or "haidushki chetti") - bands fighting for liberation of the Turkish slavery.

In the beginning of 20 century falconry was quite popular not only among Muslims living in the Northeastern part of the country. There are many villages in that region where Muslims go hunting partridges and hares with trained peregrines. In the beginning of last century falconry was practiced also by Tatars living in Bulgaria, as well as in the regions around Thessaloniki and Ohrid. Throughout all centuries falconry was so popular that it was even memorized in Bulgarian national folklore. A song dated from 19 century narrates about a young girl praying to God to give her wings of bird to fly to the Bulgarian army and pick there her beloved man - a hero of the heroes on whose knee there stands a falcon and where an otter spryng cover.

THE SITUATION NOWADAYS

After all those beautiful poetic verses above, we must regretfully turn eyes back to the situation in Bulgaria nowadays.

In 1978 the capital city of Sofia hosts the annual meeting of CIC, the International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation. Upon the proposal table by Pierre Basset, the representative of IAF, it was adopted a decision that a working group be established in Bulgaria to deal with the falconry affairs at CIC. However, it is not clear whether there was such a group established at all, and if not, on what reasons.

Today falconry is prohibited in Bulgaria. According to Article 65, paragraph 12 of the Game law (Act on Hunting and Game Preservation), it is prohibited to use hunting falcons and other birds of prey during hunting, irrespectively of their species and origins, as well as the usage of greyhounds.

The cited legal text expanded its application with the latest amendment in 2002 aimed exclusively to highlight one specific thing - the negative attitude of the state toward falconry. The paragraph banning hunt with birds of prey were adopted with the active intermediation of non-governmental ecological organization who partner the government in grafting legislation concerning those affairs. Regretfully, poorly motivated and illogical commentaries, as well as the extreme stance of local ecologists over the issue of hunt with birds of prey served as a basis of the active legislation.

The discussion over legalization of falconry in Bulgaria reflected the cross-road of mostly disadvantages factors - organizations illiterate in the falconry affairs and preaching strongly against it are at the same time authorized to draft the legislation concerning it and to control all attempts to popularize the matter and raise discussions over it.

In that sense, after incessant urges to start talks, representatives of the "green" organizations have intercepted any attempt to promote the idea. And although in most cases representatives of those non-governmental organizations demonstrated complete incompetence and misunderstanding of the matter, they use every opportunity to show unconcealed hostility and lack of interest.

The main reason of the ecologists behavior is that if there is falconry they will retreat from their traditional principles and, very likely, to lose finances provided by various European ecological funds financing pre-accession projects in our country. Because Bulgarian administration is still in a transitory period

of harmonizing its work with the standards of the European Union, a member of which the country hopes to become in the near future, our partners from IAF are also facing difficulties in communication with authorized institutions.

Patrick has a good idea of what I am talking about - to all 17 letters over the matter of legalizing falconry in Bulgaria sent to different state institutions, not a single reply came back. Of course, the hopes of the Bulgarian falconers are, this situation to be changed. We are aware that the countries aspiring for EU entry have to go through a complex and long procedure of negotiations over each sector, including the "green" one and to harmonize its national legislation with the acquis communautaire of the European Union. We hope that the regulated practice of falconry in the Union will reflect here helping to authorize it legally in Bulgaria as well. Nonetheless, national legislation of each member country includes regulations over that type of activity. It may be useful that representatives of various clubs in the countries allowing falconry send letters in support of Bulgaria to the Bulgarian Association for Conservation of Birds of Prey that later we would be able to present as official documents in our fight for legalizing falconry in the country.

CONCLUSION

Dear Sirs and Madams, my dear friends,

As a representative of the not so numerous, but enthusiastic enough group of falconers in Bulgaria, let me once again express my deepest joy over the opportunity to be present here, with all of you, and to share with you these few, but unforgettable days of my life, which, I am sure, I would remember for life. I am sure that with the joint efforts of the International Association, the revival of falconry in our country is soon to become fact.

Dear friends, please let me express my gratitude in my conclusion words to our president Patrick Morel, as well as to Prof. Thomas Richter, Robert Kenward, Herwig Hoedl, Dr. Jevgeny Shergalin, Janos Toth and Ph. D. Janos Aradi, to Gilles Nortier, José Manuel Rodriguez-Villa, Lazlo Zado, to Frank M Bond, Dr. J. Timothy Kimmel, Dr. Ing. Bohumil Straka, Janusz Sielicki, to Asyilhan, Djuma - Vladimir Salnikov, to Ata Eyeberdiyev and Riza Hemraev and to all those whose names I would not be able to say here, but who helped and still help Bulgarian falconers to collect the necessary information for battles further to come over falconry.

Dear friends, we are grateful for your support and sympathy thanks to which we all continue ahead in the tracks of our first steps. Please keep going on with the same vigor, steadfast and staunch in standing up for your ideas in falconry. Keep on helping to those like ourselves who long for their love, but still cannot touch it, and stand by our common interests for better and cleaner hunt.

Falconry is in our souls and deep in our hearts. It is like a ship sailing in the ocean, and you, my dear friends, are those without whom we would not go on. You are the captains and it is up to you to secure the success of this ancient and unique "ship". Courage!!!

Thank you for your attention.

Pavel Yakimov
President of BACBP
(Bulgarian Association for Conservation of Birds of Prey)
The Falconer's Association



Bern Convention

Christian de Coune

24th meeting of the STANDING COMMITTEE

29th November - 3rd December 2004
Strasbourg

This year is the 25th anniversary of the Bern Convention. Receptions were organised by the Council of Europe, by the Municipality of Strasbourg and by the Embassy of Switzerland. They were good opportunities for having informal conversations with delegates of the member-countries and with observer-NGOs. Such conversations are one of the assets of such conferences.

The Wolf in Switzerland

Switzerland proposes to down-list the wolf from strictly protected species to protected species (appendix III). There are a few wolves now in Switzerland and the public opinion is quite divided on the protection to be given to that species in view of the damages it causes to domestic animals. The possibility exists on basis of article 9 to derogate from the protection measures in order to avoid damages. Switzerland doesn't want to adopt a policy of granting systematically derogations to prevent damages to livestock, they want to be able to apply to the Wolf a policy of sustainable management, which is only possible if the species is on appendix III. Switzerland considers that derogations may be applied only on a temporary basis and they would rather withdraw from the Convention if they had to apply long term derogations.

Yves Lecocq for FACE recalled that the Standing Committee adopted in 1993 a resolution interpreting article 9 by saying that derogations " *may not necessarily be temporary, in other words they may be granted permanently...* ".

That statement is very important for falconry in view of the fact that we need to be " permanently " allowed to keep protected species in captivity.

The Wolf will remain a strictly protected species and Switzerland remains a party to the Convention.

Biennial Reports

The member-States must report every two years about the derogations they have granted.

It deserves to be recalled that the model form the Parties must follow for their biennial reports lists the five reasons for derogating provided by article 9, but the model forms adds a 6th reason that article 9 doesn't mention : " falconry ". This addition confirms that falconry is a legitimate reasons for derogating. The Convention applies only to wild specimens, in other words the derogations cover birds originating from the wild.

For the EU countries, the derogations concerning birds are reported by the EU Commission. The EU report was not submitted to the Standing Committee this time. France nonetheless reported on the goshawks and sparrowhawks that falconry have been allowed to take from the wild. Ireland reported on Peregrine falcons and Sparrowhawk that were taken from the wild. Poland reported too.

It is interesting to note that no Contracting Parties made any comment on the fact that derogations have been granted to

take birds from the wild for falconry neither did the Secretariat say anything.

It is tempting to conclude that they do not object.

Invasive alien species

The European Strategy on Invasive Alien Species has been introduced before IUCN's World Conference in Bangkok. EU will see how the Strategy could be implemented in the Union.

Very few countries have a legislation. A code of conduct would be desirable to avoid accidental introductions. Examples were quoted : Grey squirrels, white tailed duck, American mink.

Single Species Action Plan

It has been decided to devote a SSAP to the Saker Falcon. Logically, the action plan will focus only to the European population of sakers. The work will be conducted by BirdLife International. I expressed privately my surprise about the fact that a population of birds whose conservation status is good will be the subject of such an important work. The delegate of BirdLife told me that the species is considered as " globally threatened " and that this justifies such a study even if the species is not threatened in Europe. She challenged that the European population of the species has a favourable conservation status and recommended me to read the book BirdLife is about to release on the conservation status of birds in Europe. According to that book, the situation of the saker would not be so good. The conservation status would be good in the EU countries, but would be declining by 20-40% in other countries. It is declining in Russia because of nest robbing.

I said that falconers are demanding to be involved in the study leading to the action plan. I stressed the fact that there are too often misunderstandings about falconry due to an insufficient knowledge of it ; therefor involving falconers would be useful for that work in view of their expertise.

A workshop will be organised mid-February in Hungary, which will be the starting point of the study. It is agreed to invite us to it. I have been advised to get in touch with the responsible of the project at the BirdLife office in Wageningen (Netherlands) concerning our participation and about the composition of the working group and about data that they already have. BirdLife calls for financial support. Hungary calls too, because the ministry has given his principal agreement but not financial. The Government of Slovakia has offered a financial contribution.

Such an action plan is a very important document that, according to the Bern Convention Secretariat, " is serving to guide action on the ground and is helping many governments taking the sometimes hard decisions needed ".

Situation of the Saker : I spoke with the delegate of African Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement, who is Bulgarian citizen ; he said that sakers are systematically taken from the nests by falconers and that falconry is a big problem in Bulgaria.

Strasbourg Declaration

On the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the Bern Convention a Declaration has been adopted on " the role of the Bern Convention in the preservation of biodiversity ".

During the discussions about the drafting of the text, Germany asked the words " and sustainable use " to be added at four places after the word " conservation ".



Other topics.

Resolutions have been adopted concerning the mitigation of the impact on birds of wind farms and powerlines.

Iberian Lynx conservation, its situation is very critical due to the decline of the rabbits. Captive breeding programme is operative.

Emerald Network is a network of protected sites throughout Europe, a very ambitious project that is progressing well.

Specific Sites and Populations, this is as usual the most important part of the agenda. It is the implementation of the Convention on the field, i.e. European wildlife and natural habitats. Amongst others : Green Turtle in Turkey, construction of a mororway through protected areas in Bulgaria, the construction of a channel in the Danube Delta in Ukraine, hydro-electrical power plant in Iceland, etc...

Corridor conversations.

I spoke with several people outside the conference room. This makes the attendance to this meeting a useful opportunity for addressing falconry and introducing the IAF. I distributed IAF's Newsletter. It is definitely a useful piece of P.R.

Ukraine: there is no objection to falconry, but there is a lack of contacts between the falconers and the authorities.

Turkey: they will send me information about falconry in Turkey, they know somebody who is involved in falconry.

Azerbaijan: not sure if falconry is being practised in AZ. Asks how to adhere to the IAF in case there would be falconers there; will let me know if there is a falconers' association. Says that Arabs go to AZ for hunting (this sounds more like extrapolated hearsays). I gave IAF's Newsletter.

Austria: there would be some cheating by eagle breeders. I said it is easy to check with DNA. About falcons, I said that it is much easier to acquire a legal bird than an illegal one and that breeders would be crazy to cheat, which I believe they don't do. I said I am happy that Austria allows goshawks to be taken from the wild and that this is a good application of article 9.

Macedonia: there is a falconry tradition, but is no longer active. Given Newsletter.

Iceland: there has been no falcon robberies for more than 10 years. He quoted Operation Falcon in the USA in the 80's. I said that the whole operation was to say the least very unfair to falconers.

Tunesia: I softly complained that there is practically no contact between Tunesian falconers and IAF and advocated for more active exchanges.

Morocco: I said that I was happy that Morocco had become a member of the IAF.

European Union: I complained with the delegate of the EU that member-states adopt too easily more restrictive measures than for instance the Bird Directive. The text of the Directive is the result of long discussions and negotiations, it is a compromise. I find it unfair to reject some provisions of a text that has been agreed after multilateral concessions. More restrictive measures should be considered as a sort of derogation or reservations, which should be applied "if there is no other satisfactory solution" like it is the case for derogations. Practically all the Member-states apply more restrictive measures, which I consider unfair.

FACE and BirdLife International sign Agreement on sustainable hunting

PRESS RELEASE Immediate release

Brussels, 12th October 2004. FACE and BirdLife International sign an Agreement with Environment Commissioner Margot WALLSTROM as part of the European Commission's Sustainable Hunting Initiative. The signing took place in the presence of key conservation and land use personalities including the Head of Cabinets for the Commissioners of Environment and Agriculture as well as representatives of IUCN, COPA, the European Landowners' Organisation.

The Agreement is the conclusion of a three-way dialogue during the past three years aimed at producing a pragmatic interpretation and application of the 1979 Birds Directive.

A key principle of the Agreement is that BirdLife International and FACE recognise the value of the Directive for maintaining wild birds (including huntable species) and their habitats in a favourable conservation status at the EU level - with application of the Directive being based on the Commission's recently published Interpretative Guide.

The organisations also agreed to work together to promote strategic conservation priorities, such as halting the loss of biodiversity by 2010, the protection of important sites for birds and appropriate reform of the CAP.

The Agreement also strengthens hunting within the NATURA 2000 network and sets out an acceptable timetable for eliminating lead shot use in wetlands.

At the signing ceremony, FACE President, Gilbert de TURCKHEIM, stated that FACE believes that priority must be given to making the Directive work along the lines of the Interpretative Guide. He recommended strongly that the Guide shall not remain a simple reference document but the Commission must give it a more solid legal foundation. He added that neither organisation has the intention of taking initiatives to amend the Directive text, but in the longer term the organisations do not rule out the possibility of a consolidation of the legal instruments for wildlife conservation.

President de TURCKHEIM concluded that every Agreement is the fruit of compromise, but the advantages for hunting are more important than the disadvantages. The signing of this Agreement is a powerful symbol of the collaboration between hunters and bird protectionists at the European level.

**Contact:**

FACE - Federation of Associations for Hunting and Conservation of the E.U.

Sarah MARTELEUR, communication@face-europe.org
Visit also our NEWSROOM section on the FACE website (www.face-europe.org) to find other press releases and information for the media.

Accord entre BirdLife International et la FACE sur la Directive 79/409/CEE**En cas de doutes sur l'interprétation, la version anglaise fait foi.**

Dans le cadre de l'Initiative pour une Chasse Durable (ICD) de la Commission européenne, et à la suite d'un certain nombre de rencontres, la FACE (Fédération des Associations de Chasse et Conservation de la Faune sauvage de l'UE) et BirdLife International ont conclu l'Accord suivant :

1) Les deux organisations reconnaissent que la Directive Oiseaux est un instrument juridique approprié pour la conservation à un état favorable au niveau de l'UE, à la fois d'oiseaux sauvages (y compris les espèces chassables énumérées à l'Annexe II de la Directive Oiseaux) et de leurs habitats. Les deux organisations conviennent que la priorité est de faire fonctionner la Directive suivant les indications du Guide interprétatif (Guidance Document on Hunting under Council Directive 79/409/EEC on the Conservation of Wild Birds).

2) Dans le respect du Point 1, aucune des organisations n'a l'intention de prendre ou de soutenir des initiatives visant à amender le texte de la Directive Oiseaux. À plus long terme, les deux organisations n'excluent pas la possibilité d'une mise en conformité des textes communautaires existants pour la conservation de la vie sauvage, en respectant leurs principes fondamentaux, sans affaiblir les dispositions actuelles de la Directive Oiseaux.

3) Les deux organisations reconnaissent la valeur historique et actuelle des compromis scellés dans la Directive Oiseaux en ce qui concerne la chasse, et reconnaissent que ces compromis constituent la base pour promouvoir ensemble des priorités de conservation stratégiques, telles que travailler ensemble vers l'objectif d'arrêter la perte de biodiversité d'ici 2010, la protection des sites et la réforme de la PAC.

4) Les deux organisations soutiennent la mise en place du Réseau NATURA 2000 et reconnaissent l'importance d'une protection efficace et d'une gestion active des habitats pour la conservation de la biodiversité. Les deux organisations soulignent qu'en principe la désignation de sites NATURA 2000 n'est pas incompatible avec la chasse. Elles reconnaissent qu'une chasse bien gérée à l'intérieur des sites NATURA 2000, peut se poursuivre ou prendre place tant qu'elle est compatible avec les objectifs de conservation du site. Dans cette optique, elles font référence au chapitre pertinent 1.5 " Conservation of Habitats " du Guide interprétatif.

5) Les deux organisations s'accordent sur le fait qu'il est souhaitable d'atteindre des accords locaux, régionaux ou nationaux sur des pratiques de chasse aux oiseaux, afin d'établir un dialogue constructif entre acteurs locaux et de réaliser une évaluation rationnelle des risques et des mesures à prendre. Les Partenaires ou Membres nationaux des deux organisations sont libres de viser des objectifs plus ambitieux pour la biodiversité, la chasse durable et la conservation des oiseaux.
6) Les deux organisations sont d'avis qu'une évaluation rationnelle des risques et des mesures à prendre, y compris celles à adopter par la législation ou d'autres règles sur la chasse, doit

être basée sur les données les plus à jour et les plus fiables, tout particulièrement sur le niveau des populations d'oiseaux et sur l'activité cynégétique. La récolte des statistiques de tableaux ainsi que leur interprétation scientifique et leur usage adéquat, est nécessaire.

7) Les deux organisations lancent un appel à la Commission et aux États membres pour élaborer, adopter et mettre en vigueur, des Plans de Gestion pour des espèces de l'Annexe II considérées comme étant dans un état de conservation défavorable.

8) Les deux organisations lancent un appel aux autorités compétentes pour qu'elles prennent les initiatives appropriées afin d'assurer le respect de toute la réglementation sur la conservation des oiseaux, notamment par une application correcte, mais également par des initiatives d'éducation et de sensibilisation. Elles offrent leur assistance à cette fin.

9) Les deux organisations demandent l'élimination de la grenaille de plomb pour la chasse dans les zones humides partout dans l'UE dès que possible, mais de toute façon pour l'année 2009 au plus tard. Elles soulignent aussi les risques résultant du l,cher dans la nature d'espèces et de sous-espèces d'oiseaux non-indigènes.

10) Il a également été convenu par les deux organisations de développer un dialogue régulier pour la recherche de consensus bilatéral et à cette fin de se rencontrer au moins deux fois par an, ainsi que chaque fois qu'une telle rencontre est considérée comme utile ou nécessaire pour traiter d'un thème spécifique. Elles vont en outre échanger de l'information, des publications, etc. et promouvoir cet accord auprès de leurs Partenaires et Membres nationaux et collaborer avec d'autres organisations et structures (telles que Wetlands International, UICN, CIC, ELO, etc.).

FACE
BirdLife International

Guidance document on hunting under Council Directive 79/409

The EU Commission has issued an interesting document: "Guidance document on hunting under Council Directive 79/409"

You can download that 90 page document from the website of the EU Commission under following address:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/nature/nature_conservation/focus_wild_birds/sustainable_hunting/pdf/hunting_en.pdf

I recommend you to read especially following paragraphs: 1.7.4, 3.5.21, 3.5.24, 3.5.25, 3.5.29, 3.5.30, because they deal with falconry. They constitute useful arguments in favour of falconry in the context of the Bird Directive.



As you will see, one may say that "Brussels likes falconry". The restrictions imposed to falconry in some member-States are not dictated by the Directive but are "stricter measures" introduced by the Member-States themselves on their own initiative.

Paragraph 3.5.21 and footnote 100 were inspired by the reaction of the IAF and some national clubs in the 70's. I recommend you to be very careful about the possibility of harvesting wild birds of prey for falconry, I advise you to consult IAF if the case arises.

Read the whole document, it is very interesting. Please keep in mind that this document is not an interpretation of the Bird Directive, but only a guidance document; only the Court of Justice of the European Communities may interpret the Directive, it is not at all bound by the Guidance Document.

Christian de Coune

Meeting called by IUCN's Sustainable Use Group (SUSG) on wild bird trade

The meeting in Cambridge on 4 March 2005 concerned a petition that has been organised by the World Parrot Trust and signed by more than 100 other NGOs, seeking a ban on import of wild birds into the European Union. The meeting was based on 4 talks, starting with a presentation by Tim Inskipp on behalf of CITES, reviewing changes over the last 30 years in the levels of trade for various bird species, especially parrots. Steve Broad from TRAFFIC then gave a report on "Trade measures and sustainability: the state of play for wild birds," with some overlap, but with more stress on the socio-economic importance of trade for motivating conservation in the source areas. Data on raptors showed that although trade in many species was now mainly from managed sources (breeding) rather than from the wild, accipiters are still mainly wild-sourced.

Jamie Gilardi of World Parrot Trust (WPT) then gave the case for a ban under the heading "Overexploitation, disease and cruelty: time for the wild bird trade to end?" His main point rested on 4 cases which he said represented cruel and unsustainable use, and on the ban on import of wild birds that the USA imposed 10 years ago. Three of his 4 cases were effectively dismissed during subsequent discussion, namely that the African grey parrot was threatened but unstudied (IUCN rates the species as of no concern), that 3 parrot species in trade from Nicaragua all are declining (the EU does not accept imports from Nicaragua but they are smuggled overland to USA) and that trade in Blue-fronted Amazon from Argentina has caused population decline (see below). No information was available on his claim that trade in parrots from Iquitos in Peru was unsustainable because it involved destroying nest sites. He also claimed that no birds could be taken from the wild within the USA.

The fourth talk was by Robin Sharp, of SUSG on "What is wrong with blanket bans? Conservation, incentives and livelihoods in global context." This talk gave several conservation arguments in favour of trade, noted the strong support for sustainable use in the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD mentions sustainable use in 13 of 19 substantive articles but protection only twice) and pointed out inconsistencies in the WPT case. He mentioned a just-published study of the Argentinian Blue-fronted Amazon that showed how licensed exports were now sustainable and gradually being increased to motivate habitat conservation.

Statements were then given by Birdlife, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and Joint Nature Conservation Committee (the CITES authority in the UK). The JNCC statement was very informative. The main point was that the EU now has effective controls that actually encourage conservation in source countries. Each country operates CITES independently based on pooled knowledge. If one country doubts the "no detriment" claim of a source country and refuses an import licence, the refusal triggers international peer review by other EU authorities. If that refusal is upheld, there is discussion with the source country, including provision of training for wildlife officers. Thus, he said, the international trade benefits conservation management in the source countries, which typically have a much larger internal trade in wild birds than their exports.

The second lesson from the JNCC statement was that sustainable use of wild resources not only encourages local people to conserve wildlife, but also encourages government departments to support such use, because it provides livelihoods. It behoves falconers to make very good friends of their licensing authorities. Especially when falconers pay for licences, the employment they provide in government is a motivation to support falconry.

Robert Kenward (IUCN WG chair)
10.3.05





CIC interview - José Manuel Rodríguez- Villa



1. At the 51st CIC General Assembly, CIC and the International Association for Falconry (IAF) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding to increase their collaboration. What is the added expertise and experience IAF will bring into this partnership?

Yes, after a constructive preparatory period, CIC and IAF (International Association for Falconry and Conservation of Birds of Prey) recently signed a MoU to better serve the common interests of both organizations. The main purpose of such agreement is to work more efficiently to safeguard falconry as a traditional, sustainable way of hunting and to promote the conservation of raptors. CIC and IAF common visions and concerns on the outstanding issues make this agreement a natural alliance of the two leading organizations representing hunters and falconers at international fora from a conservationist perspective.

The IAF was founded in 1968 as a Federation of Falconry Associations by some relevant European falconers. Now we join more than 50 Member Organizations from more than 40 countries in all continents as the only body representing exclusively falconry in the international arena. Within this frame, a closer working relationship between CIC, and in particular its Falconry Commission, and IAF will mean more efficiency, better coordination and, hopefully, improved results in our endeavours. To that aim, the IAF will contribute with its expertise and contacts in dealing with issues concerning the specific nature of Falconry at the international institutions (EU, CITES, Council of Europe, Bern Convention etc...) and with its knowledge about the Falconry status and concerns all over the world through its own network. Of course, the relationship will be also supported on CIC's experience and outstanding record, relevant presence in many areas and key links with Governments and NGOs.

2. CIC's Commission on Falconry and Birds of Prey Conservation has a long track record of promoting falconry as one of the oldest forms of hunting and intrinsic value to many cultures around the world. Furthermore, the Commission supports suitable measures for the conservation of the birds of prey and their habitat. It also assists in the resettlement of regionally extinct species of birds of prey and with supporting of remaining populations of threatened species. Having this in mind: what are the new perspectives and objectives resulting out of the collaboration with IAF?

We'll develop an action plan in which it will be considered our eventual joint participation or support to new concrete projects whether they are about conservation or to stress the importance of falconry as humankind's heritage, apart from our regular representation work at the international fora.

Falconers are a highly developed group of hunters with specific skills and long background in raptor conservation. Our hunting activity (hawking) presents one of the lowest impact ratios among the activities using natural resources. Falconry has proved to be sustainable for centuries. It is the only hunting national tradition of some countries, particularly in the Middle East. The uniqueness and beauty of falconry as hunting method is positively perceived by public opinion in many countries. At the same time, we are aware, as falconry representing body, of the key importance of enjoying a strong alliance with rest of hunters of whom we are a tiny part. We are particularly pleased to join efforts with a reputable organization as the CIC, seriously concerned about conservation and targeting sustainable use issues as one of its main purposes.

In that sense this new CIC/IAF connection is expected to enhance all these aspects and be of mutual and common benefit both for hunters in general and falconers. We are more than happy to work aiming that target.

3. Turning to practical conservation work: in ten weeks from now the 13 Convention of the Parties to CITES will take place in Bangkok. The conservation status of the Saker falcon will be a hot topic on the agenda. Some weeks ago, CITES held a consultative Meeting with range states and NGO's in the United Arab Emirates. The Meeting produced the so-called Abu Dhabi Declaration that calls for "enhanced cooperation at all levels of research and to carry out coordinated efforts by national and international organizations to study the population biology and conservation problems." In what way can CIC and IAF contribute to improve the conservation status of the Saker?

Certainly, this is not an easy subject as some may wrongly think. Saker falcon conservation involves a huge geographical area including countries with poor law enforcement systems and critical social problems particularly in extensive rural areas. Together with smuggling and poaching linked with Arab falconry, there are other very substantial factors to the issue prevailing in some parts of saker range like change of traditional uses of land, massive poisoning by rodenticides among others.

Arab falconry has sustainably used wild saker falcons for centuries. Arab falconers are genuinely worried about the recent saker decline and some very positive initiatives are taking place. Within them, Abu Dhabi's Agency ERWDA (umbrella organization of our member the Emirates Falconers Club)



long record in conservation works aimed to keep Arab falconry within sustainability needs to be underlined. ERWDA's research and conservation work on saker falcon and its traditional prey in falconry, the houbara bustard, is widely known and involves intensive research in most of the range, captive breeding and release projects.

On September 2003, ERWDA co-organized a Saker Falcon Symposium in Abu Dhabi to specifically address the concern. Main saker field researchers throughout its range were present and reported to attendants including Gulf countries State Agencies, CITES Secretariat etc.. about the saker decline and its causes. IAF issued a presentation on falconry organization. CIC was present as observer through its President Dieter Schramm. In the Symposium, ERWDA explained the implementation of a falcon marking, registration and passport system successfully implemented in the UAE to prevent illegal traffic of birds. Similar schemes are being considered in Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait and other countries of the area. In same line as the Saker Symposium, last May a CITES consultative Conference on Falcon International Trade took place in Abu Dhabi hosted by ERWDA. Representatives from all concerned countries (saker range, captive breeders/exporters and final users) and NGOs, including IAF, attended. After thorough presentations and discussions some common understanding of the situation was achieved.

Within that frame, we think that the role of organizations like IAF and CIC in the conservation of saker falcon is in promoting and supporting the positive initiatives of "on the ground" concerned falconers. To that respect the foundation of falconry clubs in the ME area and their integration in the international falconers/hunters network is of key relevance. Such structure brings two directions flow of information and education, better control, follow up, assesment of the activities plus international coordination/support to sound initiatives aiming Arab falconry soon back in the sustainability.

All in all, as long as the work to put in place few right measures continues (quota systems placed according to real status of saker in certain areas benefiting rural people of range countries, falcon passport implementation, mixed use of captive bred birds, etc...), we think that the future prospect of the saker falcon populations' status is optimistic due to its huge range, productivity and adaptability. That would mean no need for the implementation of stricter general measures that would compromise the traditional use of wild falcons by Arab falconers and that would fuel illegal activities and falcons' black market.



Status of Falconry in Spain

To talk about the situation of falconry in Spain is a little complex. Spain is a decentralised state, with a central administration or government descending from Madrid and 17 autonomous communities or regions. Competencies on nature conservation and on the majority of use of natural resources are the responsibility of the autonomous regions, existing therefore 17 different policies, which, in the majority of cases, do not have anything to do one with the other and that, sometimes, are even contradictory.

Falconry, of course, and its regulation, is in part an exclusive competence of the autonomous communities. However, there are a number of existing conflicts between the central administration and the regional administrations of the autonomous communities, which have not yet been resolved.

From AECCA, we take the following stand:

The autonomous communities are competent to regulate the practice of falconry in all its aspects, or to restrict it without attending to national legislation (as the central government lacks all competencies to this regard). These communities have the power to designate hunting periods, hunting practices and their development, prey that can be hunted, species of birds of prey that can be used for the practice of falconry etc. They do not, however, have the competence to regulate the breeding of birds of prey in captivity or the keeping of birds of prey that have not come from the wild (in other words, those raptors which have been captive bred). The competence is exclusive to the Central Government, through the Ministry of Commerce, in charge of implementing in Spain the European guidelines on the CITES convention. On this last point, we are encountering difficulties with some autonomous communities who do not seem to respect this; in addition to regulating the practice of falconry (according to their competencies) they try to restrict the breeding of captive birds of prey and even the keeping of these, clearly exceeding themselves with regards to their competencies. This is the case in Castilla and Leon, which has recently published a regulation to this regard, having been forced into its appeal before courts, a process that has been recently initiated and which will take its time to be resolved. However, its solution could resolve this conflict of competencies, reason for which AECCA considers it as one of its immediate top priorities, therefore investing a lot of time and effort.

As it has been previously mentioned, the exclusive competencies on regulation of falconry in Spain are clearly for the autonomous communities. In this way, there are some communities in which falconry is permitted and encouraged, allowing even access to wild birds of prey for the practice of falconry and for breeding purposes. Other communities regulate the practice and restrict some of its aspects, while others do not even provide for it in its legislation and in some even, it is still a forbidden practice. There are also some communities that have even attempted, again exceeding their competencies, to prohibit breeding in captivity with birds of prey.

The trend during the last few years is to consider falconry as a sustainable hunting practice that has no impact on prey populations and birds of prey themselves; this being increasingly reflected in the new autonomous legislations which are



starting to be a little more open minded to our approach and less credulous to the demagogic arguments of some anti-falconry groups. However, we have to remember that in Spain we are starting off from a situation of complete prohibition of falconry at a national level in 1989, and while this was declared as being anti-constitutional in 1995 (due to the fact that the state was exceeding its capacities attempting to regulate a field that was clearly of exclusive competence to the autonomous communities), it has left a sediment of restricted activities that were even persecuted which makes it a little hard for some of these autonomous communities to forget.

Nevertheless, the task of AECCA in Spain goes through a narrow collaboration with the numerous small falconry associations in a regional aspect, as it would be impossible for a non-professional organisation as ours to fight against the 17 different fronts to which we are sometimes forced into. Relationships with all regional associations are warm and fluid in this sense, save some exceptions. There do, however, exist some reserves on behalf of other entities at a national level, through which collaborations could be made more intense, specially with the Spanish Hunting Federation (Federación Española de Caza). Numerous attempts for collaboration made by AECCA in the last few years have found very vague responses within the Federation. On the other side, the interests of both organisations do not seem to coincide with their actions: while AECCA works towards the defence of the practice of falconry and its regulation before the communities, as well as legally defending its members and working towards an improvement of the falconry level in Spain through publications, the Federación Española de Caza encourages falconry through competitions and contests, almost always carried out on bagged quarry, this clearly being different from our view of falconry.

From the time of AECCA's founding in 2001 as a result of the merging of the old AEC and UEDECA, the only two falconry associations at a national level in Spain, the number of members, and therefore the support of Spanish falconers to this important project, have not stopped growing. Currently we are approximately 400 members and this number makes us consider the number of 500 members as quite likely in an immediate future. For the rest of associations in Spain, almost 60, their membership numbers do not appear to exceed 50 members. These small associations work mostly as hunting clubs in practice. Without doubt, we are the most representative organisation of the falconry community in Spain that has ever existed. We possess a team of qualified personnel in various fields (lawyers, biologists, veterinary surgeons...) which allows us to confront the challenge of improving the falconry situation in Spain through our Executive Board and through workgroups for specific matters.

Lastly, one of the main aims of AECCA is to incorporate the human capital of falconry into the conservation of birds of prey in our country. Save for singular cases, we do not focus or concentrate our efforts towards species of interest in falconry, as their situation is far from requiring important conservational efforts: Spain has one of the bests populations of peregrine falcons in the world, amounting to approximately 3000 breeding pairs, according to a recent independent publication in 2002. Recently (2003), populations for goshawks and sparrow-hawks have been calculated to be around 3500-6500 breeding pairs for goshawks and between 8000-1000 bp for sparrow-hawks. For this, our efforts are directed towards using imprinting techniques and artificial insemination in order to carry out and improve the repro-

duction in captivity of the two species that require it most in Spain: Spanish Imperial Eagle (*Aquila adalberti*) and Bonelli's Eagle (*Hieraetus fasciatus*). Contacts have been initiated some time ago with competent administrations. However, the exchanges in interests regarding the conservation of these species are creating difficulties for obtaining results from these projects, supported by the largest group of world experts brought together by AECCA, support that for the most part, Spanish administrations that have been consulted upon it, do not seem to know how to value. For this, we are reconsidering a new approach in order to try and move these projects forward from their forced immobilised position.

Ramón Balbás
AECCA Vicepresident





IAF/CIC UNESCO Working Group

A New Working Group has been set up including members of IAF, CIC, the Archives of Falconry in the US and the newly formed Falconry Heritage Trust. We will be working towards an eventual presentation to UNESCO for declaring falconry a global intangible heritage. For the purposes of the working group the falconry world has been divided into regions whose falconers share a common history. In some cases a single country, in others several, depending on the amount of material we can logically expect. Each region has been given a coordinator who will assemble the contribution for his/her area. In some cases these are IAF National Delegates, in others well known academics and falconry scholars. Many of us are founder members of the Falconry Heritage Trust.

Coordinators will use a table (see below) to gather the information necessary for the final presentation to UNESCO. Each coordinator will also receive a list of contacts to help in information gathering, who may know other useful contacts or who already have written material to offer, for example an article from their club magazine. Coordinators may choose to delegate responsibilities to specialists in specific areas, for example a national bibliography could be the responsibility of a falconer who sells antiquarian books, the list of national clubs and organisations could be done by the IAF Delegate etc. The contributors from each country may prefer to present their information as an essay or an already published article. This is fine, but in that case as much of the information requested in the table below as possible should be added in appendix form. If you are having difficulty with any specific item please request help from the secretary Gary Timbrell, PRO for IAF and now Secretary for the FHT, will assemble all the material supplied by the working group's regional coordinators and will advise and help wherever necessary.

Language: obviously historical material will be in the original languages. It is important for us to show the global diversity of falconry so diverse languages are important, but the final presentation to UNESCO will be in English so brief titles or explanations in English for items/articles may be needed, for example photographs of artefacts or traditional costumes etc can be accompanied by a title in their own language and one in English. Where translations of longer articles or documents are needed we will, where possible arrange for them to be done within the Working Group, *which contains members fluent in at least ten world languages*. It is better for us to have information in the original language than not at all.

Copyright and intellectual property rights: material such as films, photos and written works (articles etc.) may need a signed legal agreement with the owner for us to use it.

Duplication of Material: some duplication of material is inevitable, especially historical references, for example most Asian and European countries will refer to Genghis Khan. This will not be a problem as duplications can be sorted out before the final presentation document is prepared. This exercise is principally one of amassing information, as much as possible in a short a time as possible,

Size of National Contributions: obviously this will vary a lot and will depend on the country's falconry history and the

number of falconers it supports at the moment. All information is important, a short history of falconry, but a strong contribution to raptor research and conservation will be as important in the final analysis as 1000 years of sport. We have identified 65 nations where falconry exists; even just two pages from each one of them would make a document 130 pages long.

National Contribution Table: this table is to offer guidelines to co-ordinators, it is not definitive, and many people may prefer to work in their own manner. It will, however, simplify the collection of the shorter pieces of crucial information (Questions 1-6 in blue).

Costing: it is hoped that the national falconry clubs will arrange any funding necessary themselves, but it is expected most of the most basic information can be collected at no cost. Specific funding may be needed, for example, if a falconry nation has no other source of funding, but has enjoyed a long and rich cultural tradition which will provide many photographs, need a lot of translation or will contribute hugely to the project, as in some countries where information is not currently readily available through literature, national delegates or personal contacts (Iran, India, Korea, Central Asia etc). Exceptional funding may be available for research provided it can be shown such countries are of crucial importance to the project and such trips are unavoidable to gather the information

Timelines: The final deadline for the collection of material is likely to be one year from now, but much will depend on decisions taken in the next six months. A Conference entitled "Falconry - a World heritage" is hoped for in September and will be the main forum for discussions and pulling things together towards the UNESCO submission

HOW YOU CAN HELP: all information is welcome, if you have discovered something in a museum, on a website or in a private collection, whether it is an artefact, a document, an article or a story in an oral tradition please let us know. For small bits of information you can email me, Gary Timbrell, directly, but if you have a greater knowledge or would like to contribute at a more involved level please come forward and we can put you in touch with the person charged with co-ordinating information collection in your geographical area or in your field of expertise.

This is a very exiting project.

Gary Timbrell

Public Relations Officer

for International Association for Falconry

and Conservation of Birds of Prey

Secretary of this Working Group

Kilnagnady, Upton, Co.Cork, Ireland.

Tel: 00 353 21 7330298 or 00 87 6650619

Email: gary1timbrell@eircom.net

or iaf.informationbureau@dublin.com

Each National Contribution will require:

- A list of Falconry Clubs and Non Government Organisations involved now.
- A list of Museums, art galleries etc containing artefacts or representations of falconry
- Details of prominent falconers in modern times (1900-2005) - falconers who are famous in falconry circles.
- A national bibliography - list of books on falconry in your country's own language or specifically related to your country.
- Falconry as it is practised now (different species used, types of flight, quarry flown etc).
- Falconry's contribution to conservation, captive breeding, veterinary care and rehabilitation.



- A timeline of the history of falconry in your country.
- Details of falconry in each historical period for example Middle Ages, Renaissance etc.
- Details of prominent falconers over the years - falconers who are famous as historical figures, kings etc. who were also falconers.
- Scanned manuscripts and early works.
- Cultural activities: national falconry costumes, customs and meetings particularly where they differ from other falconry traditions.
- Poetry and literature culturally related to falconry.
- High-resolution images of artwork and artefacts used in the country.
- Any film footage.
- A planned programme for protecting falconry in the future as part of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.



LETTERS

Dear raptor enthusiasts,

I am interested in the mechanics of copulation in birds, especially accipiters. Why am I interested in copulation in accipiters?

In the late 1990's I hypothesized that mounting behavior during copulation in birds show a left-sided bias. This is because most female birds have only a left ovary and associated oviduct with the entry to the oviduct located on the left side of the urodeum of the cloaca. This anatomical arrangement may favor males that mount from the left if it results in sperm being placed closer to the oviduct. Interestingly, in birds where the male has a phallus, ratites and anseriformes, the phallus either bends or spirals to the left, respectively. I tested this idea by observing copulation behavior in two passerines. In 2001, my students and I reported that approx. 75% of cloacal contacts during copulation in Tree Swallows occur from the left (Petersen et al. 2001, Left-sided directional bias of cloacal contacts during Tree Swallows copulations. *Animal Behaviour* 62:739-741). In 2003, we reported the same pattern in House Sparrows (Nyland et al. 2003. Left-sided directional bias of cloacal contacts during House Sparrow copulations, *Wilson Bulletin* 115:470-473). The frequency of left-sided contacts in House Sparrows was nearly the same as in Tree Swallows. I suspect that a left-sided directional bias may be a general pattern in birds. Indeed, nearly all of the copulations shown in D. Attenborough's "Life of Birds" show male mounting females from the left.

I am searching for information on copulation in accipiters because accipiters provide a test for my idea. I learned somewhere along the line that female accipiters are more likely to have a bilateral reproductive tract with two ovaries and oviducts. If this is truly the case, then I predict that there is no directional bias in cloacal contacts in accipiters because there may be no reproductive advantage to mating from the left.

To test my hypothesis, I am looking for detailed behavioral observations of copulation behavior in accipiters, especially the direction of mounting behavior. Any information would be greatly appreciated.

Information, which will be fully acknowledged in any publications, may be sent to me by email at lombardm@gvsu.edu, or my mail to: Dr. Michael P. Lombardo, Department of Biology, Grand Valley State University, Allendale, MI 49401-9403, USA.

Thanks in advance for any information and leads to information.

mplombardo@yahoo.com

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