

No 10

# THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF **FALCONRY**

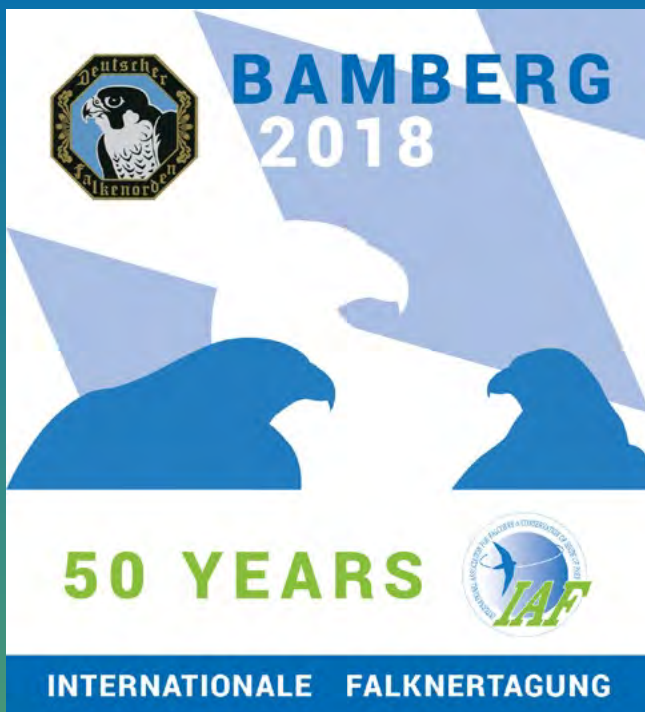
INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR FALCONRY AND CONSERVATION OF BIRDS OF PREY  
MEMBER OF IUCN



2018







The Deutscher Falkenorden (DFO) is pleased to invite the International Association for Falconry and Conservation of Birds of Prey (IAF) to their

## International Field Meet 2018,

to hold their annual general meeting and celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the IAF.

The event will take place in  
**Bamberg, Germany,**  
at the  
**Welcome Kongresshotel  
Bamberg**

(Mußstraße 7, D-96047 Bamberg:  
Telephone +49 951 7000-0)

from  
**21<sup>st</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> October 2018.**

Following this, the DFO's  
International Field Meet  
will commence,

running from  
**Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> October  
until 28<sup>th</sup> October 2018.**



Registration and all information is available on the website  
in English <http://ot-iaf-2018-en.d-f-o.de/>  
and in German <http://ot-iaf-2018.d-f-o.de/>.

If you have any questions you can contact us through the website  
or by email [ot-iaf-2018.dfo@web.de](mailto:ot-iaf-2018.dfo@web.de).

We are looking forward to welcoming many international guests in Germany  
and wish you a safe journey.

Elisabeth Leix  
Meet organiser

# Editorial



## A bit of personal history . . . .

In the eighties of the previous century, I was transferred from Taipei in Taiwan to Casablanca in Morocco. I had had some experiences with raptors in Taiwan where I had 'saved' a goshawk from a miserable death when I bought it at a local chicken market in one of Taipei's suburbs. This was a big bird, a migrant from Siberia, with a powerful grip that was felt right through the glove. We flew it with very little success on the beach and in the wet rice fields around Taipei. My first 'falconry' instruction book ever bought was a soft back: T H White's *The Goshawk*, the only title available in the bookstore in Taipei dealing with falconry and containing at least some information about manning and making equipment. I still have it, worn out and dirty with handwritten remarks in the margin. How little did I know about our art . . . .

In Casablanca we entered the world of French culinary traditions where, on weekend days, the first trip was to the local food market to buy fresh bread, cheese, and meat. The Marché Central, the central market in the old city, offered a range of live birds: chickens, pigeons, quail, pheasant, guinea fowl and many more. There I discovered, in a cage of pigeons, in a corner, a small, very light falcon. This later proved to be an alphanet lanneret (*Falco biarmicus erlangeri*) and I was allowed to take him home for a few dirhams. The lanneret had been left behind and was mortally ill – despite lengthy phone calls with a friendly vet in the Netherlands, we were unable to save it. However, I heard from our Moroccan friend, Zakariah, that a group of farmer-falconers could be found an hour's drive from Casablanca. We made the trip the following weekend; one which led to long-lasting friendships

and familiarity with traditional Moroccan falconry. From then on my interest in, and love for, the art was established forever.

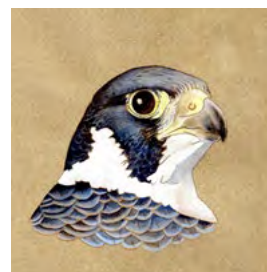
## Editorial Committee of the Journal

Regretfully, Susan Cecchini has decided to leave the committee. We are grateful for her contributions and hard work and wish her well. We certainly hope to stay in touch.

It gives me pleasure to announce that David Horobin, well known from his involvement with a range of falconry books, was willing to join the team. Equally pleasant was the arrival of Julian Hyde, a good friend, to assist with editing. Like last year's edition, this one has been designed by Ewa Szelatynska from Warsaw.

## Falcon head

The painting of the falcon head is by the late Patrick Paillat. A few years ago we wrote together an article for the Journal about letters written by Adriaan Mollen, the iconic Dutch falconer of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, to one of his French falconry clients. He will be missed.



We hope that you will enjoy this 10<sup>th</sup> edition of the IAF's International Journal of Falconry.

*Dick ten Bosch*

Editor, International Journal of Falconry  
hwtenbosch@yandex.ru



Photo credit: filrom/iStockphoto

- 3** Editorial: *Dick ten Bosch*
- 6** A Word from the President: *Adrian Lombard*
- 14** Patrick Paillat. Obituary:  
*Catherine Tsagarakis-Ostrowski*
- 16** Roger Upton MBE. Obituary: *David Horobin*
- 20** More about Snipe Hawking in Ireland:  
*Don Ryan, Eric Witkowski, Xavier Morel*
- 29** The European Foundation for Falconry and  
Conservation (EFFC) – an Introduction:  
*José Manuel Rodríguez-Villa*
- 31** Royal Loo Remembrance Cup 1851: *Dick ten Bosch*
- 33** Hunting with Eagles in the USA:  
*Andrew Knowles-Brown*
- 39** Festival of Falconry, United Arab Emirates:  
December 2017: *Leo Baeten*
- 43** Full Circle with a Passage Prairie Falcon:  
*Dan McCarron*
- 48** The grey partridge (*Perdix perdix*) as an indicator  
species for agricultural open landscapes:  
*Michael Greshanke*
- 52** The identification of the Red-naped Shaheen  
*Falco peregrinus babylonicus*, its separation  
from *F. p. calidus* in the field, and its status and  
distribution in north-western India:  
*Nirav Bhatt & Prasad Ganpule*
- 64** The *Moamin*, an Arabic treatise on falconry  
translated for the Emperor Frederick II of  
Hohenstaufen in 1240: *Baudouin Van den Abeele*
- 70** A brief report on falconry in Brazil: *Alessandra Oliveto*
- 76** Love since childhood: *Vadim Gorbatov*
- 82** IAF AGM 2017 Kyrgyzstan





Cover picture  
*Goshawk with rabbit*  
painting by Andrew Ellis.

Photo on back page  
shows a mature female  
Shikra (*Accipiter*  
*badius*) and was taken  
by Nirav Bhatt near  
Surendranagar in Gujarat  
in India.



The photos of the silver object shown on pages 30 and 31 were made available by the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, without payment.

List of photographers of the 10<sup>th</sup> edition of the International Journal of Falconry which have not been given photo credit in this edition in relation to a specific picture:  
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Editor: Dick ten Bosch  
hwtenbosch@yandex.ru

Design: ScanSystem.pl Ewa Szelatyńska  
E-mail: scansystem@scansystem.pl

Correcting and Editing Support:  
David Horobin, Julian Hyde

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Gary Timbrell and international volunteer support team

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## A sudden death

On the steppes of Mongolia, electricity poles offer saker falcons ideal places to rest upon and commence hunting from. Unfortunately, these same poles continually kill thousands of falcons, year after year, by electrocution.

In today's world such power poles represent one of the greatest threats to wild falcons and eagles, and not only in Mongolia. Falconers are leading the fight to save sakers and other affected birds from a sudden, merciless, death by crackling electricity. This can be prevented by relatively simple modifications, though the scale of the problem is vast.



Please help by visiting  
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and by making a donation.



# A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT



*In* this year's contribution to the IAF Journal of Falconry, and in what will be my last "Word from the President", I thought it would be appropriate to reflect on the relevance of falconry and what the future of our Art may be. As falconers, how do we stand in relation to our Art and do we have responsibilities beyond caring for our hawk and flying it to the best of our ability?

Since the recognition of falconry by the UNESCO Convention on Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2010, falconers around the world have shared the news of this recognition. We have celebrated it through World Falconry Day and through a series of International Festivals. We proclaim it to governments, conferences and to almost any group of people who will listen to us. Only the most isolated and uninformed of falconers can be unaware of this treasured status which our Art enjoys. What is less well appreciated is exactly what this status means. What actually is an "intangible cultural heritage"? What are the rights, responsibilities and obligations which accompany this status and to whom do they extend?

I heard a recent radio announcement that France had proposed that the *baguette* be recognised as a cultural heritage. This announcement may have amused me had I not heard something else on the radio some weeks before. In the earlier program, a baker was being interviewed and a listener phoned in with a question. He had lived in France for some years and had come to love baguettes but since returning to South Africa

he could not find a baguette that tasted nearly as good as a French one – "why was this?" "Ah", replied the baker, "tell me when you plan to come by my shop and I will try to make you one." For me, this information was like switching on a light! A baguette is made of water, flour, salt and yeast – how difficult can it be to make? Clearly there is skill and technique and this is known to French bakers. Taken to the extreme, if the last baguette-maker were to die, the art of making baguettes would disappear; a tragedy for the French at least! That then is the relevance of "Intangible Cultural Heritage" and how we can explain the significance of this convention.

The falconry submission which was originally recognised by the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage included 11 nations. Since then, other nations have joined the submission and there are now 18 nations included, which makes this by far the largest multinational submission to the convention. These nations all have an obligation to safeguard falconry within their nation and to ensure that its practice is developed and supported. The United Arab Emirates, as the lead nation within this international submission, has special obligations in promoting falconry and coordinating the submission. The UAE certainly meets its obligations through its support for falconry, through the International Festivals which promote the Art and through arranging meetings of the submitting nations to develop and coordinate new submissions. However, 195 nations

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have now ratified the convention. This means that these 195 nations recognise and agree that falconry is an element which is deemed worthy of safeguarding by the Convention. What of those nations which have not yet ratified the convention? Surely, they have, at least, a moral obligation to recognise the value set on the elements, such as falconry, which are safeguarded through this convention by nations representing the majority of humanity.

The purposes of this convention are listed as:

- (a) to safeguard the intangible cultural heritage;
- (b) to ensure respect for the intangible cultural heritage of the communities, groups and individuals concerned;
- (c) to raise awareness at the local, national and international levels of the importance of the intangible cultural heritage, and of ensuring mutual appreciation thereof;
- (d) to provide for international cooperation and assistance.

Not only governments have obligations in terms of this Convention. The IAF is an Advisory NGO to the Convention and, as such, we have an obligation to meet the purposes of the Convention and to safeguard and promote the practice of falconry. However, ordinary individual falconers also have obligations, whether stated or not, to promote the purposes of this convention. With privileges and rights come

responsibilities and this does mean that individual falconers must also have an obligation to safeguard and promote falconry. This must include ensuring the passage of skills to the next generation. In 2017, the IAF supported the Emirates Falconry Club to develop and hold the Fourth International Falconry Festival in Abu Dhabi. The theme for the event was set by our hosts as “Developing the Youth in Falconry” and this is entirely in line with the purposes of the Convention. The IAF was tasked to invite youth representatives from the over 90 nations around the world where falconry is practiced. In fulfilling this objective, we were astonished at a number of national representatives that responded that they had no youth to send! This is disastrous for falconry in those nations! During this, the second golden age of falconry, if you have no youth involved in your falconry, your falconry has no future. Moreover, you are failing in your obligations to our Art.

Having noted the apparent absence of young falconers from some countries, it was also exciting to meet the many capable and skilled young falconers who attended from every corner of the globe. The Desert Camp was held at the Sheikh Mohammed School for Falconry and Desert Physiognomy. This is a magnificent facility designed to teach young Emiratis, including girls, falconry and the traditional skills of desert life. Attending the Festival, we had groups of youth from schools where falconry is part of the curriculum coming from diverse countries including Spain, Slovakia, Zimbabwe and South Africa. There were eloquent

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young Japanese falconers, a growing contingent of skilled young falconers from China, from Pakistan, Morocco, Egypt and from South America. There were young falconers from countries where falconry is not expected, including Australia, Cuba and Papua New Guinea! If we had alarm over those countries that could produce no youth, there is ample evidence that falconry is alive, well and developing – and not only from those countries which are traditionally associated with our Art.

The growth of falconry may be impeded in countries for political reasons. Repressive regimes may suppress falconry, such as was seen in some states during the former Soviet Communist era but we are now seeing a resurgence of falconry in these nations. Security and criminal activity can also be a factor as we see in Zimbabwe and South Africa. Falconry continues in Afghanistan and we have established links with falconers in that country while they may be inhibited from joining international gatherings. Where falconry is associated with former colonial rulers or elitist regimes, it may be outlawed as in Kenya and India and these prejudices are difficult to overcome. One of the most exciting developments in recent years has been the apparent resurgence or unveiling of falconry in China where the government is seeking to create a legitimate framework for this traditional art. Falconers need to be resilient and patient under difficult circumstances but we need not tolerate unreasonable prejudice.

The IAF is playing an increasing role in responding to legislation and regulations which affect falconry in countries all around the world. This is a result of our increased capacity but also of an increasingly regulatory approach in many countries. We see the influence of growing animal rights pressures. Falconers must be alert to the development of new regulations which may affect them and need to involve the IAF in providing advice and responses as early as possible. One piece of legislation where we have intervened needs special mention. Legislation has been pushed through the Polish Parliament with what would appear to be inadequate notice and public participation for a

European Union nation. This legislation forbids youth under the age of 18 from participating in or attending hunting activities. The legislation can be seen to be aimed at undermining the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage and is obscene in that it prevents young people from enjoying healthy outdoor activities which bring them into contact with nature. Worse still, this legislation would appear to violate basic Human Rights. It is a fundamental right for parents to educate their children according to their own beliefs and customs and this legislation fails to respect this. Article 2 of the European Convention on Human Rights reads: *“the State shall respect the right of parents to ensure such education and teaching in conformity with their own religious and philosophical convictions”*. May a falconer not share the falconry experience with his or her child? It remains to be seen how effective the IAF response will be but I fear this particular fight is far from over. We are entitled to a deep anger over such absurdity but we must also be aware of the increasingly fascist approach of the Animal Rights movement.

Human history is crowded with evidence of intolerance. The intolerance for different religions, races and political philosophies has resulted in wars, vicious repression and genocide. We live in an era where people try, consciously, to overcome such intolerance and we have established international Human Rights which are designed to ensure that we respect people's differences and avoid the horrific excesses of past history. Why is it then that the Animal Rights movement is apparently immune to such restraints? When we see the outpourings of critics of hunting there is a frequently repeated refrain: “I do not understand how they can kill an animal”. This lack of understanding is then the justification for calls to ban hunting and for the vilification of hunters in social media frenzies. The lack of understanding of other people, about their customs and their religious beliefs has been the justification of past and even present excesses; now hunters face this same “demonisation” and we face it because people are becoming more urbanised and they no longer understand the natural world and our association with it.



While we decry legislation that stops young people from going into the field to accompany a falconer or to practice falconry, it is worth pausing to consider why they should be permitted or even encouraged to do this. There is an increasing urbanisation for the world's seven billion people and now over 50% of the world's population is urbanised. Our numbers and activities are irrevocably altering the earth, changing the climate and bringing about a new era in the Earth's history: the Anthropocene. Unless we respect the planet on which we live, we and life as we know it will not survive. We need to retain links to the Earth and understand the natural world if we are to have the wisdom to manage the future of ourselves and all biodiversity.

In 1857 the US Government used "eminent domain" to seize 840 acres of land in the centre of New York City. This was to become a semi-wilderness area within the city, known as Central Park, and was expected to "improve the moral character of even the poorest of New Yorkers". So, over 150 years ago, it was appreciated that there was a need to create natural areas for the wellbeing of city dwellers. There is the clear perception that it is beneficial for humans in cities to maintain some link with nature. This link need not be hunting and there are myriad of pursuits, such as hiking and bird watching, that can link people with nature and contribute to human health and mental wellbeing. There is, however, something special about hunting activities in that they bring people into intimate contact with wildlife, with the laws of nature and with the natural environment. Hunting engenders a special respect for nature and for wild creatures and inevitably promotes conservation of the natural world. Falconry can be seen to stand out among hunting disciplines because of the very special relationship which falconers enjoy with their hawk. A falconer is never more than a hunting partner in the hawk's endeavour to practice what survival demands of it and what is its natural destiny. The raptor's life is full of what we, as humans, see to be dramatic and exciting. Falconers work extremely hard, and with great patience, to enjoy this privileged relationship. Should we tolerate

legislation that denies this privilege? Should we cower because people decry what we do through ignorance – because they "cannot understand"?

The late Sheikh Zayed, God protect his soul, said, in his wisdom:

*"Falconry is a constant reminder to us of the forces of nature, of the inter-relationship between living things and the land they share, and of our own dependence on Nature."*

We therefore see that hunting and particularly falconry have a significant role to play in the preservation of nature and the survival of biodiversity through retaining the links to nature and overcoming the lack of understanding. Falconry will survive and flourish if we meet our obligations and pass the baton to the next generation. In the course of my falconry career I have had a number of youngsters who have suffered as my "apprentices". I must now acknowledge that they have all reached a level where their skills far exceed those of the "master" but I also know that nothing gives me greater pleasure than accompanying them into the field. Were that all my investments should be so profitable!

So, falconers must continue to take the field with their hawks and they should remember to take a youngster with them. The IAF will continue to support them in their Art and to defend their right to practice our shared heritage. Please support us as we support you.

*Adrian Lombard.*

March 2018

主席的话





## كلمة من الرئيس:

في مساهمتي هذا العام في مجلة الصقارة التي يصدرها الاتحاد العالمي للصقارة والحفاظ على الطيور الجارحة، وفيما يبدو أنه آخر "كلمة من الرئيس" أكتبها، فإنني أعتقد أنه سيكون من المناسب التفكير في كل ما له صلة بالصيد بالصقور، وفيما يجب أن يكون عليه هذا الفن في المستقبل. كصقارين، ما هي مواقفنا من هذا الفن؟ وهل لدينا مسؤوليات تتجاوز أن نرعى صقورنا ونطير بها إلى أقصى حد ممكن من قدرتنا؟

منذ الاعتراف بالصقارة من قبل اتفاقية اليونسكو حول التراث الثقافي غير المادي في عام 2010، تبادل الصقارون في جميع أنحاء العالم أخبار هذا الاعتراف. واحتفلنا به من خلال اليوم العالمي للصقارة، ومن خلال سلسلة من المهرجانات الدولية. وقد أعلننا ذلك للحكومات والمؤتمرات وتقريباً لأي مجموعة من الناس تستمع إلينا. فقط الأكثر عزلة وغير المطلعين من الصقارين يمكن أن يكونوا غير واعين بهذا الوضع الثمين الذي أصبح يتمتع به فننا. ما هو أقل تقديراً تماماً هو بالضبط ما تعنيه هذه الحالة. ما هو في الواقع "التراث الثقافي غير المادي"؟ وما هي الحقوق والمسؤوليات والواجبات التي تصاحب هذا الوضع الممنوح لنا؟

سمعت إعلاناً إذاعياً حديثاً بأن فرنسا اقترحت اعتبار خبر الباجيت الفرنسي تراثاً ثقافياً. قد يكون هذا الإعلان أدخل البهجة في نفسي، حتى لو لم أسمع شيئاً آخر على الراديو قبل بضعة أسابيع. في البرنامج السابق، تمت إجراء مقابلة مع خباز واتصل المستمع لتوجيه سؤال للضيف. كان يعيش في فرنسا منذ عدة سنوات، وأحب الخبز الفرنسي، ولكن منذ عودته إلى جنوب أفريقيا لم يتمكن من العثور على باجيت بالطعم الفرنسي نفسه. "ماذا كان هذا؟". "آه"، أجاب الخباز "أخبرني عندما تخطط للمرور بمتجري، سأحاول أن اصنع لك واحداً". بالنسبة لي، كانت هذه المعلومات مثل إشعال الضوء! الرغبة الفرنسية مصنوع من دقيق الماء والملح والخميرة - ما مدى صعوبة صنعه؟ من الواضح أن هناك مهارة وتقنية وهذا معروف للخبازين الفرنسيين. إذا ما أخذنا في آخر المطاف، إذا مات آخر صانعي الرغبة الفرنسي، فإن فن صنع الخبز الفرنسي سوف يختفي. مأساة للفرنسيين على الأقل! ومن ثم، فإن أهمية "التراث الثقافي غير المادي" وكيف يمكننا شرح أهمية هذه الاتفاقية.

تقدمت 11 دولة بملف الصيد بالصقور الذي تم الاعتراف به في الأصل من قبل اتفاقية اليونسكو لصون التراث الثقافي غير المادي. ومنذ ذلك الحين، انضمت دول أخرى إلى الطلب، وهناك الآن 18 دولة منضوية في هذا الملف، الأمر الذي يجعله أكبر قدر من المشاركة المتعددة الجنسيات في الاتفاقية. جميع هذه الدول ملزمة بحماية الصيد بالصقور داخل دولتها وضمان تطويرها ودعمها. وتقع على عاتق دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة، باعتبارها الدولة الرائدة في هذا الملف الدولي، التزامات خاصة في تشجيع الصيد بالصقور وتنسيق تقديم هذا الملف. من المؤكد أن دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة تقي بالتزاماتها من خلال دعمها للصقارة، ومن خلال المهرجانات الدولية التي تروج للفنون، ومن خلال تنظيم اجتماعات الدول المقدمة للملف لتطوير وتنسيق التقديمات الجديدة. لكن 195 دولة صدقت على الاتفاقية. وهذا يعني أن هذه الدول الـ 195 تعترف وتوافق على أن الصيد بالصقور هو عنصر يعتبر جديراً بالضمانات الممنوحة له بموجب الاتفاقية. ماذا عن تلك الدول التي لم تصدق بعد على الاتفاقية؟ ومن المؤكد أن لديهم، على الأقل، التزاماً أخلاقياً بالاعتراف بالقيمة المحددة للعناصر، مثل الصيد بالصقور، التي يتم الحفاظ عليها من خلال هذه الاتفاقية من قبل الدول التي تمثل غالبية البشرية.



يمكن سرد أغراض هذه الاتفاقية على النحو التالي :

(أ) حماية التراث الثقافي غير المادي؛

(ب) ضمان احترام التراث الثقافي غير المادي للمجموعات والأفراد؛

(ج) زيادة الوعي على المستوى المحلي والوطني والدولي بأهمية التراث الثقافي غير المادي وكفالة التقدير المتبادل له؛

(د) توفير التعاون والمساعدة الدوليين.

ليس على الحكومات وحدها التزامات فيما يتعلق بهذه الاتفاقية. الاتحاد الدولي للصقارة هو منظمة غير حكومية استشارية للاتفاقية، وعليه، فإننا ملزمون بالوفاء بمقاصد الاتفاقية وحماية وتعزيز ممارسة الصيد بالصقور. كما على الصقارين الأفراد العاديين التزامات أيضا للترويج لأهداف هذه الاتفاقية، سواء تم التصريح بها أم لم يتم. ومع الامتيازات والحقوق تأتي المسؤوليات، وهذا يعني أنه يجب على الصقارين الأفراد أيضا واجب صون الصقارة وتعزيزها. ويجب أن يشمل ذلك ضمان تمرير المهارات للجيل القادم. في عام 2017، دعم الاتحاد العالمي نادي صقاري الإمارات لتنظيم مهرجان الصداقة الدولي الرابع للصقارة في أبوظبي. وقد وضع مضيفنا موضوع الحدث تحت عنوان "تنمية قدرات الشباب في الصيد بالصقور"، وهذا يتماشى تماماً مع مقاصد الاتفاقية. وتم تكليف الاتحاد العالمي للصقارة بدعوة ممثلي الشباب من أكثر من 90 دولة يمارس الصيد بالصقور من جميع أنحاء العالم. ولتحقيق هذا الهدف، دهشنا من عدد من المندوبين الوطنيين الذين ردوا بعدم وجود شباب لإرسالهم! هذه كارثة للصقارة في تلك الدول! وفي أثناء ذلك، فإن العصر الذهبي الثاني للصقارة، إذا لم يكن لديك أي شباب مولع بالصقارة، فإن الصيد بالصقور لن يكون له أي مستقبل. علاوة على ذلك، فأنت تقشل بذلك في التزاماتك تجاه هذا الفن.

بعد ملاحظة غياب واضح للصقارين الشباب من بعض البلدان، كان من المثير أيضاً تلبية العديد من الصيادين الشباب القادرين والمهرة الذين حضروا من كل ركن من أركان العالم. أقيم مخيم الصحراء في مدرسة الشيخ محمد للصقارة وقراسة الصحراء. إنها منشأة رائعة مصممة لتعليم الشباب الإماراتي، بما في ذلك الفتيات، فنون الصيد بالصقور والمهارات التقليدية للحياة الصحراوية. خلال حضور المهرجان، كان لدينا مجموعات من الشباب من مدارس الصقارة التي هي جزء من المناهج الدراسية من دول مختلفة بما في ذلك إسبانيا وسلوفاكيا وزيمبابوي وجنوب أفريقيا. كان هناك صقارون يابانيون شباب يتمتعون بقدر كبير من البلغة، وهناك مجموعة متنامية من صغار الصيادين المهرة من الصين، ومن باكستان، والمغرب، ومصر، ومن أمريكا الجنوبية. وكان هناك صقارون صغار من بلدان لا يُتَوَقَّع وجود الصقارة فيها، بما في ذلك أستراليا وكوبا وبابوا غينيا الجديدة! إذا كان لدينا انزعاج بشأن البلدان التي لم تتمكن من إنتاج أي صقارين شباب، فهناك أدلة كثيرة على أن الصيد بالصقور على قيد الحياة، جيداً ومتطوراً، وليس فقط من الدول التي ترتبط ارتباطاً تقليدياً بهذا الفن.

يمكن إعاقة نمو الصقارة في البلدان لأسباب سياسية. قد تقوم الأنظمة القمعية بقمع الصقارة مثلما كان الحال في بعض الدول خلال الحقبة الشيوعية السوفييتية السابقة، لكننا نشهد الآن عودة ظهور الصقارة في هذه الدول. يمكن أن يكون النشاط الأمني والإجرامي عاملاً كما نرى في زيمبابوي وجنوب إفريقيا. وتستمر رياضة الصيد بالصقور في أفغانستان، وقد أنشأنا روابط مع صقارين في ذلك البلد لتعويض منعهم من الانضمام إلى التجمعات الدولية. وحيث ترتبط الصقارة بالحكام الاستعماريين السابقين أو الأنظمة النخبوية، فقد يكون هذا القانون محظوراً كما هو الحال في كينيا والهند، ومن الصعب التغلب على هذه التحيزات. من أكثر التطورات إثارة في السنوات الأخيرة الظهور الواضح أو كشف النقاب عن الصيد بالصقور في الصين حيث تسعى الحكومة إلى إنشاء إطار شرعي لهذا الفن التقليدي. يحتاج الصقارون إلى التحلي بالصبر والمرونة في ظل ظروف صعبة، لكن لا يمكن أن نتحمل التحيز غير المعقول ضد الصقارة.

يلعب الاتحاد العالمي للصقارة دوراً متزايداً في التصدي للتشريعات واللوائح التي تؤثر على الصيد بالصقور في البلدان في جميع أنحاء العالم. وهذا نتيجة لقدرتنا المتزايدة ولكن أيضاً علينا فهم النهج التنظيمي المتزايد في العديد من البلدان. إننا نرى تأثير تزايد ضغوط حقوق الحيوان. يجب أن يكون الصقارون في حالة تأهب لوضع لوائح جديدة قد تؤثر عليهم، ونحتاج إلى إشراك الاتحاد في تقديم المشورة والردود في أقرب وقت ممكن. وتجدر الإشارة هنا إلى جزء واحد من التشريعات التي تدخلنا فيها. فقد تم دفع ذلك التشريع عبر البرلمان البولندي بما يبدو أنه إخطار غير كاف ومشاركة عامة لدولة أوروبية. يحظر هذا التشريع على الشباب دون سن 18 المشاركة في أنشطة الصيد أو حضورها. ويمكن النظر إلى التشريع على أنه يهدف إلى تقويض حماية التراث الثقافي غير المادي، كما أنه شديد الضرر في أنه يمنع الشباب من التمتع بأنشطة صحية خارجية تجعلهم على اتصال بالطبيعة. والأسوأ من ذلك، يبدو أن هذا التشريع ينتهك حقوق الإنسان الأساسية. ومن حق الوالدين تعليم أطفالهم وفقاً لمعتقداتهم وعاداتهم، وهذا التشريع لا يحترم ذلك. تنص المادة 2 من الاتفاقية الأوروبية لحقوق الإنسان على ما يلي: "تحتزم الدولة حق الوالدين في ضمان التعليم والتدريس بما يتفق مع قناعاتهما الدينية والفلسفية". هل يجب لا يتشارك الأب في تربية الصقور مع طفله؟ يبقى أن نرى مدى فعالية ردود الاتحاد، لكني أخشى أن تكون هذه المعركة بعيدة عن نهايتها. يحق لنا أن نشعر بالغضب الشديد من هذا السخف ولكن يجب أن نكون مدركين للطريقة الفاشية المتزايدة لحركة حقوق الحيوان.

يزدحم تاريخ البشرية بدليل عدم التسامح. أدى عدم التسامح مع الأديان والأعراق والفلسفات السياسية المختلفة إلى نشوب الحروب والقمع الوحشي والإبادة الجماعية. إننا نعيش في عصر يحاول فيه الناس، بوعي، التغلب على هذا التعصب. وقد وضعنا وثيقة حقوق الإنسان الدولية التي ضمنت لضمان احترامنا للاختلافات بين الناس وتجنب التجاوزات المروعة في التاريخ الماضي. لماذا إذن تكون حركة حقوق الحيوان محصنة ضد مثل هذه القيود؟ عندما نرى ترديد منتقدي الصيد لزعم متكرر: "لا أفهم كيف يمكنهم قتل حيوان". هذا الافتقار إلى الفهم هو مبرر لنداءات حظر الصيد وإفشال الصيادين على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي. كان عدم فهم الأشخاص الآخرين وعاداتهم ومعتقداتهم الدينية مبرراً للتجاوزات الماضية وحتى الحالية. يواجه الآن الصيادون نفس "الشيطنة" لأن الناس أصبحوا أكثر تحضراً ولم يعد بإمكانهم فهم العالم الطبيعي وارتباطنا به.

في حين أننا نستنكر التشريعات التي تمنع الشباب من الذهاب إلى الميدان لمراقبة الصقارين أو ممارسة رياضة الصيد بالصقور، فإن الأمر يستحق التوقف للنظر في سبب السماح لهم أو حتى تشجيعهم على القيام بذلك. هناك تزايد في التحضر بالنسبة إلى سكان العالم البالغ عددهم 7 مليارات نسمة، والآن أكثر من 50% من سكان العالم متحضرون. إن أعدادنا وأنشطتنا تعمل على تغيير الأرض بشكل لا رجعة فيه، وتغيير المناخ وإحداث عصر جديد في تاريخ الأرض: الأنثروبوسين. ما لم نحترم الكوكب الذي نعيش فيه، فلن نتمكن نحن والحياة التي نعرفها من البقاء. نحن بحاجة إلى الاحتفاظ بالارتباط بالأرض وفهم العالم الطبيعي إذا أردنا أن نحصل على الحكمة لإدارة مستقبل أنفسنا وجميع أشكال التنوع البيولوجي.





في عام 1857، استخدمت حكومة الولايات المتحدة "المجال البارز" للاستيلاء على 840 فدانا من الأراضي في وسط مدينة نيويورك. كان ذلك ليصبح منطقة شبه برية داخل المدينة، تُعرف باسم سنترال بارك، وكان من المتوقع أن "يحيين الشخصية الأخلاقية حتى لأفقر سكان نيويورك". لذلك، قبل أكثر من 150 سنة، كان من المقدر أن هناك حاجة لإنشاء مناطق طبيعية لرفاه سكان المدينة. هناك تصور واضح أنه من المفيد للبشر في المدن أن يتم الحفاظ على بعض الارتباط مع الطبيعة. لا يشترط أن يكون هذا الارتباط هو الصيد، فهناك عدد لا يحصى من المساعي، مثل المشي لمسافات طويلة ومشاهدة الطيور، التي يمكن أن تربط الناس بالطبيعة وتساهم في صحة الإنسان وعافيته. ومع ذلك، هناك شيء خاص عن أنشطة الصيد في أنها تمكن الناس من الاتصال الحميم مع الحياة البرية، ومع قوانين الطبيعة ومع البيئة الطبيعية. يولد الصيد الاحترام الخاص للطبيعة والمخلوقات البرية ويعزز حتماً الحفاظ على العالم الطبيعي. يمكن اعتبار الصقارة ضمن أشكال الصيد بسبب العلاقة الخاصة جدا التي يستمتع بها الصقارون مع صقورهم. إن الصقار ليس أكثر من مجرد شريك في مسعى الصقر لممارسة متطلبات بقائه ومصيره الطبيعي. حياة الجوارح مليئة بما نراه (كبشر) دراماتيكيًا ومثيرًا. يعمل الصقارون بجهد كبير وبصبر كبير للاستمتاع بهذه العلاقة المميزة. هل يجب أن نتسامح مع التشريع الذي ينكر هذا الامتياز؟ هل ينبغي لنا أن ننحني لأن الناس ينتقدون ما نفعله بسبب الجهل - أو لأنهم "لا يستطيعون الفهم"؟

قال المغفور له الشيخ زايد، طيب الله ثراه، في بعض كلماته الحكيمة:

"لقد توارثنا رياضة الصيد بالصقور من أجدادنا، يوم كانت أواصر العلاقة مع الطبيعة أشد قوة وأقل تعقيداً، وهذا تذكير دائم لنا بقوى الطبيعة، وبالعلاقة المتبادلة بين الكائنات الحية والأرض التي نتقاسم العيش عليها، وباعتمادنا على الطبيعة."

لذا، نرى أن الصيد وخاصة الصقارة لها دور هام في الحفاظ على الطبيعة وبقاء التنوع البيولوجي من خلال الاحتفاظ بالصلوات مع الطبيعة والتغلب على عدم الفهم. سوف تبقى الصقارة وتزدهر لو أننا نفى بالتزاماتنا ونمرر العصا للجيل القادم. خلال مسيرتي في الصقارة، كان لدي عدد من الشباب الذين عانوا معي "كمُتدربين". يجب أن أعترف بأنهم قد وصلوا جميعاً الآن إلى مستوى تفوقوا فيه على مهارات "المعلم"، لكنني أعلم أيضاً أن لا شيء يعطيني المزيد من المتعة من مرافقتهم في هذا الميدان. ماذا لو كانت كل استثماراتي مربحة جداً بنفس هذا القدر! لذا، يجب أن يواصل الصقارون النزول في الميدان بصقورهم ويجب أن يتذكروا أن يأخذوا معهم من هم أحدث منهم سناً. سيستمر الاتحاد في دعمهم في الاستماع بفهم والدفاع عن حقهم في ممارسة تراثنا المشترك. عليكم دعمنا وعلينا أن ندعمكم.

أدريان لومبارد، مارس 2018

## OBITUARY

# PATRICK PAILLAT



Patrick Paillat, eminent French falconer and great bibliophile, died on 4<sup>th</sup> August 2017 in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, at the age of 73. He now rests in the desert he loved so much and where he lived almost half of his life.

In the early 1980s, Jacques Renaud offered him a job in Taif, Saudi Arabia, in a pioneering project to breed and reintroduce MacQueen's bustards. Taif was chosen because of its particularly mild climate (for Arabia) to host the National Wildlife Research Centre (NWRC). The centre, created under the leadership of Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Saud Al Faisal, was to become a large experimental laboratory for captive breeding and reintroduction of several threatened Arabian species, including the mythical Arabian oryx and the houbara bustard. In 1989, the NWRC saw the hatching of its first artificially-bred chicks – a success which paved the way for many other bustard farms around the world. However, in 2005 Patrick moved to Al Ain, in the United Arab Emirates, where another bustard farm, the NARC, was being established. He was employed by the Environmental Agency of Abu Dhabi as a consultant on bustard breeding.

During all his years in Arabia, Patrick was a keen falconer, especially enjoying hawking with the traditional species of Arabic falconry, sakers and peregrines. As a result of over 20 years of bibliographic research and contact with Arab falconers, both in Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, he realised the importance of Arab falconry's heritage. He also discovered that Arab literature on the subject is the oldest surviving in the world, with texts dating from the 8th century. However,

he realised with horror that Arabic manuscripts on falconry were not just scarcely-appreciated resources but also ones which are sometimes at risk.

As a result of his research and great knowledge on the subject, Patrick was appointed by HE Mohammed al Bowardi in 2008 to create the Middle East Falconry Archive (MEFA). Sharing his enthusiasm for this great project, initiated and sponsored by HH Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed al Nahyan, I agreed to assist and so, from 2008, we undertook a review of falconry manuscripts in Arabic scripts scattered in libraries around the world. This led to the creation of a bibliographic fund based in Abu Dhabi through the digitisation of manuscripts and the exhaustive production of facsimiles. This fund, unique in its kind, is developing gradually. To date, 11 very important manuscripts have been reproduced and many facsimiles distributed to institutions, including the Archives of Falconry in Boise.

Throughout his life, Patrick was driven by a passion for falconry and the preservation of birds of prey. He made a major contribution, notably through the MEFA, to UNESCO's 2010 inscription of falconry on the list of humanity's intangible cultural heritage. The International Fund for Houbara Conservation, which hosts MEFA, has committed to pursuing this important project for the Emirates' cultural heritage – in which Patrick's memory will live on for years to come.

He is dearly missed by his friends.

*Catherine Tsaganakis-Ostrowski*

Researcher, Middle East Falconry Archive (MEFA)

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## OBITUARY

# ROGER UPTON MBE

*I*t is with some trepidation that one commences an obituary for a man so monumental in modern falconry that he needs no introduction; a man who gave falconry so much and shaped generations in the sport. Roger Upton was already a fully-fledged falconry legend long before I was hatched, and his immense influence on so many aspects of falconry soared for more decades than I have spanned. He upheld and improved British falconry's standards, facilitated

understanding between falconers from diverse backgrounds through their shared passion and left a tremendous legacy on falconry's heritage. Whilst he may have lacked the wider power and influence of falconry's "own" Holy Roman Emperor, Fredrick II, Roger was a *stupor mundi* to modern falconers – an instantly recognisable, universally respected and much-loved figure around the world. He remains one who will be remembered by future generations through his writings yet one who was, first and foremost, a practical falconer of great experience.

Roger's career began in 1954 with a goshawk, giving him a sound appreciation of the intricacies of handling and hunting hawks. Early on, he contacted another future falconry legend, Steven Frank, and the two, both resident in Wiltshire, became great friends, initially flying merlins together. In these days of National Service, at the suggestion of the Duke of Beaufort, master of the hounds with which they hunted, both Roger and his twin brother Peter joined the Household Cavalry. This did nothing to preclude hawking, however: Roger kept his merlins (somewhat unofficially!) in the regimental stables. They were exercised in Hyde Park but taken



to fly at quarry whenever possible, travelling in a suitcase-style box Roger designed to avoid the unwanted attentions of London commuters.

Assisted by Steven Frank, Roger soon graduated to grouse hawking with peregrines: the start of a passion that spanned the rest of their hawking careers. Through this demanding branch of our art, Roger came to host guests from all walks of life. He accompanied James Robertson Justice in the field with HRH The Duke of Edinburgh,

frequently flew falcons for the late HRH The Queen Mother and became pivotal in securing top quality sport for a wealth of visiting falconers. Prime amongst these were Italian falconers Umberto Caproni, Fulco Tosti and Ferrante Pratesi. Count Caproni first met Roger at the start of his falconry career, spending many subsequent seasons hawking with him in Caithness. He recalls that, when they commenced grouse hawking, it was impractical to bring falcons into the UK due to quarantine restrictions and so Roger maintained their hawks at his home outside the season. Adding that Roger was "great company during the trips we had together in the States and Libya", he concludes that "some of the best memories in my life are the days we spent together." Other European falconers who enjoyed memorable sport were Christian Saar and Patrick Morel. Roger, along with Jack Mavrogordato and James Robertson Justice, also played a prominent role in bringing the charm and realities of hawking to a wider audience in the mid-1960s with the classic film *The Falcon Gentle*.

Nearer home, Roger was also a skilled practitioner of rook and partridge hawking, practicing both on the Marlborough Downs. It was here that he entertained



visiting Arab falconers in 1964. A reciprocal invitation saw him visit Abu Dhabi (then a far cry from today's modern city) where he made many friendships, most notably with Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahayan, and began a long-lasting connection with the Middle East. Sheikh Zayed invited Roger to help organise the first International Conference on Falconry in 1976, leading to greater understanding between different falconry cultures. More recent incarnations of this, and the strong sense of community they demonstrated, were fundamental to falconry's recognition by UNESCO as a significant part of humanity's cultural heritage. In more immediate terms, however, Roger's love of hawking in the desert saw him become an expert on Arabian techniques and heritage, on which he later published an authoritative treatise, and very much a bridge between East and West. Arab falconers saw him as one of their own, dubbing him "*Bin Shahin*" or "Son of the Falcon."

Of course, we know him as a falconer, but Roger had many other sporting interests. A mutual friend who knew him through coursing told me of his mastery of this sport. A sound judge of hounds, Roger had an adept touch with salukis, which require sensitive handling: doubtless his natural affinity with Arabian hunting and early experience with highly-strung shortwings made this a foregone conclusion. He practiced coursing, before the UK ban, with an equal passion to that for hawking; a passion evident in his vehement, yet characteristically gentlemanly, rail against that ban in *Rhyme Intrinsic* – a volume of poetry and sketches published with his brother Peter. Many falconers might be unaware of Roger's strong creative flair. Aside from his books and poetry, he was a gifted sculptor and artist and, like many falconers, crafted his own furniture at a time when it was not readily available. He made hoods and gloves, now eagerly sought by collectors, and indeed established a leathercraft business in Marlborough with his wife Jean.

Our sport being a largely individual activity, with highly personal motivations and aspirations, inevitable differences of approach and methodology, sadly, often lead to great divisions between falconers. Suffice it to say, I have never heard anyone express anything but esteem for Roger, even where there have been divergences on practical points such as how to hold meat in the fist when feeding a hawk. In the greater scheme of things, such differences are quite trivial yet often lead to passionate disagreements. That Roger rose above this,

ever maintaining his courteous demeanour, and that even amongst those who have at times struggled to do so, I have never heard a bad word about him, is telling in itself in a sport long considered an "extreme stirrer-up of passions."

More than a mere sport, falconry shapes its practitioners' whole philosophy of life. Whilst participating to the best of my ability when possible, one of Roger's greatest legacies to me personally was an acceptance that it is better to not practice at all than to do so to a poor standard. On occasions where friends have offered me hawks to fly, Roger's philosophy, evident in his books, has prompted tough but prudent decisions to abstain. However, he influenced my life most profoundly in terms of falconry heritage. Inspired, like so many others, by his work, and accepting limitations on practical hawking, my energies have been directed into studying the sport's history and heritage. This has become my *raison d'être* – one that has developed personal self-confidence, directly brought opportunities to travel and, indeed, helped me through the hardest times in my life – a positive focus that made me who I am. The words of Symon Latham (an earlier great, Wiltshire-based, falconer) about his own hawking mentor seem especially relevant to Roger's influence on me:

*"He, I confess, it was that taught me the way to live."*

Falconry heritage has recently become something of a phenomenon within the sport. Serious falconers have always looked back to their predecessors for wisdom and example, and have aimed to perpetuate their ruling passion, though there was no formal recognition of this heritage until relatively recently. Perhaps the first book specifically recording falconry history, as distinct from mentioning it anecdotally, *A Bird in the Hand* made many falconers realise that we were losing knowledge and information, and indeed aspects of falconry's wider cultural importance, as successive generations passed away. Roger, undoubtedly, played a crucial role in influencing others to record not just history, but ongoing heritage. Today, we have physical falconry archives around the world, a Falconry Heritage Trust and, perhaps most significantly of all, UNESCO recognition. Roger contributed directly to many of these initiatives, influencing others indirectly,

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and his work continues to inspire research into recent and less recent falconers and the development of yet more archives around the world.

It was through this passion for falconry heritage that I first had the privilege of meeting Roger in person. He was, to me, what great musicians or footballers are to others – the leading proponent of the most important aspect of my life. That I am often asked to assist with heritage-related written tasks is entirely down to Roger's influence and encouragement. It was also heritage, primarily, that led to Roger's long overdue recognition for his contributions to British society with his appointment as a Member of the British Empire in 2014. This reflected a lifetime's service to falconry, both in the field and in the wider cultural sphere, developing Anglo-Arab relations (for which he also received the Abu Dhabi Award in the same year) as well as, of course, awareness of falconry's global heritage.

Given his influence in falconry heritage, it seemed especially poignant that he passed away shortly before the official opening of the British Archives of Falconry's new exhibition facility – an achievement that, in so many ways, was down to his immense influence. One image, of many, stands out in my recollections of that memorable evening: a pencil sketch of Roger by his son Mark. In this, he is stepping away from the viewer, carrying a cadge. On that evening, it symbolised, to me, Roger's role in carrying falconry from the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century into the 21<sup>st</sup> and his lasting legacy to, and place in, our sport's heritage. He may have stepped away from us, but leaves falconers from all backgrounds, falconers who loved and respected him, footsteps in which to follow. May all who value falconry's traditions and heritage follow those footsteps in the heather.

*David Horobin*



DAVID  
HOROBIN

David Horobin is a joint Director of the British Archives of Falconry and frequently undertakes research and writing activities linked to the sport, its history and heritage. His main influence in this respect was Roger Upton's work on British falconry heritage, and he is passionate about passing on the torch Roger kindled to future generations.









# More about Snipe Hawking in Ireland

**Snipe: Falconry & Conservation** *by Don Ryan*

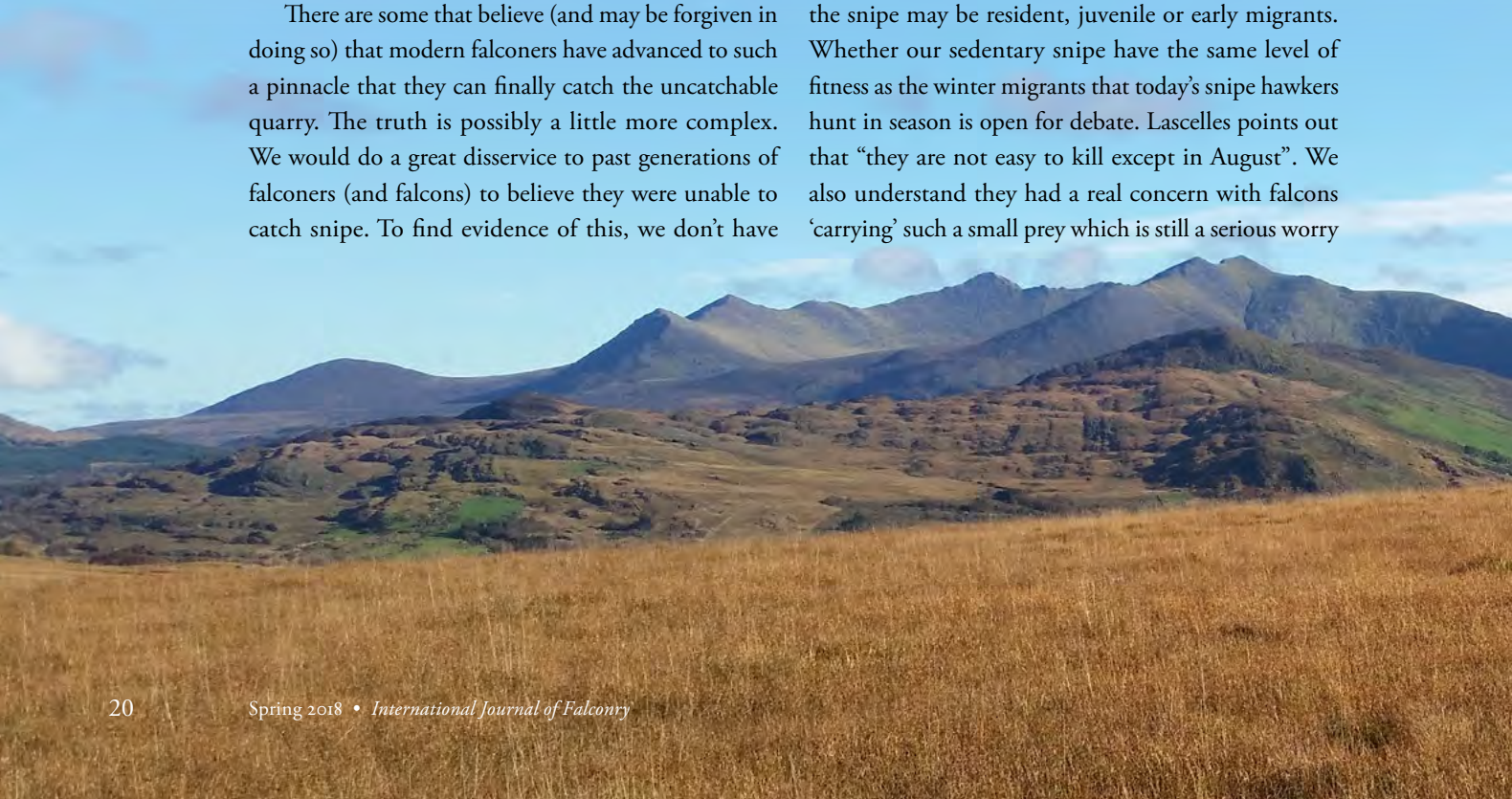
There is no doubt that snipe hawking is receiving a lot more attention in recent years than it has previously experienced in past centuries. In the halcyon age of game hawking, in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, the habitat for snipe was far more suitable than it is today. There was less drainage and no offending conifer plantations creeping over our wetlands like dry rot. No thorny wire strung across the middle of a lowland bog or the brow of an upland moor that cause you to cringe with the thought of a falcon clipping it. The employment of keepers was also unnecessary to manage and maintain this mysterious will-o'-the-wisp whose numbers were undoubtedly far greater in past centuries. In his work *Topographica Hibernica* (Topography of Ireland), written in 1188, the Welsh monk Giraldus Cambrensis tells us "There are immense flights of snipes; both the larger species of the woods and the smaller of the marshes, but the latter are more abundant". In more recent times, I've spoken to old farmers in the southwest of Ireland who've assured me that in recent decades before afforestation, there were thousands of snipe lifting from the sloughs like swarms of bees.

This begs the question then; why has this abundant and challenging quarry stayed below the falconer's radar for so long?

There are some that believe (and may be forgiven in doing so) that modern falconers have advanced to such a pinnacle that they can finally catch the uncatchable quarry. The truth is possibly a little more complex. We would do a great disservice to past generations of falconers (and falcons) to believe they were unable to catch snipe. To find evidence of this, we don't have

to dig too deep into past falconry literature. There are several instances in Colonel Thomas Thornton's *A Sporting Tour through the Northern Parts of England*, first published in 1804, of flights at snipe with one occurrence of a flight lasting sixteen minutes. There is also another instance where Thornton's falcon, "at one stroke, cut a snipe in two parts, so that they fell separate". I observed a similar incident last season where a snipe's wing was sliced off in mid-air by a Matthew Gage bred tiercel flown by Eric Witkowski. These incidents are two centuries apart and worthy of mention as they illustrate how some memorable flights can be so vivid and timeless. I wonder how many times in those 200 years has such an event been witnessed?

Moving on half a century to 1857, we find further evidence in Francis Salvin and William Brodrick's *Falconry in the British Isles*. They present a chapter on 'Snipe Hawking' and remark that "good sport may be had with this quarry". Gerald Lascelles also tells us in his writings on 'Falconry' from the Badminton Library edition of *Coursing and Falconry*, published in 1892, that "Snipe are occasionally cut down by a good tiercel". From these 19<sup>th</sup> century authors, we learn that the majority of flights at snipe were carried out before the month of September which suggests the snipe may be resident, juvenile or early migrants. Whether our sedentary snipe have the same level of fitness as the winter migrants that today's snipe hawkers hunt in season is open for debate. Lascelles points out that "they are not easy to kill except in August". We also understand they had a real concern with falcons 'carrying' such a small prey which is still a serious worry





for today's snipe hawkers, even with telemetry. The fear of a falcon carrying a light quarry to a great distance is understandable as a hawk taking its kill to the ground runs a serious risk of attracting attention from other predators. Knowing where your hawk has landed and getting to it quickly is critical.

There is less written about snipe hawking by the early/mid 20<sup>th</sup> century authors. Gilbert Blaine makes no mention of snipe in relation to game hawking in his publication on *Falconry*; however, he does recognise the immense challenge of the quarry in his chapter on 'Merlin and Lark Hawking'. In *A Falcon in the Field*, Jack Mavrogordato makes no reference to snipe in discussing 'Game Hawking' and, surprisingly, doesn't enter a comment in his passage on 'Small Game Hawking'. Likewise, Woodford remains silent on the subject in *A Manual for Hawking*.

From the level of writing given over to grouse hawking by these authors, along with correspondence in 1957 from Ronald Stevens, we get some insight into why snipe hawking may not have been explored with any real passion. After moving to the west of Ireland, Ronald mentions he may take a small tiercel for woodcock, golden plover and snipe due to the lack of grouse to fly at. There is no doubt that falconry was the preserve of the privileged in times past. Game hawking was even more so. Those fortunate enough to practice game hawking were also fortunate to have access to grouse moors. Unless of course, like Ronald, they moved to Ireland where, after Ireland's independence, much of the lands of the big estates were broken up and given over to farming. The profession of game-keeping then became unnecessary and drastically declined and, as a result, so too did grouse.

Like salmon, grouse are an iconic species and a greater trophy than many of the other game species such as partridge, pheasant, duck and, of course, the

common snipe. Staying with matters piscatorial, snipe can be likened to sea-trout. Ounce for ounce, sea-trout are a greater fighter than the salmon, more elusive, wary and difficult to catch (and in my opinion, taste far nicer); yet salmon still retain the title of 'King of Fish' and the trophy above all others to catch. When the salmon and sea-trout are running, few anglers will swap their salmon fly for a trout fly. It is the same for moorland that holds both grouse and snipe. Grouse are the king of game birds and this is obvious in all publications on the subject of game hawking. The authors also agree that the falcon is more suited to grouse than the tiercel, although noting there were exceptions. Few would arrive at the grouse moor with a cadge full of tiercels. However challenging the twisting and jinking snipe is for the tiercel, it is increasingly more so for the larger falcon.

This evidence would lead us to believe that the difficulty of catching snipe, along with having other species to enjoy the sport of game hawking, are the primary reasons why snipe hawking has not been attempted with any serious conviction over the centuries and has remained as an incidental flight rather than a deliberate quarry. Those who could afford to game hawk could afford to grouse hawk. Why would anyone expend their energy on such a difficult quarry when other game species that carried greater esteem were readily available? Perhaps the common snipe was just too common!

Within a short period of time on first landing in Ireland it became apparent to Robert Hutchinson that, due to lack of management, grouse and partridge were in such decline that it made consistent game hawking with pointers and setters virtually impossible. Occasionally finding a grouse or partridge does not make a game hawk. Sadly, in Ireland today, grey partridge have been removed from the 'Open Seasons

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Don Ryan, Eric Witkowski and Xavier Morel.

Order' and the season on red grouse is restricted to the month of September. Similar to Ronald Stevens, Robert realised that the only opportunity to practice traditional game hawking in Ireland was to explore the alternative of other game species. Enter the common snipe! The healthy abundance of snipe feeding on the vast open stretches of Irish blanket and raised bogs appeared to Robert to provide the ideal opportunity to examine if the sport of game hawking with dogs could be preserved in Ireland. The relatively flat terrain of both the upland and lowland bogs are ideal to witness the fast moving pace of the pointers and setters and every turn and stoop of the falcon are in clear view. As ground cover is low, it also encourages the snipe to stay airborne rather than bale into the nearest bush. With these essential game hawking ingredients established, the key question that then remained was, could snipe be caught with a consistency that would prevent the hawks becoming despondent and, eventually, abandoning the quarry?

When Robert invited a handful of UK game hawkers to Ireland in the early noughties to find this out, no one could have been fully aware of how the course of Irish falconry was about to change. On that first dedicated snipe meet in Ireland, success was achieved to such a degree that it left no doubt to all present that exploring snipe hawking further was both warranted and inevitable. Watching eagerly on with his brown tiercel peregrine was Irish falconer Martin Brereton. The rest is history. Snipe hawking in Ireland has gone from strength to strength since that meet and it's encouraging to see more and more falconers seeking to give it a bash each year.

So, what does snipe hawking do for falconry? Well, quite a lot actually. Snipe are the last truly wild quarry to enable the practice of game hawking with dogs to be carried out from one end of the hunting season to the

other. Although they have declined in recent decades, the common snipe are still in relative abundance and, with such a long season (12<sup>th</sup> Aug to 31<sup>st</sup> Jan in UK & 1<sup>st</sup> Sep to 31<sup>st</sup> Jan in Ireland), they can truly boast that they "Maintaine the Faulconer and his Faulcon's flight". Snipe hawking also maintains and promotes the use of pointers and setters in game hawking which has notably been in decline in recent years and, as steadiness, ground control and game scenting abilities are crucial, it elevates the standard and quality to a very high level. If game hawking were a university degree, snipe hawking is the Ph.D. It continually tests the dog, falcon and orchestration skills of the falconer, demanding the utmost concentration and dedication. To be consistently successful at this branch of falconry, a snipe hawker needs to immerse themselves completely; committing the falcon's flight to one specific species. A successful tiercel on grouse or partridge may fail on snipe but it is unlikely that a made snipe hawk will fail on grouse or partridge. As snipe inhabit non-agricultural wetlands and damp habitats, there is generally little or no financial cost in gaining access to hunt these landscapes. This allows those not fortunate to afford access to grouse moors, or other 'keepered grounds, the opportunity to enjoy the sport of game hawking with the only necessary expense being time. Snipe are also an incredibly sustainable quarry for game hawking as very few are caught for the incredible amount of sport they provide. All snipe hawkers will attest to the many excellent days they've had in the field with empty game bags at feeding-up time. At the IAF meet in Ireland in November 2016, two groups containing over 20 falconers and over 100 spectators experienced excellent sport and camaraderie with countless number of flights, for a final tally of nine snipe at the end of six full days. Snipe hawking is as much about the escaping flight of the snipe as it is about the pitch of the falcon. It's also about the lasting friendships and memories it forges in those untamed and un-keepered, beautifully wild, places it takes you to. It is no wonder that, for a number of dedicated game hawkers, the common snipe has now become the quarry of choice.

The scientific name *Gallinago gallinago* does little to capture the charming nature of this enigmatic wader. The term derives from the Latin, *Gallina* meaning "hen" and the suffix *-ago*, "resembling". Describing a snipe as resembling a hen is akin to describing a diamond as resembling a pane of glass. The original name 'snipe'



is believed to be of old Norse origin but due to the distinctive noise the male makes with its tail feathers in courtship flights, it has received many vernacular terms throughout the old world. The bleating sound of a kid goat best describes the humming sound which has now become universally known as “drumming” and it’s not surprising it was formally referred to by the Latin name *Capella*, meaning “the little kid”. Other folk titles it has been fondly referred to by are “goat of the air”, “goat of the bogs”, “the little goat of the dusk”, “heather bleater”, “the horse of the air” and, one of my favourites, “the bog bleater”.

Now that snipe hawking has become established as an achievable although challenging branch of game hawking, the falconry community need to ensure that the common snipe, like most other game species, is afforded a voice. In the words of the late Irish author John McGahern, “When you’re in danger of losing a thing, it becomes precious and when it’s around us, it’s in tedious abundance and we take it for granted as if we’re going to live forever, which we’re not”.

Although the common snipe are flagged as of ‘Least Concern’ in the Red List of Birdlife International and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) due to its extremely large range, snipe in the resident breeding range of Ireland and Britain have undergone a moderate decline in recent decades, earning the species an Amber status on both islands. This is principally due to habitat loss through drainage and afforestation of moorlands and bogs. It is abundantly clear, especially to the ever-growing band of snipe hawkers, that there is a need for an organisation dedicated to monitor snipe. For this reason, a falconer-led initiative under the guidance of the International Association of Falconry’s Biodiversity group established a group known as the ‘Snipe Conservation Alliance’. The launch was held in Ireland in January 2018 in Athlone, Co. Westmeath.

The Snipe Conservation Alliance is a network of enthusiasts (both scientists and non-scientists) interested in the study, monitoring, management and conservation of the common snipe (*Gallinago gallinago*) and jack snipe (*Lymanocryptes minimus*). The aim of the group is to provide a resource to help understand the ecology and to ensure the sustainable use and conservation of the species. As it becomes established, it is intended that the Snipe Conservation Alliance will offer support

to any group or person wishing to become actively involved in the welfare, improvement and maintenance of snipe habitat. It will be a partnership process and the objectives can only be achieved through active engagement with government departments, local communities and landowners who wish to see snipe remain on our bogs and moors on both uplands and lowlands for future generations.

The launch, held at the Shamrock Lodge Hotel in Athlone, was a great success and well-attended by a wide range of enthusiastic supporters.. Along with an informative presentation given by Dr Andrew Hoodless, Head of Wetland Research from the Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust, there were engaging talks from other passionate speakers, including falconer Robert Hutchinson who gave a lively presentation on behalf of the Irish Hawking Club. Vincent Flannelly spoke on behalf of the Field Trial organisations under the auspices of the Irish Kennel Club, Jim Fitzharris represented Countryside Alliance Ireland and the Irish Red Grouse Conservation Trust and Gary Timbrell spoke on behalf of the IAF.

On conclusion of the presentations, there was just enough time to visit a nearby raised bog to experience contemporary snipe hawking and witness why they are such a prized game species to falconers. The perfect weather conditions held all the promise of a fine afternoon’s sport with a light breeze blowing favourably to the nostrils of our keen pointers and setters. Our mysterious bog bleater had other ideas in mind however and gave their own presentations on how to overcome every challenge of the fit seasoned-hardened falcons to easily escape into the pale January sky. In spite of our empty game bag, a fantastic afternoon’s sport was enjoyed by all and needless to say, the merriment carried on late into the evening.

You can find more information about this group at [www.snipeconservationalliance.org](http://www.snipeconservationalliance.org) or visit them on Facebook or Twitter.







Photo credit: Eric Witkowski

### **Tiercel's story** *by Eric Witkowski*

After the terrible loss of two excellent snipe hawks due to unfortunate circumstances in 2015, the following year, I took on a new tiercel bred by Matthew Gage. The decision was made based on the reputation of Matt's great line of grouse hawks and I also expected a smaller size hawk than the average Irish peregrine tiercel. Another factor was a shortage of pure native Irish falcons. The new tiercel was ready to go at the beginning of June with many summer months ahead before proper hawking would begin. He was a steady, nicely mannered hawk. I was able to easily pick him up from his block perch without offering any meat and hood him calmly. All went really well and the tiercel was flying strong before the month of October when snipe arrive in good number. He bagged his first snipe in September and, soon after, I realised he was a real gem. He just needed a bit more work to develop his true potential. Very soon, my new brown bird was an expert in snipe hawking. He became a master as early as November, polishing his attitude in later months. His wing power, speed, manoeuvrability and confidence was second to none in comparison to other trained, even blue, intermewed tiercels. He gave me some great memories in his short, intensive life; he bagged about 60 snipe in his first season. I lost him soon after.

Without hesitation, I ordered another hawk from Matt from the same parents. I hoped all would go as well as the first tiercel and trusted the genes would have a similar expression. Well, this hope was soon to be revised.

The new tiercel arrived early, and was ready to fly free by the end of June. First thing I noticed was that he was more temperamental than his older brother. Initially there were some hooding problems which disrupted my two daily flights policy. Another issue was that his behaviour was causing minor feather damage for a period of time, making me concerned about his plumage. My work routine had also changed since the previous year, which caused more problems. But who said falconry, and especially game hawking, is easy? Soon I noticed another problem, which I thought might be resolved when my new hawk gained more confidence in hunting. The issue was he only chased the prey he saw as easy to catch, without putting in too much effort. That was new to me as all my previous tiercels tried hard in pursuit. I knew this could become very complicated as, over snipe, they need to stay focused to be any way successful.





Axel and Max,  
my snipe setters.  
(by Eric Witkowski)

first few, my hawk chased with enthusiasm but soon realised this is a pretty hard piece of meat to catch. After flying a few, one day he just decided to blank them. His flying weight was around 510g at the time, which was pretty sharp for my liking. I said to myself that he'd had a bad day, but the same happened next day and the day after. It was highly alarming for me. Many experienced game hawkers will tell you your bird is too fat, but I knew from my short experience with snipe hawking that this was not case. With snipe hawks you must do something opposite than what is traditional with grouse, partridge, and duck hawks. I just fed him up, knowing only a higher weight would help, as he was not feeling strong enough to chase those elusive, agile little waders. In two days, his weight rose to 545g and, soon after, to 570g, causing more behavioural problems. To fix one thing, sometimes you cause another more complicated issue and the difficulty lies in how to balance the solutions. If we knew how our birds think, falconry would be a very simple sport. As hoped, raising his weight improved performance in the field and he began to stoop snipe again and, this time, chasing them hard. It took several weeks before he was successful, but he finally succeeded on 21<sup>st</sup> of October. Next day, he

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In the meantime I was able to make him fly very high. Around August, he was making serious pitches; well over 300m/1,000ft, every single day for five weeks in a row. He was climbing so fast, sometimes it was hard to believe. Once the snipe arrived, I knew these heights would not be possible. You simply cannot catch a snipe with an inexperienced tiercel from that high pitch for many reasons. Snipe have more time to find cover to bail and the bog size is also an important issue. You cannot realistically expect two or three re-climbs to those pitches.

More important than pitch in the making of a snipe hawk is to give them plenty of opportunity to stoop, chase and finally kill their first snipe. That will build their strength, speed and confidence. You can work on pitch at a later stage, after a few kills. In September, his pitch was not as impressive, maybe 50-150m; just enough to catch a snipe. The snipe arrived earlier than normal in 2017, and we flew them most days in September. The



Snipe hawking.





Cadge of snipe hawks.

## 2017 Snipe hawking season in Ireland

*by Xavier Morel*

Ireland is becoming, with the passing of the years, one of the obligatory falconry destinations for my hawking season. Undoubtedly, I am a big fan of snipe hawking – one of the most exciting and difficult falconry challenges that may exist. The snipe is one of the best wild quarries you could dream of, the scenery is beautiful and the work with the dogs really nice. It is a very complete form of falconry.

This season I spent a total of six weeks in Ireland, starting with the snipe meet of the Irish Hawking Club in Sneem at the end of October and leaving after the meet held in Athlone.

My girlfriend, Kelly Van Looy, spent the first and the last ten days with me, discovering the tricky bogs....

Most of the time was spent in the Sneem area, and I want to particularly thank Andrew Savage who helped me out to find a cottage and the bogs to hunt on. Willy Ziegler and Tom Richter, German falconers, were also in the Sneem area for snipe hawking, and we were lucky to share several days of hunting together.

The first ten days were perfect: the weather was good and the snipe population was sufficient, though they were not abundant. The next 20 days were more difficult since the weather was really bad, with lots of rain and much wind, and it was very difficult to find snipe: sometimes I had to work the dog for three hours to have one single point. The last week in the Athlone area was just perfect.

caught another one. After these two successful days in a row, I had a good feeling and was thinking that it had finally clicked for him. But life is not as simple as that. Despite trying hard, we had to wait some time before he caught another one. He was lucky enough to catch a few in November and December, but I felt he was not performing as well as expected. Not after I had put so much time and effort into him. It remained like that until Christmas, where we were fortunate to catch a few in a short period of time. I saw his excitement rising each day. In the middle of January I saw my hawk hunt snipe as I aspired to. All the necessary ingredients; wing power, speed, manoeuvrability, persistence and confidence, had finally come together. As the season came to a close, my tiercel had become a successful snipe hawk.

After many frustrations in that 2017/18 season, I can say to myself I have made a good hawk. He is now (April) in his moulting chamber. His foot and cere have become a nice orange colour. I'm hoping for a good moult and am looking forward to the new season. A new tiercel from Matt was booked a long time ago. I hope he will have a good breeding season too.

To gain access to videos "Snipe Hawking in Ireland" please scan these codes.



Mike Nicholls, Xavier Morel, Kelly Van Looy, Willy Ziegler, Elodie Ponçin and Manfred Maugasc.





Observation of a wild peregrine attacking snipe.

remember when or how, and I am still thinking about what I did wrong . . . .

The *minor* falcon started badly. She had been a good bird until the beginning of October but since then was flying poorly, without motivation. I suspected a health problem but was incapable of diagnosing it accurately. Instead of pushing her and giving her bad lessons most of the time, I decided to just give her some training flights every second day. I did not want her to learn to have game served from pitches of less than 100 metres, as she usually flies above 200. She made some nice flights at the end of the trip, knocking down one snipe just in front of us with great efficiency. However, she could not see the snipe on the ground and, after recovering her, the snipe literally slipped out of Kelly's fingers.

*UFO* behaved much better and was my best hawk of the season. He is becoming a serious and efficient tiercel, flying at pitches of between 200 and 250 metres, sometimes more, with a hunting weight between 620 and 660g. Gaining experience on snipe, his footing

*UFO* taking off.

I had the following hawks with me:

- *UFO*, a 2015 peregrine tiercel
- *Victoria*, a 2016 *minor* falcon
- *Dolf*, Kelly's 2016 sakret (brought primarily to prevent disrupting his training)
- *Floki*, a 2015 gyr-aplomado tiercel lent by a friend to test his abilities on snipe

The pointer, called Violet, was lent to me by an Irish falconer, Darren Coen, and turned out to be a nice, steady and reliable dog. Thanks to Darren and Sharron Redington for getting me in contact with Darren Coen: that dog saved my trip!

The gyr-aplomado turned out to be a disappointment, not for the species, but due to the bird's individual personality. He was a very consistent hawk in Belgium, taking pigeons and partridges from pitches between 180 and 200 metres, and I placed a lot of hope in him because he was an agile bird capable of flying in strong winds. He therefore seemed to be a perfect match for snipe. However, after four or five days he completely refused to attack the snipe (probably influenced by his hybrid intellect) and, later, refused to fly at all. He was perfectly healthy and neither raising nor lowering his flying weight made any difference. As flight opportunities were very scarce I stopped flying him. I probably made a mistake at some point, but I cannot







Don Ryan and his younger tiercel's first snipe.

improved a lot, touching them nearly every day for the last ten days of the trip.

The last week he was flown twice every afternoon. His strong wingbeat, his pitch and positioning, combined with spectacular stoops, made him, overall, a very steady and reliable tiercel. It was a genuine pleasure for the other falconers and I to enjoy his flights.

We shared some great days with the local falconers, enjoying great flights with the tiercels flown by Don Ryan, Eric Witkowski, Kevin Marron and Martin Brereton. The last four days in the Athlone area were really excellent: the weather was absolutely perfect, cloudy and with little wind, and there was a high density of snipe. We had some very good flights from Kevin, Don and Martin's tiercels, and a few snipe were bagged in nice style. The hawks' attacks were impressive, getting very close in each flight, following from perfect positioning and pitch.

I will definitely be back next season . . .



#### DON RYAN

Don Ryan is an all round sportsman and conservationist, fishing and hunting alongside his passion for falconry. Recently retired Director of the Irish Hawking Club, of which he remains a member, he is also a member of the British Falconers' Club. He enjoys success flying a male goshawk at game and two tiercel peregrines at snipe. With five cocker spaniels and an Irish red and white setter to accompany him in the field, he jokes he has too many dogs and too many hawks.



#### ERIC WITKOWSKI

Born in Poland, Eric first encountered falconry as a student in Zagnansk School of Forestry where he flew mostly goshawks and buzzards. He later moved to the Irish midlands where he met Martin Brereton who showed him proper snipe hawking. Thereafter, he moved to the south-west of Ireland where he lives with his family in County Kerry, with plenty of bogs and moors to fly snipe. He bought his first tiercel in 2010. Eric belongs to a small group of falconers in Ireland who have set the standard for snipe hawking in recent years.



#### XAVIER MOREL

Xavier started falconry in 1979 at the age of 13, under the tutelage of his brother Patrick Morel, former IAF president. He flew goshawks for the first ten years and then switched over to longwings. He has practiced falconry in most European countries and in Morocco, and has worked as a professional falconer setting up displays and hacking falcons. Xavier is currently Sales Manager of Microsensory GPS Telemetry Systems, which he helped to develop.



UFO on post.



# THE EUROPEAN FOUNDATION FOR FALCONRY AND CONSERVATION

## – AN INTRODUCTION

*by José Manuel Rodríguez-Villa*

As part of its Strategic Plan, IAF recently established the European Foundation for Falconry and Conservation (EFFC), legally incorporated in Holland.

Falconers have accumulated a wealth of knowledge and specialised skills over millennia. Their passion for raptors, quarry species, hunting grounds and nature in general have shaped the falconry community as a most qualified group when dealing with issues such as conservation, sustainable hunting traditions, culture and animal welfare.

It is widely accepted that falconers have for centuries initiated and led efforts to champion these causes, with the remarkable advances in techniques and expertise developing in tandem with our vision of a judicious use of natural resources. Falconers' contributions have been numerous and hugely significant in the biological research of wild raptors, their quarry species and habitats, not to mention other fields such as veterinary science, ethology, captive breeding, rehabilitation, release and restoration techniques, innovative legislation aimed at better conservation measures and the perpetuation of sensible hunting traditions through cross-generational education.

UNESCO has recognised falconry as an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Mankind in 18 countries, nine

of them European. Cultural expressions of falconry have left a very colourful heritage that can be found in archaeology, historical accounts, literary descriptions, art history, place and family names, music and theatre. In Europe, there is a remarkable variety of these expressions in a relatively small geographic territory.

EFFC's main objective is to perpetuate and enhance the role of falconers within a European (or European-linked) context by supporting and eventually funding projects in which falconers' participation is relevant. For this, we will be focussing on two main areas: Conservation & Animal Welfare, and Culture & Education.

Our goal is to ensure that falconry contributes to 21<sup>st</sup> century European society, helping to safeguard the things that we hold dear for our children and grandchildren. We know that falconry has a knowledge and skills base that qualifies us to play a significant role in this – as our slogan puts it: “Bringing Falconry values to Europe's future.”



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### JOSE MANUEL RODRÍGUEZ-VILLA

Jose Manuel Rodríguez-Villa commenced falconry aged 18, predominantly hawking ground quarry with goshawks. For the last 35 years he has flown peregrines at red legged partridges and ducks on the Spanish plains.

Founding Vice President and an honorary member of the Spanish Association of Falconry and Conservation of Birds of Prey (AECCA), he has also served two terms as IAF Vice President for Europe, Asia, Africa and Oceania (2003-2009) and sat on its Advisory Committee for 15 years. He was formerly Chairman of the Falconry and Raptors' Conservation Commission at the International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation (CIC) and a member of its Executive Committee. Jose Manuel is also a founding Board Member of the Falconry Heritage Trust (UK) and, currently, chairs the European Foundation for Falconry and Conservation (EFFC).

I am honoured to act as Chair for EFFC alongside a Board comprising members with a long and proven track-record in falconry and management – IAF's current President Adrian Lombard, Elisabeth Leix (Treasurer) and Philippe König (Secretary).

We are also privileged to have the generous support of our esteemed Council of Patrons – Helen Macdonald, HE Mohammed Al Bowardi, Peter Jenny and Allen Sangines-Krause. All four are internationally recognised figures whose names are synonymous with a commitment to falconry and conservation.

In addition to this, EFFC is most fortunate to be able to draw on the wise counsel of both Dr Andrew Dixon, our Conservation and Animal Welfare Expert, and Karl-Heinz Gersmann, EFFC's Culture and Education Expert. Both come to EFFC with outstanding credentials in their respective fields and will be central to our process of selecting and funding projects from the submissions EFFC receives. At the time of writing, procedures are being finalised for this.

Meanwhile, PR and Communications duties, including the establishment of EFFC's website, are in the capable hands of Hilary White, who has years of media experience in journalism.

EFFC begins life as a very modest foundation and we are well aware of the challenges ahead. We want this endeavour to be seen as a benchmark of what a qualified and specialised player is able to accomplish in the major fundraising industry. What's more, we want to show that falconers make efficient and resourceful partners when it comes to dealing with those issues that fall within our remit.

It won't be easy – we'll have to negotiate a very competitive landscape with limited funding sources, not to mention sometimes groundless prejudices against falconry. It will take time and effort, but we are determined to make EFFC a key instrument in channelling the potential benefits of falconry into a brighter Europe.

It goes without saying that such a goal is only possible with the continued and generous support of the global falconry community. We know we can count on you – after all, any success for falconry in one part of the world is a success for us all.

*José Manuel Rodríguez-Villa*

Chairman

European Foundation for Falconry and  
Conservation (EFFC)



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# ROYAL LOO REMEMBRANCE CUP 1851

*by Dick ten Bosch*



With the kind permission of the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, the Netherlands.

A silver table ornament shaped as a female falconer on a horse holding a falcon on her left hand and the falcon's hood in the other. At her side is a professional falconer carrying a cadge with three hooded falcons, whilst next to the horse lies a captured heron. The silver table ornament was presented as a trophy by King Willem III of the Netherlands to the winner of a horse race which took place during a meeting of the **Royal Loo Hawking Club** at the Loo Palace near Apeldoorn in the Netherlands. Both in 1851 and in 1852, the trophy was won by Mr. Stirling Crawford's horse *Darkie*. The trophy, a work of the silversmith John Samuel Hunt from London, weighs 5645 gr (176 troy ounces of silver) and has a height of 71 cm. Since May 2017 it has formed part of the collection of the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, the Netherlands.





Sunset over Wyoming. (by Andrew Knowles-Brown)



# HUNTING WITH EAGLES IN THE USA

*by Andrew Knowles-Brown*

Eagle falconry in the Americas has been somewhat below the radar as far as we on the east side of the Atlantic are concerned. My first encounter with US eagle falconry was when Michael Kuriga came over to Scotland for a British Falconers' Club International Field Meet in the 1990s. He spoke to me about eagles and hunting with them in the US, and asked whether I would like to be involved with a new eagle organisation called the International Eagle Austringers' Association, (IEAA). I said I would.

Having been to some of the US NAFA meets over the years, I had rarely seen eagles. I had already met with Lauren McGough and Chase Delles at these earlier meets, when neither had their own eagles, but they had the passion and now both have developed into accomplished eagle falconers. My first hand experiences of US eagle falconry changed dramatically when Joe Atkinson became Chairman of the IEAA and the annual Gathering of Eagles moved up a gear. I was now able to see a lot more eagles successfully hunting jackrabbits, as well as meet more eagle falconers. Fast forwarding now to 2017 and my visit to the latest Hunting with Eagles meet in October, this was held in Wyoming. The meet started on the Monday and I had arrived at the meet hotel a few days earlier with Joe Atkinson and his three eagles, Jack Hammer (JH), Davis and Miguel. JH and Davis are both seasoned hunting eagles, whilst Miguel, who Joe kindly allowed me to fly during the meet, is a young male with issues: he was found with imprint tendencies and not able to make it in the wild. He is with Joe after being assessed for possible rehabilitation using traditional falconry techniques. This will be a long job, slowly bringing him back to thinking like an eagle. I had flown him last year and this was to be a continuation of 'ironing out' his issues to ready him for his possible eventual release.

The meet hotel was at Rock Springs and the hawking ground was around the Farson area, a 45-minute

journey each day crossing past Sweetwater at 2,150 metres above sea level. This was big wild sage country where we saw native horses, pronghorn antelope and eagles – lots of eagles. The weather, overall, was good: mostly calm to a slight breeze with temperatures from freezing overnight to the morning, rising to 60-70°F with sun and blue skies in the afternoon. A few times temperatures dropped lower and we had snow flurries and some high winds, though these didn't last long and didn't cause us too many delays. The area we were on was mainly BLM (Bureau of Land Management) with a natural covering of sage brush and other native plants. The jackrabbits tended to congregate around the cultivated pivots and private farmland for night feeding, using the sage brush for resting during the day. We also drove many miles searching for the sweet spots. I still don't understand how half a mile can change the jack population from zero to hundreds so dramatically, especially when it all looks the same.

The 2017 meet saw the most eagle falconers attend that I have seen in the US, which is heartening. Regrettably, as I was flying an eagle, I didn't get to see all the eagles being flown. Some falconers wished to fly in the mornings and others in the afternoons whilst we, with three eagles, wanted to fly a longer time to get all the birds slips. People therefore split up to go to different parts of the hawking area. Sometimes we met up with other falconers and joined in with them or met in town for lunch or a snack to discuss our tactics. The way eagle hawking is undertaken in the US is to walk solo in the field, unlike in the UK where all eagles go out hooded and take it in turn to take a flight. Here, each falconer would walk till he had taken about half a dozen flights, return their bird to the vehicles and then allow the next falconer to take their eagle out for its turn. These "pesky white-tailed wabbits" are very similar to our European brown hares, using a variety of ingenious tactics to outwit their pursuers. With wild



Miguel and I having a chat!  
(by Andrew Knowles-Brown)



eagles ever-present they get plenty of experience of outwitting eagles. Some jacks will break 50 yards out so as to outrun the pursuing eagle, running up any rise in the ground and into the wind. Others bust as you are about to step on them, twisting and turning through the sage bushes, enticing the eagle to make a grab and

then jumping left, right or upwards, leaving the eagle in a cloud of dust and sage brush. They also have an annoying habit of lolloping along very slowly with an upright ear pricked posture, almost daring the eagle to commit to a stoop. They then duck behind a sage bush and exit in the opposite direction, leaving the eagle to once again 'eat dirt' and look very embarrassed: obviously a tactic that works.

Tony Sufferdini  
with Jesus.  
(by Andrew  
Knowles-Brown)

Our three eagles had good numbers of spectators coming out to see JH and Davis perform. Both these eagles of Joe's are experienced female eagles and, once they are dialled in to performance mode, put on some very good flights for the 30 plus visitors. Everyone is involved by walking in the flushing line, which can either be like a well-oiled machine – a nice straight line – or a straggling, wobbly gaggle of followers not really taking notice. These two scenarios dictate whether the falconer has the regimental sergeant major attitude, so keeping command of the spectators. The differences can make or break successful flushing. Some of the visitors were local Fish and Wildlife Service officers as well as United States Department of Agriculture personnel, along with other dignitaries. These were invited so they could see exactly what eagle falconry is all about, so as to aid discussions between the falconers and law-makers. Speakers, a round table conference, traders and raffles took place in the evenings.

On to the eagles with the Atkinson team, the eagle Joe has flown longest is JH. An eagle with a complex nature, Joe has had her for 16 years. When she was







Dexter returns  
to Chase.  
(by Pete  
Zaluzec)

brought into captivity she had some major veterinary treatment which caused her to lose fear of humans and exhibit imprint tendencies, and she takes a dislike to some people. When I first met her she was a made eagle and very competent at taking jacks with Joe. Although she initially didn't like people in the field and she could also take umbrage at moving objects such as 'nodding-donkey' oil pumps or farm machinery, it only took me a few visits before she tolerated my presence and now, some years later, she will fly with other people present. A very powerful flyer, who likes nothing best than a close-busting jack which is her forte, she will even ignore a flight if she feels the jack is not close enough. At times she will take a slip and secure it before the rest of the spectators even realise.

Davis is Joe's second female eagle: a good-sized, solidly built eagle, again with plenty of experience and jacks under her belt. She has been with Joe for nine years and, like JH, also has imprint tendencies, similarly due to intense veterinary treatment. She is not as unpredictable as JH but she still has to be treated with a certain amount of respect.

Last but not least is Miguel, the male I was allowed to fly, a young male who is in need of some TLC and guidance. He's a bit like a hormonal teenager who rebels against the rules and feels that he is always right: I am sure those of you who are parents reading this will know exactly what I mean. Last year, when I flew him for the first time, he was fidgety on the glove and would strike out for no reason. When he did decide to return after a flight, he came in very low at knee height and would try to bind to my leg if the glove was not low enough, trying to intimidate the newbie he thought I was with his attitude. I always tend talk to my eagles,



Jim Rogers  
with Voltar.  
(by Pete  
Zaluzec)

using as calming a tone as possible, so I would strike up a conversation with him, knowing of course he didn't understand a word I was saying, but using my voice to reassure him whenever I felt it necessary. Miguel picked up from where he got to last season and, within the first day or so, was back to how we had finished. He settled quickly after a few hesitant recalls, sat quietly on the glove and didn't appear to be looking to strike out at me, though I always kept my wits about me in case he was lulling me into a false sense of security. When unhooded for hunting, he was also focusing on the job, looking ahead as I walked and watching for that jack to flush. When it did, he readily took off in pursuit though, as an inexperienced eagle, the rabbit's exit strategy easily outwitted him. However, he learned their tactics with each flight he took. He was taking on long slips and recalling well so things were looking good for the meet week.

The other eagles I saw fly were Tony Sufferdini's male Jesus, Chase Delles's male Dexter and Lauren McGough's male Miles. Tony's male is a rehab eagle with imprint tendencies. Jesus is a very testing eagle to fly, with a habit of face-biting and footing, so Tony has to be on his guard when flying him. With a few seasons



Another deftly executed exit strategy.  
(by Pete Zaluzec)

a stoop. However, he will try to enforce his dominance if Tony doesn't concentrate.

Chase's male is a wild-taken eagle, taken under licence. He is very level-headed and it is a joy to see him fly and be handled. I have seen Dexter on a number of occasions over the years during which time he has changed immeasurably. From being a nervous passage eagle that couldn't be trusted to be taken out in thermalling weather, in case he specked out, never to be seen again, he has evolved into a very well-mannered eagle. Dexter is eager to work with Chase and will take on a jack in almost any scenario and successfully take it. A very aerial flyer, with a rising powerful flight as he overhauls his quarry, he has a trademark wingover and stoop to take his jack, but will adapt as the conditions dictate. With his now-extensive experience, he can take jacks in flat calm or high wind: a definite pleasure to watch.

Lauren's eagle is an older male she took on three seasons ago. He was originally taken from the eyrie illegally 16 years ago and reared by a non-falconer, so became imprinted. As he hadn't been flown, Lauren has had to put in much hard work to get Miles fighting fit but, like a young eagle, he hasn't had the experience to understand and work out the jackrabbits' repertoire of exit strategies. He eagerly takes on slips but quite

under his belt he is good at his game, he takes on flights readily and is a powerful flyer. I saw him make some good spectator flights: he is keen to take his jack and will make multiple re-flights to get his prize if he misses



Jumpin' Jack Flash: some rabbits jumped as high as five feet to outwit the eagles.  
(by Greg Beecham)



Lauren McGough with Miles and the first white-tailed jackrabbit for both of them. (by Andrew Knowles-Brown)

often fails at the final fence to take his quarry due to his inexperience, a lot like Miguel. When I was out with Lauren and her large entourage, Miles flew very well. On one of his flights he pursued a jack through some long grass, negotiated a barbed wire fence (which shows the red mist is not in charge and his spatial awareness is in active mode) and took the jack in good style. A roar went up and Lauren did her trademark little jump: this was Miles's first white-tailed jackrabbit and Lauren's also, so a milestone in both of their falconry journeys. I am sure he will continue to succeed as a 'mature student' with both of them continuing to work well together.

All of the eagles I saw took jackrabbits during the week, the experienced eagles making multiple kills most days. Miguel, who ended last year with a single kill, improved his score to multiple kills for the week with his flying ability and demeanour noticeably improved.

Marshall Radio Telemetry were in attendance for the week, bringing their range of GPS transmitters for use on the eagles. They monitored all the flights, downloading all the relevant information and flight simulations for the falconers to see on their devices. I found the straight line speed of the eagles especially interesting: Dexter and Miguel changed top spot backwards and forwards in the early part of the week with speeds in the 40s (mph), but



Miguel topped out at 68 mph on one particularly windy day with a wind-assisted flight.

Everyone also found great interest in the two martial eagles that Chase had brought along. As I had bred them it was really nice to see him working the pair during their early days of training. He was doing some dragged lure work and picked areas where the jacks tended to flush close, so he could get that 'chase trigger' to go off in the eagles heads. Martials, unlike golden eagles, are difficult to get started. Golden's are relatively easy to enter – if it moves they want to catch it – but quite a few of the African species need to be entered and sometimes



Dexter taking his jack after a sideways slide. (by Pete Zaluzec)



it takes time for the light bulb to switch on. Chase will be flying these birds prior to them going into a breeding project. Hopefully they will be present for the next eagle meet in October 2018, so why not come along and see all the eagles? I am sure there will be some quality eagle flying in some of the most stunning natural habitat of the golden eagle and its main prey, the jackrabbit.

As a final recollection, when we arrived at the hawking ground we saw what turned out to be the resident eagle: a first year female golden eagle in mint condition. Every day we saw her at some point, either circling on a ridge away in the distance or a speck

waiting on high, arrowing across the azure blue sky. As the days proceeded she became bolder and then she started to take on flushed jack rabbits when they got an acceptable distance away from us. On the last couple of days she became very bold, actively stooping at missed jacks that were only a couple of hundred yards away. Amazing as it was to see this interaction, I think if we had been there for a few more days we may have had problems if one of our eagles took a long slip and caught its prize, which she may well have tried to steal.

See you in 2018.



ANDREW  
KNOWLES-BROWN

My falconry journey started in 1964 with a chance meeting with a 'man with a bird on his hand'; this man became my mentor and the spark of falconry was lit. I started with kestrels and sparrowhawks, followed by a brief encounter with a Har-

ris' hawk in the late 60s and then on to the goshawk. I flew goshawks on and off as education and work allowed; I also bred kestrels which I hacked for release to supplement the dwindling numbers in the wild at that time.

With my move to Scotland in 1986 my falconry involvement moved up a gear. Living on a farm gave me the space for aviaries to be built, and I soon started to breed hawks. As I had the ground and quarry available I progressed on to flying a golden eagle. My breeding expanded to include eagles, with my first golden eagle hatched in 1989, and I have bred 18 species of birds of prey, the majority being eagles.

I have collaborated with a number of institutions to further the science and knowledge of raptors, being the first to successfully freeze eagle semen and produce the first live eaglet using frozen semen. I have supplied saliva from eagles for analysis to determine if a powdered version can be made to aid with rearing parentless eaglets, and

donated feathers and egg shells to perfect the detection of fingerprints for aiding detection of wildlife crime.

Official posts:

- Chairman of the Scottish Hawking Club, and instrumental in the club joining the International Association for Falconry and Conservation of Birds of Prey;
- Scottish Hawking Club delegate to the International Association for Falconry and Conservation of Birds of Prey;
- Chairman of the Scottish Hawk Board, which liaises with the Scottish Government;
- Vice-chairman of the UK Hawk Board, the UK's representative organisation for falconers;
- Past Treasurer of the British Falconers' Club (Scottish Group);
- Board Member, International Eagle Austringers' Association.

I was actively involved with the events promoting falconry to be accepted as an Intangible Cultural Heritage by UNESCO, and I officially attended the two Falconry Festivals in Reading as well as being part of the organising group for the two UAE Festivals in 2011 and 2014.

Falconry is the fire that drives what I do. I currently fly a female Bonelli's eagle. I have successfully taken game with female and male Bonelli's eagles, and also with golden eagles, martial eagle, African crowned eagles and a golden eagle x ornate hawk eagle throughout the last 30 years in the UK, continental Europe and the USA.

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# FESTIVAL OF FALCONRY, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES: DECEMBER 2017

*by Leo Baeten*

The Fourth International Festival of Falconry was a huge success and I would like to thank everyone who helped to make this trip so wonderful.

Jelle and I arrived at the airport in the UAE in late afternoon as the sun was setting. We took the taxi to Al Ain and, three hours later, we arrived at our hotel. At the entrance, Veronique was waiting for us. She handed us a small bag with flyers, our badges and a schedule for the week. Some twenty people were present around the table in the lobby, all falconers. Everyone greeted everyone else and, as soon as we saw someone with a Festival badge, we said hello and we began to discuss falconry.

The next day, a bus took us to the Mohammed Bin Zayed School, where a series of workshops on falconry and desert physiognomy would take place during the first four days. This school, in the middle of the desert, was full of expert people from around the world who came to share their knowledge with the visitors from abroad. These four days in the desert were among the most beautiful and interesting of my life.

During the final afternoon in the desert we were presented with a spectacle of riders, camels and hawks chasing a small plane. This was a very beautiful show; something I have never experienced before. The last workshop was given by Shawn Hayes at the hotel poolside. His topic was different from others. While most workshops focused on hawks and falconry, his was centred around humans. We discussed people's relationships in the world and how friendships are born



because, next to hunting, human social relations are always of greater importance. We always hope to enjoy beautiful flights when we are out hunting, but what matters even more are the people with whom we share them. It was a workshop to remember. On Thursday, we visited the Falcon Hospital in Abu Dhabi, another dream come true.

Friday was the first day of the Festival at Khalifa Park in Abu Dhabi. Each country shared a national booth with one or two other countries. We shared our tent with Pakistan and Panama. We learned about different cultures and techniques. It was magnificent. During the last two days, gifts were exchanged, pin badges were distributed and contacts cemented. We invited people to come to our country and told them that they would always be welcome. This experience has changed my life. We were expecting to learn a lot about birds of prey and falconry, but came back filled with life lessons. We had been in another world, a world where age, origin and language did not matter; where we shared a common language and passion: that of falconry.



LEO  
BAETEN

.....  
Leo Baeten from Belgium, 17 years old, has been involved with raptors since he was 13. He does not have a hawk yet. He is a member of the Belgian falconry club "Marie van Bourgondie"



*"It is our task to pass on the art of falconry to the youth, securing the transfer of our unique falconry tradition and practice on to the next generation."*



4 - 9 December 2017 4 - 9 ديسمبر

This Festival was by far the largest of its kind anywhere in the world – ever.

#### **The 4<sup>th</sup> Edition of the International Festival of Falconry – Some facts and figures**

- The Festival was held under the patronage of Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the UAE.
- 90 participating countries.
- 700 falconers, experts and researchers.
- 27 falconers and experts who were at the first Festival, 1976.
- 250 youth falconers.
- 50 falconry related activities.
- 8 international schools and academies for falconry.
- 102 rare pictures taken from the first Festival
- A 30% increase in the number of visitors when compared with the 2014 event.

The recognition of falconry as an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO in 2010, championed by the United Arab Emirates and now including 18 countries, has been the single most effective support for the continued practice of falconry worldwide. This recognition gives falconry a status

enjoyed by no other hunting discipline and falconry is the largest multi-national element in the list of Intangible Cultural Heritage.

To be recognised as Intangible Cultural Heritage, elements must be shown to be transmitted from generation to generation and recreated by communities and groups, providing people with a sense of identity and continuity. Falconry cannot be learned entirely from books, but must be passed from parent to child, from master falconer to apprentice, or between trusted hawkling companions. This transmission of knowledge transcends boundaries of languages, politics, religion and ethnicity. Falconry defines and reinforces our sense of community, which is why many falconers feel more at home with other falconers, thousands of kilometres from where they live, than they do in their own neighbourhoods.

This Festival's celebration of youth was designed to inspire and encourage new leaders in falconry, and nurture talent among them. The more experienced falconers attending had roles as educators, mentors and inspirational figures, to help the next generation take forward the wealth of knowledge.

International  
Falconry Festival  
Video





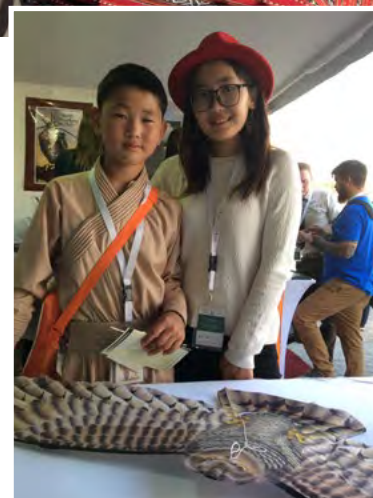
The first three days of the Festival involved a series of workshops in the Desert Camp at Telal Resort in Al Ain-Remah where falconers spent a hugely enjoyable time filled with excitement in the heart of the desert, participated in hunting trips on camels with Emirati falconers.

They visited displays of falcons presented by the Emirates Falconers' Club in cooperation with the Abu Dhabi Falconers' Club. Workshops in Bedouin tents discussed the heritage of falconry, international agreements and legislation, future strategies for falconry in the world and its regions, technologies, conservation, animal rights, nutrition and the veterinary care of raptors.

There were technical workshops on hood making and equipment with falconers from Italy, France, the UK and South Africa and instructional classes and presentations on the different methods used by Emirati falconers. There were presentations and practical sessions on falconry art, aspects of hunting with all the usual birds of prey and an exciting GPS telemetry hunt.

The public part of the Festival, in Khalifa Park, Abu Dhabi City, was opened by His Highness Sheikh Hamed Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Chief of the Abu Dhabi Crown Prince's Court. The two public days included children's activities, demonstrations, talks, exhibits and exciting practical workshops on the art and practice of falconry. Two days of music, dance and poetry entertained and inspired. Local people joined over 400 falconers from Europe, the Americas, Asia, Africa and the Middle East to learn how they train and hunt with their birds. When things became too hectic it was possible to relax with falcons and salukis in a Bedouin tent, sharing traditional food and Arabic coffee in the company of old friends and making new ones.

The Festival took place over six days altogether, and represented most of the world's clubs, organisations and international falconry schools. Principal in the organisation was the Emirates Falconers' Club, whose Secretary General, H.E Majed Al Mansouri, is also IAF's Vice-president for the Middle East and North Africa. IAF's secretariat, officials, delegates and friends all worked on organising this event and making sure of its success.







The Festival also witnessed the launch of the International Falconry Conference organised by the Emirates Falconers' Club, in collaboration with New York University Abu Dhabi and the International Association for Falconry and Conservation of Birds of Prey. This took place in the Sheikh Zayed Desert Learning Centre in Al Ain Zoo where a project was announced called: "Future Outlook on International Falconry." This project aims to gain the views of scientists from different academic fields.

There was an award ceremony for the 27 pioneers, falconers and researchers, who had attended the first festival, the original Festival of Falconry, that took place under the inspired patronage and guidance of the late Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan in 1976. This touching award ceremony was attended by falconers, researchers, experts and several local and international organisations concerned with the conservation of the falconry heritage, in addition to local and international media.

The Organising Committee received great praise from the general public of Abu Dhabi who asked that the time and scope of the activities be increased, and broadened to cover all parts of the world. The dedication of the clubs and relevant organisations towards the conservation of this cultural event was greatly appreciated.

This Festival provided a real chance to connect with each other for falconers and conservationists of all ages. It encouraged the sharing of positive attitudes to the future, to falconry's culture, the conservation of birds of prey and the nurturing of international friendships.

At a gala dinner for all participants, H.E Majed Ali Al Mansouri announced the launch of two pioneering projects in the field of falconry and conservation. The first is the "Sheikh Zayed Falconry Heritage Library" and the second is the "Mohammed Bin Zayed Raptor Conservation Fund," that will play a huge role in taking care of the heritage and conservation of falcons.

The International Festival of Falconry is held every three years, starting from the second one in 2011; the next one will be in 2020.







## *Full Circle with a Passage Prairie Falcon*

*by Dan McCarron  
Hutchinson, Kansas USA*

Photo credit: Jeffrey Willems

During the spring of 1978, as I was hiking along the North Platte River west of Laramie, Wyoming, I approached an area with a rocky outcrop and heard a muffled sound, not unlike the sound of wind in a tunnel. I caught a glimpse of her, a haggard prairie falcon (*Falco mexicanus*), making her descent. She pitched up and went over the back of the cliff. She vocalised a time or two, then disappeared. Seeing my very first wild prairie left its mark, but it would be decades before I would fly one of my own.

Most of my falconry has revolved around flying imprint and passage goshawks and passage golden eagles. I've seen many wild prairies since that first time in 1978. When I retired, I left Wyoming and moved to south central Kansas and thought about flying another eagle on jackrabbits, but hawkable numbers were more than two hours to the west. And, I didn't feel comfortable flying a goshawk here. If I was going to continue being a game hawk, I needed to develop a whole new niche.

Although I've trapped a few wild Prairies and Peregrines over the years, I've never actually had much experience trapping falcons. I have, however, spent many years successfully ridge trapping passage goshawks and other raptors using a traditional blind, lure pole/pigeon and bownet set-up. I've also trapped a good number of golden eagles using a modified Anglo-

padam trap. The transition to trapping prairie falcons was an enjoyable learning experience.

Kansas has a healthy population of wintering prairie falcons. Known as North America's desert falcon, the prairie nests primarily in the western US on cliffs and rock outcrops. Our vast grasslands support an abundance of small birds and mammals in winter. Large utility poles dot the landscape, making ideal hunting perches and roosts. These structures often parallel primitive roads and facilitate road trapping using a padam. I tested my padam by trapping and releasing passage and haggard prairies during the winter of 2015.

I trapped Susie-Q, the first passage female prairie falcon that I kept and trained, in November 2016. I was about 80 km northeast of historic Dodge City when I spotted a falcon sitting on the cross arm of a pole and was able to identify it as a passage bird with my spotting scope. I brought the trap out and set it down, using a live starling as bait. Before I could make it back to my truck, the falcon was on its way! I shifted into reverse and moved away from the trap when she made her first pass. Turning and pumping hard, she came in even faster the second time. Coming in low off the deck and determined to grab the starling and keep on going, she snagged a toe on one of the padam nooses. I had my prairie.



Passage female prairie falcon  
just out of the trap.  
(by Clayton Osburn)

I determined my prairie was a female; average in size, perhaps slightly smaller, but she was healthy, solid and heavy. I could barely feel her keel. She had a tipped tail feather and there was a bit of dried mud on her feet. I wondered where she had been. I removed her from the trap, cast her and carried her back to the truck to be hooded and put in an abba for the one-hour ride home.

For the next few weeks, Susie-Q lived in the hood except during meal time, which was on the fist. Manning and training went well. Eight days out of the trap she was eating bareheaded outside in twilight. By day 14, Susie was eating in full light on the lure. A few days later she was coming to the lure on a creance.

Susie's first free flight was 28 days out of the trap. The first few times I flew her free, I reinforced the lure. I also served her a couple of pigeons to catch. I wanted an insurance plan to get her back in an emergency, if needed. And I needed to a couple of times! I lost her twice while flying her that first fall. The first time, it took me four hours and 35 kilometers to recover her! The second time I lost her was over a duck pond. When I arrived to flush the ducks, Susie set her wings and sailed across the sky at an angle. She looked focused, but her attention was not on our duck pond. By the time I caught up with her, three hours had passed, and she had travelled approximately 27 kilometers! When I recovered her, I noticed she had a partial crop; she had eaten something along the way! I believe this was part of her routine behavior in the wild. On warm afternoons she would ring up, catch a piece of warm air, soar and not come down for several hours. I stopped flying her in the middle of the day after that, and she never took off again.

On our fourth wild duck slip, Susie caught a drake redhead. We were flying a small pond at the end of a winter wheat field. There were a couple dozen ducks



Dan  
McCarron.  
(by Jana  
McCarron)



of several different species on the pond. Susie never reached pitches of great heights. She seemed to know how high she needed to be to catch ducks, and she got skilled at hitting them, making audible sounds when she connected! We ended our first season with a big drake mallard.

I moulted Susie on the block and I put her on lights. I raised *coturnix* quail and was able to feed her fresh, whole animals during the entire moult. She dropped and replaced her primaries, secondaries and tail feathers, along with approximately 80% of her body feathers. By early October, I started preparing for our second season. Dropping her weight, she took to eating on the fist and lure flying again quickly.

On our first flight this year, I took Susie to a familiar pond. I unhooded her and she studied the landscape. After she roused, she left the fist but flew away from the pond! After several hundred yards she pitched up and then came straight down. I could see a red-tailed hawk fly off. Susie chased the hawk for a short distance and headed back my way. I was close to the pond by now, waiting for her to come overhead. When I flushed the ducks, Susie came down and hit a hen gadwall. Our first slip of the season and we had a duck in the bag! But,



Susie on  
a drake  
mallard, killed  
in the stoop.  
(by Dan  
McCarron)



Susie-Q on  
hen mallard.  
(by Dan  
McCarron)



Susie-Q with  
drake hooded  
merganser.  
(by Dan  
McCarron)







Author with once intermewed passage  
female prairie falcon, casting off.  
(by Christopher Ly)

she got rid of the competition first! She did this several times with wild Prairies and Red-tails throughout the season.

We had many more memorable flights. Susie had confidence and tailored her approach with each pond. Most of the time she planned her attacks by racing across the sky, pumping her wings as she came down from behind at a descending angle as the ducks left the pond. On larger ponds, she herded the ducks off the water giving them a false sense of security, then cut off their ability to bail back into the water. On smaller ponds, Susie took a more direct approach and this season she killed two drake Mallards in the stoop!

Susie-Q was a wonderful bird. I released her at the end of this season. I feel very fortunate to have had the opportunity to fly her. You get a deep sense of satisfaction when you trap, man, train, fly and then return a passage hawk back to the wild. It gives meaning to the term "full circle". It was almost forty years from the time I saw my first wild Prairie Falcon to the time I got to trap and fly one. Perhaps I've come full circle too!

Good hawking.



Release day:  
full circle.  
(by Dan  
McCarron)

## DAN McCARRON

Since he was a small boy, Dan McCarron has explored and studied the natural world. He attended the University of Wyoming in Laramie and earned a BS and MS in biology. Dan enjoyed a rewarding 30-year career as a science teacher in southwest Wyoming. During this period, he served on several national, state and local boards including two terms on a state wildlife advisory board. A licensed and practicing falconer for more than 40 years, most of Dan's falconry experience has focused on flying imprint and passage goshawks and golden eagles. Dan was instrumental in originally lobbying for and securing the wild take of passage Golden Eagles for falconry purposes in the US. Dan has also enjoyed fly fishing the wild and scenic rivers of the American West. In 2013, Dan and his wife, Jana, moved from Wyoming to Kansas where they own a small hobby farm focusing on poultry.





# The grey partridge

(*Perdix perdix*)

as an indicator species for agricultural open landscapes

by Michael Greshake

As humans began to settle down in the Neolithic age, the relatively species-poor forests of Central Europe gradually disappeared. If one examines the example of North Rhine-Westphalia to illustrate the situation in Central Europe, about 50% of this area is currently used for agriculture. The rest can be accounted for with 26% covered by forests and a further 13% occupied by buildings or another direct human use. The agricultural open landscape thus represents the largest habitat for our flora and fauna.

Alongside the conversion of extensive forest ecosystems into man-made agricultural ecosystems, biodiversity also changed. With the cultivation of crop plants, new wild herbs (weeds) migrated to the now open habitats alongside the crops. This ultimately formed the nutritional basis for biodiversity. This biodiversity, coupled with a structurally varied landscape, has shaped our country (and many others in Europe) until a few decades ago.

It is an often-forgotten fact that only the transformation of forest ecosystems into agro-ecosystems or “cultural steppes” created the necessary habitats for skylarks, quail, yellowhammers, lapwings and partridges, among others, to thrive. The biodiversity

that we were able to observe until the 1950s throughout Central Europe, but also more locally here in North Rhine-Westphalia, evolved solely because of the manner in which agriculture was practiced. The field flora and fauna were never particularly diverse, as it is an artificial and limited biodiversity, which was created only by the permanent cultivation of the agricultural areas by humans.

Biologists, conservationists, hunters and falconers wish to maintain this state of artificial biodiversity either for their own sake, or because of an anthropocentric feeling of empathy in addition to the possibility of sustainable use.

However, along with the shift in favour of mechanical or agro-biological control methods (crop rotation and three country harvesting among others) of “pests” and “weeds”, as well as with agro-chemical and structural changes (land consolidation, monocultures, etc.) that have come about since the 60s, we have witnessed the gradual and ever-increasing disappearance of all those species that had only been able to thrive in agricultural landscapes as a result of our previous pattern of use.

This concerns vertebrates, invertebrates, birds and, especially, insects, whose biomass has decreased by 80%

Scannen sie  
diesen Code um  
die deutsche  
Übersetzung  
anzuzeigen





locally compared to the 90s. In addition to no longer fulfilling their role as pollinators of flowering plants, insects are thus no longer a viable source of nutrition and so their decreased numbers are among the reasons for species loss in the avifauna.

There is an extensive amount of literature regarding these observations and I will therefore not elaborate on this further. Our primary concern, both as falconers and as the PERDIX working group, entails demonstrating through this project, which uses the grey partridge (*Perdix perdix*) as an indicator, that the former biodiversity can be restored through management of the partridge and its habitat. This has the potential of benefiting all types of open countryside habitats.

While maintaining our project's goal, it is important to bear in mind that the former biodiversity of the open agricultural landscapes present in previous centuries was only possible through the use of these agricultural areas, both in opposition to nature's attempts at reclaiming them and at a high energy cost. Both directly and indirectly, our proposed measures also affect the climate, water and soil quality and, ultimately, contribute to the protection of our human habitat.

Thus, in our partridge project, we are not just considering this particular species, which has been of particular importance to the falconry of previous centuries. Studies in England have shown that intelligent land management measures designed to improve the partridge population have also benefited many other species as a result (Buner 2017). The partridge is therefore an indicator species. It used to be so common and widespread in Central Europe, and its use by falconers and hunters so extensive, that it became worthwhile to train specialised pointing dogs.

The partridge was the characteristic field bird of the past (hence the synonymous name 'field chicken' in German, which indicates its habitat), whose appearance and biology has fascinated ornithologists

and bird conservationists with its characteristic breeding and courtship vocalisations. As such, this species conservation project represents an enormous ecosystem management task that provides additional conservation and protection measures from which so many other species can also benefit. Furthermore, it creates a bridge over which one can cross the divide between conservation and hunting associations.

*The problem: its failure lies not in the lack of knowledge, but in the feasibility of its implementation.*

There are many valid studies that concur which methods must be implemented to create optimal partridge habitats. There is no need for additional research on this subject: all factors are known and have been tested under experimental field conditions during which evidence was collected demonstrating their benefits for the partridge (for reference, see Dick Potts' books).

The decisive, concrete parameters/measures are:

### **1. Habitat improvement measures**

By far the most important measure is the creation of partridge habitats on at least 5% of the cultivated areas. These areas must be cultivated so that specific habitat structures or small agro-ecosystems are created, which then have a significant effect on the species that inhabit the open landscape. This includes, among other things, the implementation of a well-defined, well-known plant management plan including plants that attract insects. Insects represent the necessary protein source for the chicks during their rearing period. The absence of insects is the most limiting factor for population growth, so they are allocated a key role. These areas must be managed regularly or maintained according to suitably sensitive agricultural practices – essentially similar to those used before the pesticide era.

The farmer thus occupies a key position: he is the linchpin of success.

## 2. Predator management

With a simple calculation, one can demonstrate the influence of predators.

If 90% of a population consisting of 100 individuals is caught per year as a result of predation, and thus fails to reproduce, then only 10 individuals remain left to participate in breeding. However, if there are only 10 individuals in said population and 90% fall victim to predation, then the population can no longer sustain itself. Thus, predation management is of great importance, especially for small populations.

## 3. Winter feeding

This self-explanatory point does not require further elaboration here.

### The need to provide advice

Farmers cannot be expected to provide land for conservation measures without compensation, as this can lead to income losses that their families and businesses cannot compensate for. This is well-known, and political instruments such as 'greening' or agri-environmental measures in individual countries are intended to address this situation. Unfortunately, the proportion of agri-environmental measures has been decreasing in recent years, and greening is being implemented in many places through ineffective measures such as the production of green fertilisers in the autumn. On the other hand, many farmers feel bureaucratically overwhelmed when applying for these support measures. Most prominently, a fear of cross-compliance effects is repeatedly voiced. Thus, we have observed two major problem areas where advice and guidance could be provided: 1. Concrete implementation of "partridge-suitable" areas and 2. Application for funding. Due to the necessary amount of guidance and the knowledge that is required, this advice service can no longer be provided on a voluntary basis by nature conservation and hunting organisations.

## PERDIX Working Group



All of this knowledge regarding the partridge's loss and the potential countermeasures has forced falconers to become involved. Of course, a key motivation is the desire to maintain this game species for future generations as a viable quarry. However, involvement is also critical because the partridge characterises our largest habitat and is thus also an indicator for the quality of our human habitat. If falconers do not advocate for the preservation of this habitat, then who will?

In 2015, a European working group named BIODIVERSITY PERDIX was founded within the IAF. In addition to commenting on 'greening' and on glyphosphate, attempts at networking and engaging with EU parliamentarians, its first major project was the creation of an international knowledge platform: [www.perdixnet.org](http://www.perdixnet.org). This site is now available in 20 European languages. There are also national sites, such as the English site <http://perdix-uk.sycl.net> and the German site <http://perdix-de.sycl.net>, which complement the international site. This considerable amount of work was mainly undertaken by Prof. Robert Kenward and would not have been possible without the cooperation of Dr. Julie Ewald, Dr. Francis Buner and Dr. Nicholas Aebischer from the Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust, as well as the biologist Angela Görlich.

I believe that we have created something which may become a significant tool if it is used well in the future. As mentioned above, we don't have a knowledge problem, but rather one of implementation: Farmers must be encouraged and convinced about the necessary measures. We believe that this information work needs



Photo credit: Klaus Leix

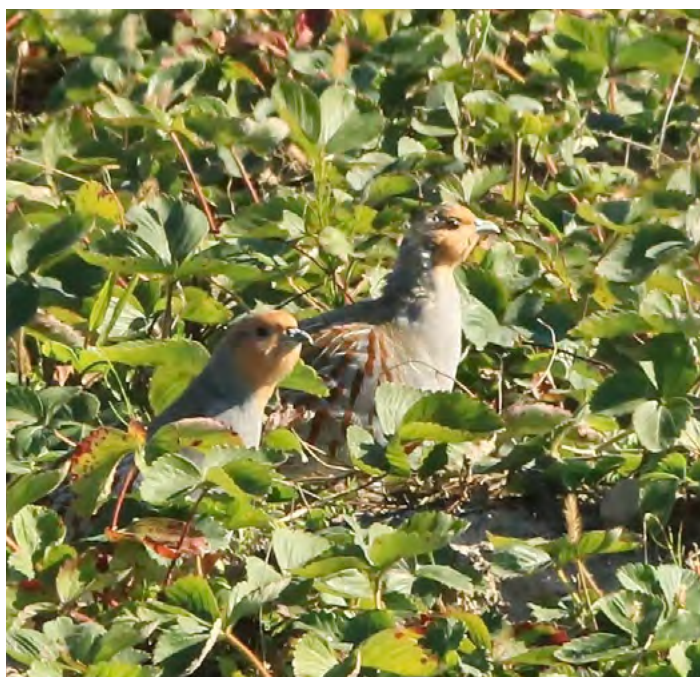


to be professionalised, and that will probably be the second step we need to take.

In spring of 2017, the PERDIXNET launch took place in Brussels. The Brussels Secretariat organised this event in the beautiful historical rooms of the BOZAR Centre for Fine Arts. A magnificent art exhibition featuring international artists was successfully organised by Mark Upton to support this event despite extensive time pressure. A splendid atmosphere, with guests from all over Europe as well as Adrian Lombard from South Africa, further enhanced this setting. Sadly, a number of the invited politicians and members of the Commission did not attend and only the future will reveal the legacy of this event.

As a member of the Steering Committee of the North Sea Region Interreg Project Partridge ([www.northsearegion.eu/partridge](http://www.northsearegion.eu/partridge)) the IAF belongs to a European network regarding the theme of partridge (*Perdix perdix*). As part of this project, which will be financed by the EU with 2.4 mio Euros for four years (2017-2020), ten different testing grounds will be set up of 500 ha each, which will be treated with habitat improving measures by the participating countries, Belgium, Germany, England, the Netherlands and Scotland, and thereafter compared with other testing grounds. The participating countries co-finance the project in equal amounts. The information obtained from the project should influence the Common Agricultural Policy of the EU. On 27.06.2017 a first meeting of the Steering Committee took place in Gottingen, Germany, in which the IAF also participated.

This remains a fascinating project that has created friendships across so many borders and whose continued evolution will be of great interest.



Dr.  
MICHAEL  
GRESHAKE

Practicing veterinarian Michael Greshake, 54, is a married father of two adult daughters. He was fascinated since childhood by the goshawk, the hawk that, both historically and today, best suits hawking in the enclosed landscapes of his native, formerly game-rich, Münsterland. At the age of 13, he took his first rabbit under the guidance of paternal friend Wilhelm Bruns, subsequently adding two Breton pointers to the goshawks.

When the rabbit population collapsed in the early 90's, he commenced game-hawking with peregrines. Today, in conjunction with a female peregrine falcon, pointer and springer spaniel, he hunts pheasants and ducks but – no longer – partridges. He writes: "Painfully perceiving ever-deepening changes in the landscapes of Central Europe and the accompanying loss of our game, falconers have a consequent special responsibility towards our habitat. This explains my commitment to the partridge."



# The identification of the Red-naped Shaheen

*Falco peregrinus babylonicus*,  
its separation from *F. p. calidus* in the field,  
and its status and distribution in north-western India

by Nirav Bhatt & Prasad Ganpule

## Introduction

Three subspecies of the peregrine falcon, *Falco peregrinus*, occur in India: the resident black shaheen, *F. p. peregrinator*, the migratory tundra peregrine falcon, *F. p. calidus*, and the red-naped shaheen, *F. p. babylonicus* (Naoroji 2006). The red-naped shaheen is a winter visitor to western India, mainly in Gujarat and in the Delhi area, straggling eastwards to the Gangetic Plains and northern Madhya Pradesh—visiting, mainly, desert and semi-desert areas (Rasmussen & Anderton 2012). It breeds mostly in Central Asia, from eastern Iran to Mongolia (White *et al.* 2017).

We present here the results from our study of its status, and distribution, in north-western India. We also attempt to describe how it may be separated, in the field, from the wintering *calidus* subspecies.

## Taxonomy

The taxonomy of the red-naped shaheen is complex and unresolved. Rasmussen & Anderton (2012) treat it as a subspecies of the Barbary falcon, *F. peregrinoides peregrinoides*, which they consider is a separate species from the closely related peregrine falcon. Other authorities, however, consider *peregrinoides* a race of *Falco peregrinus* and not a separate species (see Table 1). Grimmett *et al.* (2011) give only *F. (peregrinus) peregrinoides* for the Barbary falcon, including the red-naped shaheen in the given taxon. That this is certainly a taxonomy in flux is best shown by the fact that the Barbary falcon was treated as a separate species by Dickinson (2003) but, subsequently, it became a subspecies of the peregrine falcon in Dickinson &

Remsen (2013). For the different treatment meted to the red-naped shaheen in various works, see Table 1.

Table 1: Red-naped Shaheen: Taxonomic treatment

<i>Falco peregrinoides babylonicus</i>	<i>Falco peregrinus babylonicus</i>
Ferguson-Lees & Christie (2001)	Kazmierczak (2000)
Rasmussen & Anderton (2012)	Ali & Ripley (2001)
Oriental Bird Club / Images	Forsman (2006, 2016)
	Naoroji (2006)
	White <i>et al.</i> (2017) (website)

A recent DNA study suggests conspecific status with other peregrines (White *et al.* 2013b). Another recent authoritative monograph on peregrine falcons treats the red-naped shaheen as a subspecies of *Falco peregrinus* (White *et al.* 2013a). Forsman (2016) states that, “pending further genetic studies and given the extensive apparent hybridisation with [the] Peregrine, Barbary Falcon is treated as a subspecies of Peregrine.” Praveen *et al.* (2016) also treat the red-naped shaheen as a subspecies of the peregrine falcon in their India Checklist. While Clark & Shirihi (1995) and Clark & Davies (2000) suggested the merging of the Barbary falcon and the red-naped shaheen into one form, since they had similar plumages, White *et al.* (2013a) examined both forms, showing that there were differences and that isolated breeding specimens, though superficially similar, were distinct.

A comprehensive study of falcons, based on multiple molecular techniques (Fuchs *et al.* 2015), strongly supports treating *F. peregrinoides* as a full species. Based on this study, the Ornithological Society of the Middle East (OSME 2016) treated the red-naped shaheen as a



subspecies of *F. pelegrioides*, further qualifying that though more studies on molecular relationships are required, it would be prudent, at present, to treat the red-naped shaheen as a subspecies of *F. pelegrioides*.

Due to the aforementioned complex taxonomic status of the red-naped shaheen, we treat it here as a subspecies of the peregrine falcon, fully aware that this might change in the future.

Henceforth, in this note, we refer to the red-naped shaheen as *F. peregrinus babylonicus*, the migratory tundra peregrine falcon as *F. p. calidus*, the Barbary falcon as *F. p. pelegrioides* and the resident black shaheen as *F. p. peregrinator*.

### Methods and observations

We carried out extensive surveys in the Little Rann of Kutch and in the Greater Rann of Kutch (both in Gujarat) from 2006 to 2017. We also visited the Desert

National Park, Tal Chappar, Jorbeed (near Bikaner), and various other locations in the states of Gujarat and Rajasthan. Details of our sightings of *babylonicus*, and those of other observers, from north-western India between 2008 and 2017, are given in Table 2.

A few images, given below, are cross-referenced in Table 2. Though we have thoroughly searched for records of *babylonicus* from north-western India, it is possible that we may have missed some personal records of birdwatchers who have not shared their images on birding forums. Some of the individuals mentioned in Table 2 have been photographed multiple times by several bird photographers. We have carefully browsed through all the photographs available on websites like INW (indianaturewatch.net), OBI (orientalbirdimages.org), various birding groups on Facebook and other birding forums, and ensured from the locality, and plumage, that there are no definite new

**Table 2:** Sightings of *babylonicus* from north-western India between 2008 and 2017

Sr No	Place	Date	Observer	Remarks
1	Okhla Bird Park, Delhi	01 January 2008	Arya: OBI	Adult
2	Little Rann of Kutch, Gujarat	18 November 2008, 18 January 2009	Author's sighting (PG) (Fig 7)	Ganpule 2011
3	Greater Rann of Kutch, Gujarat	02 December 2008	Francis: OBI	Adult
4	Banas River, near Ranthambhore, Rajasthan	02 December 2009	Khandal: OBI (Fig 9)	Adult with a Juvenile
5	Greater Rann of Kutch, Gujarat	11 December 2009	Mishra: OBI (Fig 11a&11b)	Juvenile
6	Greater Rann of Kutch, Gujarat	December 2009	Shurpali: INW	Juvenile
7	Little Rann of Kutch	05 February 2012	Author's sighting (PG) (Fig 1)	Adult
8	Tal Chappar, Rajasthan	25 January 2012	Poonia: OBI	Adult
9	Little Rann of Kutch, Gujarat	30 December 2012	Mori: OBI	Juvenile
10	Greater Rann of Kutch, Gujarat	05 December 2014	Soumen Mahato, Jugal Tiwari: FB	Adult
11	Little Rann of Kutch, Gujarat	07 December 2014, then seen till February 2015	Vihol: OBI (Fig 13)	Juvenile
12	Little Rann of Kutch, Gujarat	21 December 2014, 25 January 2015	Author's sighting (PG & NB) (Fig 2)	Adult
13	Little Rann of Kutch	22 December 2014	Mori : FB	Adult
14	Dhanauri Kalan, Uttar Pradesh	28 January 2015	Arya: OBI (Fig 4)	Adult
15	Mansarovar Lake, Sariska, Rajasthan	15 February 2015	Singh: OBI	Adult
16	Near Dantiwada, North Gujarat	01 March 2015	Nirdosh Gupta ( <i>pers. comm.</i> )	Juvenile
17	Little Rann of Kutch, Gujarat	20 November 2015, then regularly seen till Feb 2016 in the same area	Author's sighting (NB) (Fig 5)	Adult
18	Little Rann of Kutch, Gujarat	20 December 2015	Author's sighting (NB) (Fig 3)	Adult
19	Gurdaspur, Punjab	December 2016	Sandeep Beas: FB	Adult
20	Greater Rann of Kutch, Gujarat	04 January 2016	Tiwari: OBI (Fig 10)	Juvenile
21	Greater Rann of Kutch, Gujarat	04 January 2017	Jaysukh Parekh <i>pers.comm</i>	Juvenile
22	Greater Rann of Kutch, Gujarat	11 January 2017	Jainy Maria <i>pers.comm</i> (Fig 6)	Adult
23	Barabanki, Uttar Pradesh	February 2017	Atul Singh Chauhan: FB	Juvenile

Abbreviations:

FB=<https://www.facebook.com> group, Raptors of India; INW=<http://indianaturewatch.net>; OBI=<http://orientalbirdimages.org>.



individuals which we have not covered in Table 2. Some individuals, posted on these websites as *babylonicus*, are misidentified and so we have not included them in Table 2. We have also not included records of birds that could be *babylonicus*, but whose photographs are of too poor a quality to decipher finer details, or for which only a single image is available. We prefer to err on the side of caution in such cases. We have excluded sighting records from 'eBird' (<http://ebird.org/content/india/>), since photos were not posted along with the bird lists and field identification is quite difficult, especially of juveniles. We have included only those sightings which are well documented through photographs, and where identification is beyond any doubt.

### Identification

Adult *babylonicus* is quite easily separated from *calidus* since the rufous wash on the cheeks, nape and the underparts of the former is quite apparent and is a diagnostic feature for identification. However, some *babylonicus* may show very limited rufous on the cheeks and nape, which may lead to confusion if seen from a certain angle. Of these individuals, some are, indeed, not 'red-naped' in the true sense. Such individuals have a darker nape, showing faint rufous nape feathers. On the other hand, some adult *calidus* may show a paler nape area, most often being pale white or greyish, but sometimes even pale buffish-white, leading to more confusion, and the risk of misidentification (A. Corso, *pers. comm.*). Hence, it is advisable to get good views, from all angles, to confirm the identification, as the distinctive rufous cheeks are usually seen only when viewed closely.

There are two basic colour forms in *babylonicus*. Dorsally, the colouration ranges from dark (blackish) to an almost pale cerulean bluish-grey – with a wide range of intermediate colours. The pale bluish and large birds are said to occur in north-western China and Mongolia (the eastern part of its range), while the darker birds occur from Turkmenistan eastwards to the adjacent Central Asian countries, and pale and small birds occur in Iran and Afghanistan (the westernmost part of its range) (White *et al.* 2013a). All types of forms are seen in the winter in north-western India: these observations are also confirmed by museum specimens (White *et al.* 2013a). The photographs of adult birds published in this paper [Fig 1-8] clearly show the variation, with dorsal colour ranging from blue through dark bluish-grey,

**Fig 1:** Adult *babylonicus*. Note rufous nape and cheeks. Dark bluish-grey upperparts and rufous underparts with very less barring. Little Rann of Kutch. 05 February 2012. Photo by Swadeepsinh Jadeja.



pale grey and dark grey to black. Ventrally, it is pale cream to dark rufous, with only faint barring on the belly and flanks. Some individuals may show prominent barring (mostly females or individuals in their first adult plumage) (A. Corso, *pers. comm.*), but this is uncommon and most adult birds seen in the study area have plain rufous underparts with narrow, sparse barring. Some of the palest birds are a solid peachy-buff with only slight, barely perceptible, markings on the flanks and thighs. If markings are present in the centre of the breast, they are usually spots or tear drops, rather than bars, except in the darkest individuals (White *et al.* 2013a). A few



**Fig 2:** Adult male *babylonicus*. Note pale bluish-grey upperparts and rufous nape and cheeks. This individual had rufous underparts with almost no barring. The bluish tones on the upperparts are prominent. 21 December 2014. Little Rann of Kutch. Photo by Nirav Bhatt.



**Fig 3:** Adult male *babylonicus*. Note the very extensive rufous head, nape and the moustache. The underparts are plain and washed with rufous, with faint barring on the flanks. The upperpart colour is darker greyish-blue. 20 December 2015. Little Rann of Kutch. Photo by Nirav Bhatt.



**Fig 4:** Adult *babylonicus*. Note pale grey upperparts and rufous underparts with almost no barring. Also note rufous cheeks. This individual lacks any blue tones on the upperparts and the upperpart colour is similar to a pale *calidus*. 28 January 2015. Dhanauri Kalan, Uttar Pradesh. Photo by Anand Arya.



darker individuals noted here had somewhat prominent underpart markings, which are more pronounced on the flanks and thighs (See Figure 5a).

These features give *babylonicus* a very distinctive appearance, and birds in adult plumages are fairly easily identified from *calidus*. Although some adult *calidus* can show pale pink to rufous wash on the underparts in adults (*pers. observations*), this is faint and does not extend on to the head, cheeks and nape, thus separating it from *babylonicus*. Furthermore, the faint salmon-pink wash observed in adult *calidus* is typical of very fresh plumage and is quickly lost due to abrasion and sun-bleaching (A. Corso, *pers. comm.*).

The separation of adult *babylonicus* from typical *peregrinator* is also relatively straightforward; *peregrinator* shows a deeper rufous wash on the underparts, has a more 'hooded' appearance with a very small (or absent)

cheek patch, due to its very broad moustache, and is dorsally dark grey or black. This contrasts with the prominent rufous cheek patch, distinct moustachial stripe and reddish crown of *babylonicus*. The underparts in *babylonicus* are usually less intensely coloured than in *peregrinator*, and the latter's upperparts are darker. Similarly, a juvenile *peregrinator* can be separated from *babylonicus* by a hooded appearance, broader moustachial mark and, usually, a dark rufous wash to the underparts. However, there is extensive plumage variation in populations of southern and northern *peregrinator* in India (White *et al.* 2013a). The separation of atypical juvenile and adult individuals of *peregrinator* from *babylonicus* is beyond the scope of this work.

The problem of separating the juvenile *babylonicus* from that of *calidus*, by plumage, is well known, and White *et al.* (2013a) state that even museum specimens of



**Fig 5a & 5b:** Adult *babylonicus*. This adult female was seen in the same area for more than two months. Note the blackish upperparts and the rufous underparts with noticeable barring on the belly and flanks, which is usually not seen in adult *babylonicus*. Such darker individuals of *babylonicus* are impossible to separate from *pelegrinoides* without DNA analysis and measurements, and it is not possible to determine the subspecies. Hence treated here as *babylonicus*. Little Rann of Kutch. 24 November 2015. Photo by Jainy Maria (5a) & 20 December 2015. Photo by Nirav Bhatt (5b).

**Fig 6:** A dark adult *babylonicus*. Greyish-black upperparts. Rufous cheeks, barring on the flanks and thighs. Note that the scapulars have started moulting (in early January) and new feathers are seen, indicating start of body moult. A hint of pale supercilium is seen above the eye. 11 January 2017. Greater Rann of Kutch. Photo by Jainy Maria.



*babylonicus* are sometimes mistakenly labelled ‘*calidus*.’ This is reflected in the field too, when identification of some juveniles is often quite difficult. This is especially problematic with pale and sparsely streaked juvenile *calidus*, which are quite similar to juvenile *babylonicus*. Naoroji (2006) states that ‘some exceptionally pale *calidus* juveniles may show thin, scattered brownish streaking below.’ Even the head pattern – broad pale supercilium and a narrow dark moustache contrasting prominently with a wide pale cheek patch – and the dorsal colour in many pale juvenile *calidus* closely matches juvenile *babylonicus*. It is well known that the juvenile *calidus* is very variable, with underparts varying individually in background colour, from buffish white to yellowish ochre, and the dark streaking on the breast may be heavier or finer (Forsman 2006, 2016). Both species occur in the Little Rann of Kutch, and their separation becomes difficult.

The various texts do not give details regarding separation of juvenile *calidus* from *babylonicus*, except general identification pointers. Based on our experience of *calidus* and *babylonicus* in Gujarat, and studying photographs of both, the following features are useful in the identification of juvenile *babylonicus*:

1) Upperparts: Usually pale brownish, with rufous edges to the feathers, but this latter is variable, ranging from dark brownish to blackish. Frequently, the pale tips and fringes to the upperpart feathers are completely worn (or very faint) in winter.

2) Size and structure: In general, *calidus* is usually much larger and bulkier than *babylonicus*. However,

this is difficult to judge in the field without direct comparison. This is usually apparent in male *babylonicus* as it is quite small in size. The female *babylonicus* may be as large as a male *calidus*, and hence this is not very conclusive unless both are seen together, but, in general, *babylonicus* is more slim and compact. Furthermore, *calidus* is usually appreciably longer in the tail and wings, with a narrower and longer ‘hand’ (being a very long-distant migrant), although to detect such differences in their jizz requires great experience (A. Corso, *pers. comm.*).

3) Underparts: The base colour of the underparts is pale rufous to creamy but may become whitish by the first winter. Many of the juveniles seen in north-western India in the winter have whitish or only pale cream underparts. The underpart streaking is also very variable with very fine and sparse streaking in most individuals, but a few show slightly thicker streaking, which usually forms lines on the breast and belly. Importantly, the streaking is usually concentrated into the central area, with the throat and upper breast, and the lower belly and thighs often remaining unmarked and whitish. Often, a rufous hue is seen on the upper breast and belly.

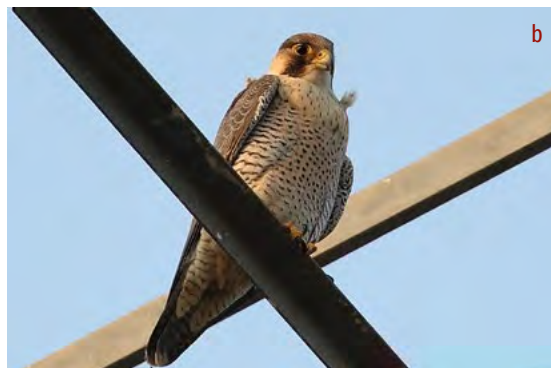
4) Plumage and moult: By winter, most *babylonicus* show more worn plumage than *calidus*. This is due to the fact that *calidus* is an Arctic breeding bird while *babylonicus* is a more southerly breeder. Though the breeding season varies, *babylonicus* usually breeds from early February to April (White *et al.* 2013a), with the young fledging by the end of May. The juveniles of



**Fig 7:** Adult *babylonicus* in flight. Rufous underparts with barring on the flanks. Compact structure with pretty obvious short tail. Plain, pale rufous lesser coverts. The barring on the primaries and secondaries is quite prominent. 18 January 2009. Little Rann of Kutch. Photo by Prasad Ganpule.



**Fig 8a & 8b:** Adult. The upperparts are typical pale blue-grey seen in adult *babylonicus*, but note the underparts; showing heavy barring without any rufous. However, a faint rufous wash on the cheeks and on forehead is apparent. This could be an individual in its first adult plumage or possibly an intergrade with another subspecies, or simply a very well-marked old female. The breeding origin of such birds is unknown. Winter 2010. Hyderabad. Photos by Dr. J. Pranay Rao.



the northern breeding *calidus* usually fledge in August (Dixon *et al.* 2012), hence there is a difference of almost three to four months in their breeding periods. This is also confirmed by the fact that most records of *babylonicus* here are between mid-November and the end of February, while *calidus* is seen in Gujarat until mid-May, indicating that *babylonicus* returns to its breeding area earlier. This difference in moult timings is important in separating the two. Furthermore, most *babylonicus* breed in dry, desert-like conditions and the feather edges quickly abrade.

By December, most *babylonicus* show worn plumage, with abraded tips to dorsal feathers, which are bleached due to wear, and the head and mantle feathers are also frequently moulted to adult-like plumage. By contrast, *calidus* are in relatively fresh plumage and so, in November–December, *calidus* have less wear to the plumage, especially dorsally, compared to *babylonicus*. Many *babylonicus* show adult feathers on the mantle and head by the end of January, thus showing a more advanced moult than *calidus*. The general state of the plumage in winter is an important feature in separating the two, a difference not reported in the main reference texts. The difference in moult timing is used in separating adult *peregrinus* from *calidus*, as *peregrinus* moults all primaries after breeding while *calidus* completes its moult, which is suspended during migration, in late winter (Forsman 2006, 2016). Hence, this feature can also be used in separating *babylonicus* from *calidus* in early winter.

5) Bare parts: Cere, orbital skin and eye ring are pale to darker yellow, and the feet are yellow in juveniles. Fledging *babylonicus* have a bluish cere and eye ring, which turns yellow post fledging. By autumn, the cere



**Fig 9:** Juvenile *babylonicus*. This individual was seen with an adult, presumably its parent, which was typical adult *babylonicus* with bluish grey upperparts and rufous nape. Note the rufous tinged underparts with sparse streaking, the yellow cere and eye ring, rufous wash on the cheek and whitish supercilium. A few adult-type feathers are seen on the mantle in December, indicating early moult, and, furthermore, the plumage is already rather abraded and sun-bleached, indicating an early fledging. Note the slim structure, looking much slimmer and compact than *calidus*. 20 December 2009. Banas River, near Ranthambhore, Rajasthan. Photo by Dharmendra Khandal.

and eye ring are pale yellow to yellow in *babylonicus*, while *calidus*, being a late breeder, shows a grey cere until late winter. Though the colouration of bare parts is also based on diet (carotenoids), the difference in the breeding periods of *calidus* and *babylonicus* makes this feature very important. This is considered to be diagnostic in separating juvenile *pelegrinoides* from juvenile peregrines (Clark & Shirihai 1995). Shirihai *et al.* (1998) state that *pelegrinoides* tends to acquire stronger yellow pigment in bare parts earlier (as early as September), but this is correlated with the timing of breeding. While this particular feature is not given in the reference texts for *babylonicus*, it should apply for separating *babylonicus* from *calidus*, especially in early winter, November–December, since both taxa

**Fig 10:** Juvenile *babylonicus*. Note the slim structure and the plumage. Mantle already shows adult-type feathers in early January, indicating advanced moult. This individual had a whitish, almost unstreaked breast. The rufous on the cheeks is noticeable. The yellow cere and eye ring and the banding on the tail is also typical of *babylonicus*. 04 January 2016. Greater Rann of Kutch. Photo by Jugal Tiwari.



are morphologically quite similar. An overwhelming majority of juvenile *calidus* that we have seen in Gujarat had a grey cere until the end of December, while all juvenile *babylonicus* had a pale yellow or yellowish cere in the same period. This is also seen in several photos of first winter juveniles posted on the Internet on many birding websites. While *calidus* may show a pale yellowish cere by January, this can be used for separation in early winter. Another useful feature is the eye ring, which in *babylonicus* looks thicker with more

bare skin in front of the eye. This is usually not seen in *calidus*. However, close views and good photos are needed to confirm these features.

6) Head pattern: The head patterns of juvenile *calidus* and *babylonicus* are surprisingly similar. Many *calidus*, especially pale-plumaged birds, are difficult to separate from *babylonicus*, as they show a prominent white supercilium, white cheek patch and pale forecrown. However, *babylonicus* frequently shows at least some rufous to the moustache, cheeks and eyeline, with the supercilium being tawny in colour. However, pale *calidus* can sometimes show a light brownish wash on the moustache.

7) Tail pattern: Rather variable, but most *babylonicus* show a more prominent sub-terminal tail band. This is usually not seen in *calidus*. However, there is much overlap between the two and many *calidus* indeed show wider sub-terminal dark bars (at least the last two).

The identification features described above are useful in the identification of most *babylonicus*. However, there are a few individuals of *calidus* that are extremely similar in plumage to *babylonicus* and are best left unidentified. A critical study of a large number of individuals is needed to verify whether the above-mentioned features can be consistently applied for separating the two species. Clark & Shirihai (1995) noted that *pelegrinoides*



**Fig 11a & 11b:** Juvenile *babylonicus*. This is a rather dark individual, showing almost blackish upperparts. The plumage looks much worn in early November, with the fringes almost non-existent. The underparts are rufous, showing somewhat heavier streaking. Note that the thighs are finely streaked. The yellow cere and eye ring are seen here. The moustache looks entirely black, with the cheeks showing only a faint rufous tinge. This individual is very unlike the juvenile birds seen here, as the upperparts are darker than usual. 07 November 2009. Greater Rann of Kutch. Photos by Vaibhav Mishra.



and peregrines are very similar in proportions. Looking at the proportions of museum specimens of *calidus* and *babylonicus* given in White *et al.* (2013a), there is indeed an overlap in measurements. However, the overlap in wing lengths of *babylonicus* and *calidus* is minimal and this feature might be useful in separating the two. The wing lengths for both are given below in Table 3.

**Table 3.** Wing length of *babylonicus* and *calidus* after White *et al.* (2013a)

Species	male (in mm)	female (in mm)
<i>babylonicus</i>	269-298 (n=14)	314-330 (n=7)
<i>calidus</i>	296-323 (n=28)	330-364 (n=21)

The morphometric measurements given in Abdulali (1969) also fall within the ranges for both the subspecies given above. The ratio of wing length to tail length can also be useful as *babylonicus* looks shorter-tailed, and its wing-to-tail ratio is larger than that of *calidus*. However, measurements of live specimens will help ascertain whether this can be applied to separate the two. In general, *calidus* clearly appears longer-tailed in the field, a difference mostly noticed in adults, as juveniles of both *taxa* have longer tails than adults, therefore making it harder to tell the differences in the field visually.

The juveniles of *babylonicus* shown here [Fig 9-13] represent the wide variation seen in juvenile plumages, with differences in upperpart colour, streaking on underparts and head pattern. The *calidus* juveniles given here [Fig 14-17] are atypical individuals, similar to *babylonicus*, and difficult to separate. Some birds are impossible to assign to any subspecies without measurements and are best left unidentified.

Finally, a comment on the juvenile *babylonicus* shown in Figure 149 in White *et al.* (2013a); this individual was photographed in the Little Rann of Kutch and is given as a dark juvenile *babylonicus*. It is, in our opinion, most probably a juvenile *calidus*; the typical head pattern (lacking rufous wash on the moustache and cheeks), white base colour to underparts, the coarse streaking, arrowhead markings on the flanks, the greyish cere and the rather bulky appearance point towards a *calidus*.

## Discussion

Historically, *babylonicus* has been recorded in Gujarat; Ali (1954) collected two specimens from the northern edge of the Little Rann of Kutch, and reported two more sightings from Kutch. Dharmakumarsinhji (1955)

**Fig 12:** Juvenile *babylonicus*. Note the streaking on the underparts, which is concentrated in the middle, leaving the upper breast and the lower belly and thighs largely unmarked. This type of streaked breast is typical of *babylonicus*. Note the rufous wash on the nape. May 2005. Near Urumqi, Xinjiang, China. Photo by John Holmes.



noted that it was rare in Saurashtra, but seen more commonly than *peregrinator* in winter, when it preferred open country. This is not true now as *babylonicus* is no longer seen in Saurashtra and all recent records are from Kutch. In fact, *peregrinator* breeds in the Girnar Hills near Junagadh in Saurashtra (Mori & Joshi 2017) and is more commonly seen in the surrounding areas now. Naoroji (2006) mentioned *babylonicus* as an



**Fig 13:** Juvenile female *babylonicus*. Dark brownish upperparts. Streaked underparts (forming lines) with prominent rufous wash. The upper breast has already moulted into adult like plumage. The thighs are finely streaked, and the cere and eye ring are dark yellow. This is a juvenile which is in moult. This bird was seen in the area from December 2014 until February 2015. 01 February 2015, Little Rann of Kutch. Photo by Falguna Shah.



**Fig 14a & 14b:** Juvenile *calidus*. This individual is similar to a juvenile *babylonicus*. The underparts are thinly streaked. However, note the fresh plumage (the fringes to the mantle feathers are not at all worn) in late December, indicating late breeding. The face markings are poorly defined and the grey cere and eye ring, along with the bulkier build, are indicative of a juvenile *calidus*. Well-known raptor expert Dick Forsman helped us in identification of this bird and gave a detailed explanation, emphasising the state of plumages in December, of which we quote only a few lines: "Juveniles of the peregrine group can be notoriously difficult to identify, because of rather extensive plumage variation within each taxa, but in this case I think it is safe to say we are dealing with a juvenile northern peregrine of the *calidus*-type." We consider this bird as a putative *calidus*. December 2012. Bangalore. Photos by Kiran Poonacha.



**Fig 15a & 15b:** Juvenile *calidus*. A very different bird from those seen in Gujarat. Note the very sparsely streaked breast, with arrowhead markings on the flanks. The upperparts are grey rather than brown – with a grey wash on the upperparts (which turned to pale brown later). Upperpart feathers with ochre fringes. The head markings are similar to *babylonicus*, with a thin moustache and white supercilium, but note absence of any rufous on the head and underparts. Note also here the very fresh plumage with "scaly" effect due to wide pale fringing all over the upperparts. Such birds are said to inhabit the Russian Arctic, east up to the Taimyr Peninsula. This individual was very large – approaching the size of a saker falcon (*Falco cherrug*) – and hence could be sexed as a female. It was seen in the same area for two months. Little Rann of Kutch. 02 January 2011 Photo by Prasad Ganpule (15a) and 16 December 2010 by Nirav Bhatt (15b).

uncommon winter visitor to north-western India, with a sighting record from Kutch.

Looking at the above records, it can be said that *babylonicus* is a rare, but regular, winter migrant to north-western India. It prefers desert and semi-desert areas, as the maximum number of records from Gujarat are from desert areas of the Greater- and Little Rann of

Kutch. A few birds were seen in a specific area for more than two months in the Little Rann of Kutch, indicating that they remain in the same area in the winter months. Interestingly, regarding the juvenile *babylonicus* which was seen between December 2014 and February 2015 (Fig 13), an adult *babylonicus* was also seen in the same area from December 2015 until February 2016. We



**Fig 16a & 16b:** Juvenile *calidus*. A pale individual with sparsely streaked breast. Note the head markings; white supercilium and forehead, thin moustache and hint of brownish wash on the moustache and eye line. The upperparts are light brownish and the plumage is looking very fresh, with no abrasion to the fringes of the mantle feathers. The underparts and cheeks are white, with no hint of rufous. 08 November 2015. Little Rann of Kutch. Photos by Dhairya Dixit.



feel that it could be the same individual owing to its similar size and structural similarities in the two birds but, without ringing or other details, we cannot be sure. In addition, both *calidus* and *babylonicus* occupy the same habitat in the Little Rann of Kutch and have been often sighted in the same location at different times (*pers. obs.*, NB).

*Pelegrinoides* is not known to occur in India. Its distribution is from northern Africa to the Middle East and Arabia (Forsman 2016). A study in the Middle East and Africa observed that upperpart colour in *pelegrinoides* also ranged from light bluish to dark (blackish), similar to *babylonicus* (Corso 2001). It should be noted that some dark *babylonicus* seen here are extremely similar to *pelegrinoides* and it is not possible to identify such individuals to the subspecific level. While *pelegrinoides* is known to be partially migratory (White *et al.* 2013a), only further research will confirm whether some birds seen here are indeed of this subspecies. This would require trapping, physical examination and DNA analysis.

Ideally, a study of breeding birds is essential in proving the variation seen in *babylonicus*. The identification of juveniles should be researched in the areas where it is resident and/or moves only to the

adjacent plains and valleys so that the breeding origin of these birds is known and details of plumage variation in adults and juveniles can be studied. The moult strategy in adults is also of interest as a few individuals seen here had started body moult (of mantle feathers) in late December and early January. The breeding origin of the birds wintering in India should also be studied by tagging these individuals. This will reveal where the birds wintering in India come from, as it seems likely that birds from the entire breeding range of *babylonicus* winter here. This will also help in understanding the movements and migration routes of these birds.

As *babylonicus* is rare in India, with very few individuals being photographed and even fewer individuals studied for a longer period of time in the winter, there is little data regarding the variation and identification of juvenile *babylonicus* in the reference texts. The identification pointers presented here are based on a preliminary study and mainly intended to help birdwatchers distinguish *babylonicus* from the more common *calidus* during their winter migration to India. However, in juvenile plumage, unless the bird exhibits typical plumage characteristics of either *babylonicus* or *calidus*, it is best to abstain from subspecific identification. Further research will help

**Fig 17:** Juvenile peregrine falcon. One of the most contentious individuals seen here, expert opinion is divided regarding its identification. The slight rufous wash on the moustache and the head pattern points to a juvenile *babylonicus*. However, note the sparsely streaked breast, which is similar to the bird in Fig 15, the whitish colour to the underparts, the bulkier build, white supercilium, condition of the plumage, the arrowhead markings on the flanks and the grey cere in late November, which indicates a *calidus*. This individual is probably a *calidus* (intergrade with a close clinal taxon?). However, such individuals are impossible to identify to the subspecies level with certainty unless trapped and measured, and hence are best kept unidentified. 27 November 2010. Little Rann of Kutch. Photo by Saptagirish Oleti.



clarify taxonomical and morphological differences in this taxon, along with its habitat preferences in the winter.

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Video  
Falcons India



NIRAV  
BHATT

Based in Surendrar, Gujarat, in India, I have been birding for more than 18 years. I have a particular interest in birds of prey, on which I have undertaken various surveys in Gujarat and Rajasthan. I have published about 10 papers in peer-reviewed journals, almost all of which are related to raptors. Gujarat's Little Rann of Kutch is one of my favourite birding destinations because of the population and diversity of raptors in the area. I am currently working on making a detailed identification guide for raptors found in these areas. You may learn more about my work by visiting my website, [www.planetnirav.com](http://www.planetnirav.com), which includes more than 5000 pictures and much more.

E-mail: [birdwatchernrb@gmail.com](mailto:birdwatchernrb@gmail.com)



PRASAD  
GANPULE

I am based in Morbi, Gujarat, India and have been bird watching for more than 15 years. I am especially interested in birds of prey, shrikes and gulls. I have published more than 30 papers in peer reviewed journals like 'Indian BIRDS', 'Birding Asia', 'Wader Study Group Bulletin' and our local journal 'Flamingo', and bird identification is my favourite topic for study. The birds of my state of Gujarat are of special interest to me and I have also travelled all over India for birding. My preferred birding destination is anywhere in the Himalayas.

E-mail: [prasadganpule@gmail.com](mailto:prasadganpule@gmail.com)

# The *Moamin*, an Arabic treatise on falconry

## translated for the Emperor Frederick II of Hohenstaufen in 1240

by Baudouin Van den Abeele  
Fonds National de la Recherche Scientifique, Belgium  
Université Catholique de Louvain

In the Arabian Middle Ages, as in the West, falconry developed as a leisure activity favoured in particular by noblemen, princes and rulers. The first Arabic treatise that has been preserved, that of Al Ġiṭrīf ibn Qudāma al-Ġassānī, was written c.780 for the Caliph al-Mahdi, in Baghdad. In the Latin West, the most renowned falconry treatise of the Middle Ages is the well known *De arte venandi cum avibus*, “On the art of hunting with birds”, by Emperor Frederick II of Hohenstaufen who lived mainly in southern Italy (1194-1250).

Frederick II’s treatise on falconry stands at the summit of the Western tradition of falconry treatises. Larger than any other written before, it is also more complete and scientific, for it firstly offers a deep study of birds in general before describing falcons, their manning and their training for hunting cranes, herons and ducks. It is also very clearly written and didactic, so much that, even today, falconers still read this text written nearly seven hundred years ago. Published in 1942 and reprinted several times since, the English translation by Wood and Fyfe has proved very successful, although one should state here that the translation is at times somewhat shortened and simplified. The Vatican manuscript of *De arte venandi cum avibus* stands out as the most lavishly illustrated manuscript on falconry that has come down to us (fig. 1). It was written on behalf of Manfred, Frederick’s son, who wore the crown of Sicily from 1258 to 1266.

Frederick II is a major author on the subject of falconry, but he was also concerned with other texts on this topic. It is less well known that he was the patron of the only translations of Arabic falconry treatises into Latin: this is the story of the *Moamin*, a Latin text that would become quite popular in the West. In 1239, Frederick was writing his own treatise in one of his castles in southern Italy. As his Norman ancestors had done, he cultivated diplomatic contact with the sultans of Tunis. At the very beginning of 1240, having been informed that Tunis was affected



Fig. 1. Hooding the falcon. A page of Frederick II’s *De arte venandi cum avibus* (Vatican Library, Pal. lat. 1071, f. 105v; Southern Italy, ca 1260).

by severe famine, the Emperor commanded that ships loaded with corn be sent (fig. 2). His court philosopher and translator, Theodor of Antioch (Burnett, 1995), wrote a letter in Arabic for the Sultan. When the ambassadors departed from Tunis on their way back to Sicily, they probably received an Arabic manuscript on falconry as a gift for the Emperor whose passion for falcons was well known (Akasoy, 2000-2001). At any rate, in 1240 Theodor of Antioch was at work translating an Arabic treatise. He finished this at some time in the summer, because we know that Frederick II corrected the translation during the siege of Faenza that lasted from August 1240 to March 1241. The “Book of Moamin the Falconer”, *Liber Moamin*

Scannez ce  
code pour voir  
la traduction  
française







Fig. 2. A ship of Frederick's fleet. *Chronica* of Giovanni Villani (Vatican Library, Chigi L VIII 296, Italy, 14<sup>th</sup> c.).

*falconarii*, is the title given to this Latin translation, which was recently edited (Georges, 2008).

Compared to *De arte venandi*, it is not a very long text and, in a modern edition, occupies some 80 pages. It is divided into five books:

- I. On the various birds of prey, their care and the signs of health and illness (12 chapters).
- II. On the internal diseases and their healing (62 chapters).
- III. On external diseases and their healing (15 chapters).
- IV. On hunting dogs and their care (6 chapters).
- V. On diseases of dogs and their healing (10 chapters announced in the table of contents, 6 preserved).

The content is dominated by the medical care of falcons and dogs, a matter not treated in *De arte venandi cum avibus*, and hence it was an interesting companion volume to the imperial work. The Arabic original is not preserved as such, but it has been proved by Detlef Möller that the text is inspired by two sources: in part, for Book I, by the old Al Ġitrif treatise (fig. 3), and for books II to V by the “Book for the Caliph al Muttawakkil” written in the 9<sup>th</sup> c. We know also that this last book has been only preserved through its partial copying into a falconry treatise written for the Sultan of Tunis al Mansur, which brings us back to the Tunis connection to the court of Sicily.

The “Book of Moamin the Falconer” was rapidly copied in various manuscripts, circulating especially in Italy. At present, there are no less than 29 copies preserved, nearly all of Italian origin; of course many more copies must have existed. The text was also rapidly translated into vernacular, spoken languages:



Fig. 3. Manuscript of the treatise of al Ġitrif (Istanbul, Topkapı Sarayı, Ahmet 2099/3; Turkey, 15<sup>th</sup> c.).

as early as c.1260, a translation was made for one of the sons of the Emperor, Enzo of Sardinia, who had fallen prisoner in 1249 after an unfortunate battle near Bologna. He remained the hostage of the Bolognese until his death in 1272. Preserved in two manuscripts, this translation is in Franco-Italian, the French language spoken in some courts of central and northern Italy. Afterwards, three different translations were made in various forms of the Italian language (Neapolitan, Tuscan, and Roman), so the text reached a wider public than the high-status readers of Latin texts. The *Moamin*, in fact, became one of the most frequently copied treatises on falconry of the Western Middle Ages.

If one looks at the manuscripts of the Latin *Moamin*, one observes that there are very few early copies: only two are datable to around 1300, some others are from the 14<sup>th</sup> century, the majority originate in the 15<sup>th</sup> century and some were even written in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Many of the *Moamin* manuscripts are fair copies, written on parchment in beautiful handwriting, sometimes with decoration as in the





Fig. 4. Room for falcons, title page of the Aragonese copy of the *Liber Moamin falconarii* (New Haven, Yale University Library, Beinecke 446, f. 1; Naples, 15<sup>th</sup> c.).



Fig. 5. Title page of the Vienna *Moamin* (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Hofjagd- und Rüstkammer, K 4984, f. 1; Southern Italy, ca 1300).

copy made around 1450 for the King of Naples, Alphonso I of Aragon (fig. 4). Two Latin manuscripts are most particular, because they were illuminated: an artist has painted little scenes in them showing some aspect of the content.

The first of these illustrated copies is preserved in the Kunsthistorisches Museum of Vienna in a somewhat surprising location for a manuscript: the Department of Armouries and Hunting (Hofjagd- und Rüstkammer, K 4984). Datable to c.1300, it was made in Italy for an unknown patron whose arms were unfortunately erased from the first page of the codex (fig. 5). It went abroad afterwards: in the middle of the 15<sup>th</sup> century it was in Hungary, in the hands of a major nobleman of the royal court, Janos Rozgonyi, who wrote down some personal notes around 1450. Later in that century, it passed into the hands of a Viennese humanist and physician, Doctor Johannes Fuxmagen, who wrote his name as an ex-libris on a front page. At the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, it ended up in the Imperial library of Emperor Maximilian I, passionate hunter and collector of falconry treatises (Gasser, 2008). The manuscript was first kept in his treasury room at Innsbruck, and later on at Ambras Castle, from whence it was transmitted to his successors.

The miniatures of the Vienna *Moamin* take place inside initial letters painted in gold, at the beginning of each of the 102 chapters (fig. 6). This was a most demanding task for the illuminator for three reasons.



Fig. 6. A page of Book III in the Vienna *Moamin* (f. 37v).



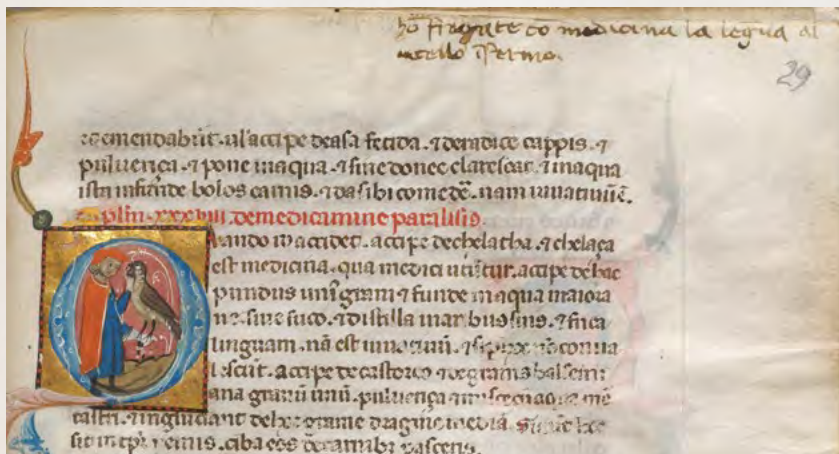


Fig. 7. Illuminated initial and instruction to the illuminator, Vienna Moamin (f. 29).



Fig. 8. Falconer nourishing his bird, chapter II. 7 of the Vienna Moamin (f. 15v).

Firstly, its main subject, the way to cure sick falcons, had never been illustrated before; secondly, the text was in Latin, a language reserved for intellectuals and, finally, the space for the scenes was extremely limited, between 1.5 and 3 cm high. Fortunately, the illuminator received the help of a learned reader who noted, in Italian, little instructions for his work, and these were preserved for the greater part (fig. 7). Thus one can appreciate how the subject to be painted was formulated from Latin into Italian, and made understandable for an artist. In some cases it was not all that helpful when the writer only translated the title. Thus, on f. 15v for example, we read *homo medicante ucello de catarro fresco o vero humido*, “a man curing a bird from a fresh or a humid catarrh”; this sentence corresponds to the title of chapter II. 7, *De medicamine catari recentis sive humidi*. Here, the painter could hardly guess what this “fresh or humid catarrh” was and he simply painted the falconer giving his hawk something to eat (fig. 8). In other case the writer has coined most adequate instructions. Thus for chapter II. 48, *De medicamine indigestionis*, indigestion in the hawk, the writer of the instructions has translated some symptoms: *homo avente ucello racortante el collo e stregnente el capo ale spalle e apre la bocca*, “a man having a bird that shortens its neck, brings its head back to the shoulders and opens the beak”; this is exactly what the painter has been able to paint in the initial (fig. 9).

This manuscript gives a fascinating insight into the progressive creation of an illustrated text, which results in a masterpiece of medieval manuscript painting. It is at present the subject of intense research, for it is being published as a facsimile by ADEVA in Graz (Austria), in a series in which the Vatican manuscript of *De arte*

*venandi cum avibus* had been reproduced by Carl Arnold Willemssen in 1969, as well as the most renowned Paris manuscript of the *Livre de chasse* of Gaston Phébus (Bibliothèque nationale de France, fr. 616). For the Vienna Moamin, a companion volume is foreseen, including a description and study of the manuscript and its illustration by the author of these lines, and a German and English translation of the Latin text prepared by Prof. Bernhard Pabst. A version in Arabic has also been planned by the editor.

The other illustrated manuscript of the Moamin was written in 1459 for the Duke of Milan, Francesco Sforza, and bears his emblems on the binding and on the title page. Here the illustrations are not in the



Fig. 9. Falconer holding an ill bird, chapter II. 48 of the Vienna Moamin (f. 31v).



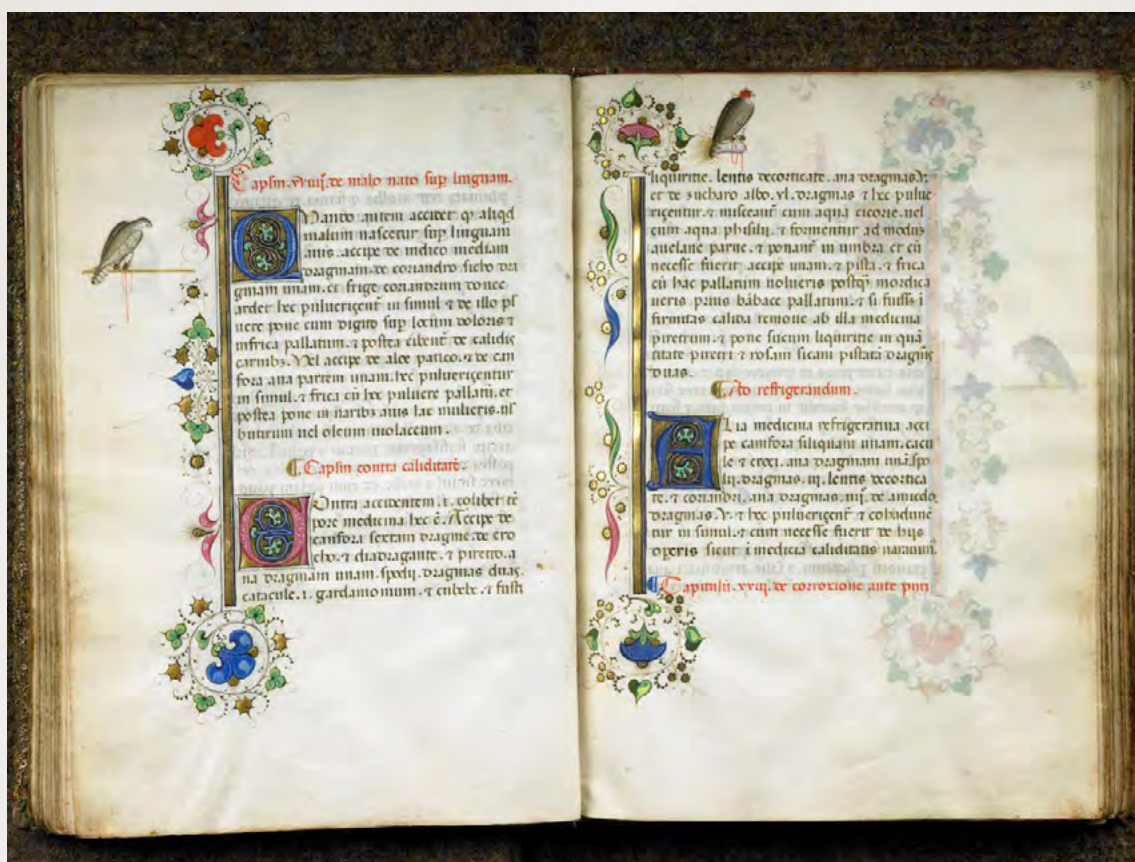


Fig. 10. Double page of the Chantilly *Moamin*, book II (Chantilly, Musée Condé, ms. 368; Milano, 1459).

initials, but in the margins: on each page where a chapter begins, some falcon or dog is painted, in very elegant scenes, but without much detail. Most falcons are shown sitting on the fist or on a perch, and they are sometimes hooded. (fig. 10) There are also two full page miniatures showing, firstly, a scene of heron and duck hawking by an aristocratic company near a pond (fol. 1v) and, secondly, a boar hunt in the woods (fol. 85r). These two scenes have been reproduced in several publications (Chamerlat 1985, Cummins 1988, Bugnion 2005). On the whole, this splendid manuscript is rather decorated than illustrated, for the miniatures seldom present some allusion to the precise content of the facing chapter. There are a few exceptions, such as the motif of a falcon attacked by an eagle, a falcon bathing or a falcon looking down on its feet, adequately painted facing the chapter that deals with worms in the feet (fig. 11). The manuscript has survived in splendid condition: even the binding is original, adorned with an embroidered fabric showing one of the emblems of the Sforza dukes, a little hill with trees, and the German motto *Mit Zait*, “with time”, meaning that some great things grow slowly, like a tree.



Fig. 11. Falcon suffering from worms in the feet, marginal illustration of the Chantilly *Moamin* (f. 37v).



These two manuscripts show how an Arabic treatise, through its translation into Latin, became a reference text for high-status patrons of falconry in medieval Italy. To quote the late and much lamented Patrick Paillat, who worked for many years as an expert on falconry in the Emirates, “The *Moamin* and the *De arte venandi cum avibus* are pillars of a cultural bridge between the East and the West”.

\* \* \*

This article is a reworked version of the talk presented at the International Falconry Conference organised on December 5<sup>th</sup> 2017 by Oliver Grimm and Karl-Heinz Gersmann in Al Ain (United Arab Emirates), during the 4<sup>th</sup> International Festival of Falconry.

#### Further reading:

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- Jacques Bugnion, *Les chasses médiévales. Le brachet, le lévrier, l'épagneul, leur nomenclature, leur métier, leur typologie*, Gollion: InFolio, 2005.
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- Christian Antoine de Chamerlat, *La fauconnerie et l'art*, Paris : ACR Editions, 1986.
- John Cummins, *The Hound and the Hawk. The Art of Medieval Hunting*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1988.
- Christoph Gasser, “Caccia e libro alla corte dell'imperatore Massimiliano I (1459-1519)”, in *Micrologus*, 16 (*I saperi nelle corti / Knowledge at the Courts*), Firenze, 2008, pp. 153-170.
- Stefan Georges, *Das zweite Falkenbuch Kaiser Friedrichs II. Quellen, Entstehung, Überlieferung und Rezeption des Moamin, mit einer Edition der lateinischen Überlieferung*, Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2008.
- Benjamin Kedar and Etan Kohlberg, “The intercultural career of Theodore of Antioch”, in *Mediterranean Historical Review*, 10 (1995), p. 164-176.
- Detlef Möller, *Studien zur mittelalterlichen arabischen Falknereiliteratur*, Berlin, 1965.
- Muhammad ibn 'Abdallāh al-Bāzīyār, *Das Falken- und Hundebuch des Kalifen al-Muttawakkil*, ed. Ana Akasoy and Stefan Georges, Berlin, 2005.
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- Idem, *La fauconnerie au Moyen Age: connaissance, affaitage et médecine des oiseaux de chasse d'après les traités latins*, Paris: Klincksieck, 1994.
- Idem, *Texte et image dans les manuscrits de chasse médiévaux*, Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale de France, 2013.
- François Viré and Detlef Möller, *Al Ġitrīf ibn Qudāma al-Gassānī (VIIIe siècle). “Traité des oiseaux de vol” (Kitāb dawāri aṭ-ṭayr). Le plus ancien traité de fauconnerie arabe*, Nogent-le-Roi : Jacques Laget, 2002.

Forthcoming facsimile of the Vienna Moamin, and commentary volume:

ADEVA – Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt  
St. Peter Hauptstrasse 98 / A – 8042 Graz  
info@adeva.com / www.adeva.com



BAUDOUIN  
VAN DEN ABEELE

Baudouin Van den Abeele is Professor of Medieval History at the Belgian Université Catholique de Louvain and Senior Researcher of the Fonds National de la Recherche Scientifique. For more than 30 years, he has devoted most of his research to the history and culture of medieval falconry. Besides numerous articles, he has published books on medieval Latin, French and Italian treatises on falconry (1994, 1998) and their manuscripts and illustrations (2013), as well as a French translation of Emperor Frederick II's monumental *De arte venandi cum avibus* (2000). He is currently developing a database on the medieval iconography of falconry.

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Fig. 1, 2: Vatican Library, Vatican (with kind permission). Fig. 5, 6, 7, 8, 9: Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, Austria (with kind permission). Fig. 10, 11: Musée Condé, Chantilly, France (with kind permission). Fig. 3, 4 and photo of the author: photo by B. van den Abeele.



# A BRIEF REPORT ON FALCONRY IN BRAZIL

*by Alessandra Oliveto - WWG*

Brazil is considered a country with continental dimensions; its area corresponds to approximately 1.6% of the planet's entire surface, covering 20.8% of the whole area of America and 48% of South America. Its great territorial expanse gives the country an enormous diversity of climates, topographies, flora and fauna.

Whilst in Brazil there is evidence of ornamental bird training by the Indians found in text and images predating the arrival of the Portuguese, there is little or no evidence that the native people of the Americas practiced the art of falconry. Falconry probably came to the New World with the European

conquistadors who discovered new hawk and quarry species and, of course, new landscapes that offered potential to be exploited by falconers.

In recent research, my attention was captured greatly by a picture in which Cabral can be seen taking possession of a new land in the name of the king of Portugal. This new land is Brazil. In the original image – scanned by the Natural History Museum of New York – in black and white we clearly see a man holding a bird on the fist. (**Photo 1**)



Photo 1 – Pedro Álvares Cabral, discoverer of Brazil <<https://digitalcollections>> accessed on 1 November 2017.

Some important references show that kings and queens who came to Brazil practiced falconry in their respective countries, and we know that any falconer, when discovering new hawks, new quarry and new hawking ground, has the desire to have a new experience and new achievements in falconry. Unfortunately we still have nothing tangible, but we are working together with Portuguese historians and falconers from around the world to unravel these mysteries.

I leave the reader here with an important passage from the book of D. Pedro that says: “An avid hunter, Dom João was one of the few European rulers at the turn of

the nineteenth century who still practiced the medieval sport of falconry. His love of hunting, seemingly at odds with his sedentary nature, might be explained by the relish with which he devoured the yield of the hunt: it was not the sport, but the anticipation of eating that drove the prince regent into the field. Venison and game fowl were among his favourite foods, which also included roast chicken.”

However, while we may not have fully unveiled the past, we are currently writing the future . . .



It was 33 years ago that young Brazilians began to try to understand falconry. After watching movies on the TV, one of them was enthused by falconry. It is, however, noteworthy that four different people from the same period said the same thing: they awoke to the art of falconry after watching movies where kings, queens and nobles had hawks as companions.

"I saw another remarkable Disney film called *Varda the Peregrine Falcon*, which showed the biology of the *Tundrius* peregrine and in part of the film the female falcon was captured by a falconer in a do-gazza trap. He used the traditional taming and training methods until she flew free, but he lost her. After three days the falconer recovered her. This film marked me because it showed how to train a raptor. As I was taken by surprise, and at that time there was no DVD or video cassette, I took a giant tape recorder and I wrote a letter asking the TV channel to replay the film and made 200 copies . . . ." (Jorge Sales)

These enthusiasts of the history of Brazilian falconry, without knowing and never hearing anything about each other, looked for associations outside of Brazil to join and joined NAFA in 1993.

The first meeting was held in 1994 between Jorge Sales, Guilherme Queiroz and Leo Fukui and, from this year until 1997, they sought ways to introduce falconry into Brazil. Simultaneously, they practiced it, organising themselves with more support and knowledge due to NAFA membership. **(Photo 2)**

In 1997 the Brazilian Association of Falconers and Preservation of Birds of Prey (ABFPAR) was founded.



Photo 2 – Leo Fukui, Guilherme Queiroz and Jorge Lisboa (personal archive Jorge Lisboa).

## Falconry in Brazil today

### Panorama

There is an explosion of enthusiasts, apprentices and people practicing the art of falconry today in Brazil and in the world. Fortunately there are two strong Associations in Brazil (ANF and ABFPAR) and several competent groups that are trying to protect this progress so that it isn't made in a disorderly way.

In 2015 the first falconry book in Portuguese and the first falconry manual were released by the Northeast Association of Falconry to help practitioners of the art and to start ensuring falconers were competently qualified through tests.

Most falconers are concentrated in the northeast and southeast regions of the country. In the south there are some experienced falconers, but in lesser quantity. In the centre-west there is a group of falconers who are in their initial years of falconry, while in the north of the country we currently have information about only two falconers and one apprentice.

We have few breeders in Brazil because, until 2016, we could not commence new breeding projects and, unfortunately, relatively few birds were commercially available for falconry – namely *Parabuteo unicinctus*, *Falco femoralis*, *Falco sparverius*, *Falco peregrinus* and *Accipiter bicolor*. Peregrine breeding only started in 2013.

The *Parabuteo* is flown across Brazil; males weigh, on average, 460-520g and females between 650-780g. Many falconers in Brazil fly this species at the most varied feathered prey, since Brazil does not have rabbits in abundance and invasive hares are still scarce in most of the Brazilian territory.

*Accipiter bicolor* – very few Brazilian falconers have had the opportunity to fly these, since only one breeder produces the species. It is therefore little known and seldom available, but is a species for which Brazilian falconers long.

*Falco peregrinus cassini* – it was only just over three years ago that this species began to be commercialised, so everything is new in relation to the waiting on flight in Brazil. It is interesting to mention that most states are not cold, so peregrines struggle with the high temperatures.

*Falco sparverius* – this is a much more readily available species, but little explored in Brazilian falconry

Por favor, escaneie este código para obter a tradução em português



Escanea este código para ver la traducción al español





since most people who fly it are beginners with no experience and so thus do not realise its full potential.

*Falco rufiguralis* – we have the same problem as *A. bicolor* because there is little breeding, and none in the last few years, coupled with the consequently high price of the species.

Other birds that have been commercially available don't have great relevance for falconry – they have been little tested or the breeders are not selling them.

In 2017 the opening of new breeders was authorised and there was also a boom in the importation of birds of prey: this included *Falco peregrinus*, saker falcon (*Falco cherrug*), lanner falcon (*Falco biarmicus*), goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*) and golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*). Owls, such as the Eurasian eagle owl (*Bubo bubo*) and the snowy owl (*Bubo scandiacus*), were also imported.

## APLOMADO VS. VANELLUS

(photo 3)

### *Falco femoralis*

Aplomado (*F. femoralis femoralis*) in Brazil or “alethe”, as it was known in Europe

Weight: the largest females hunt between 260-280g

Weight: males fly between 160-190g

*Aplomado* is a word in Spanish for lead-coloured. This is a grey-blue colour similar to steel. Aplomados, when adults, acquire a beautiful plumage of steel-grey, but they have other aspects of steel such as strength, durability, malleability and, when it comes to hunting, nerves of steel. The term *aleto* is widely recognised today. US aplomado breeder and falconer Jim Nelson

defended his theory on which bird was truly the “alethe” of Renaissance Europe, conclusively proving it to be *Falco femoralis* through historical citations and records. He contributed a chapter (Vol. II chapter 25) on the aplomado, with Harry McElroy, to the ninth edition of *North American Falconry and Hunting Hawks*. Ten or fifteen years ago in a Yahoo falconry group entitled ‘Aplomado Hawking’, where falconers like Harry McElroy and Jim Nelson debated what we should call the aplomado universally, Jim defended a nomenclature whereby the female was named the *aleto* and the male the *terceleto*. He uses this nomenclature he propounds in his writings and it is increasingly being disseminated in falconry in the USA, Canada and in some other countries. (Personal observation by Jorge Sales)

### *Vanellus chilensis*

Southern lapwing (*V. chilensis*)

Weight: 270-280g

The “Quero-quero”, as it is known by the popular cry that it emits when seeing danger, is a bird that can be found all over the Brazilian territory; a medium-sized bird that defends itself and flies with great tenacity. It has sharp spikes on its wings that it does not hesitate to use when being captured. We couldn't talk about falconry in Brazil without mentioning the bird that is a symbol of Brazilian hawking: not because of the number of falconers that fly them, but through the quality of flight the *Vanellus* offers to a well-trained falcon.

For those who do not yet know, the first to hunt this species with an aplomado was Ronivon Viana, a Brazilian from Uberlândia, Minas Gerais's interior.

(Photo 4)

The aplomado is one of the most widely distributed birds in South America, Central America and Mexico, being observed as different regional subspecies. For example, *Falco femoralis pinchichae* is found in Peru, *Falco femoralis septentrionalis* in Mexico and a small part of the USA and *Falco femoralis femoralis* in Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay, etc. As a hunting tactic, it searches for its prey from fixed perches and then pursues, sometimes “hovering”, at relatively low-level altitudes. It can hunt in a cast, common cooperative behaviour among raptors. From fixed perches, the pair usually surrounds the prey, the male initiating the chase and tiring the target for the female to capture (Menq, 2016).

Photo 3 –  
Aplomado  
vs. *Vanellus*  
(personal  
archive  
Fernando  
Icaro).

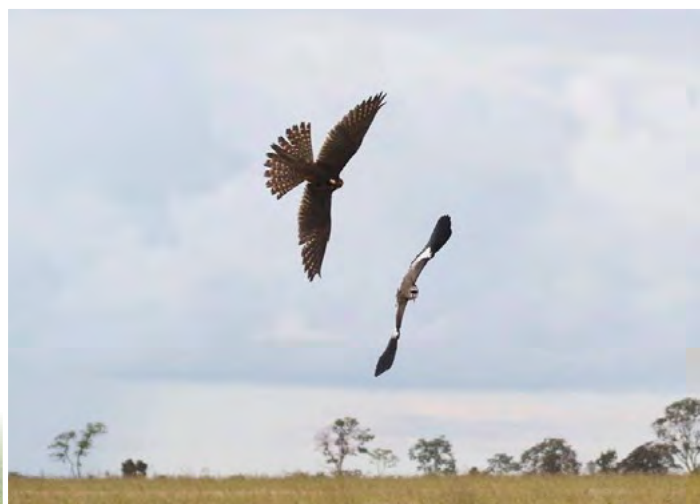






Photo 4 – Ronivon Viana and aplomados (personal archive Jorge Lisboa).

Because of this natural behaviour, falconers, who find it courageous in long tail-chases, encourage flying in the traditional “out of the hood” mode directly from the fist: when quarry is sighted, the falcon is unhooded to locate and pursue prey. However, there have already been “waiting on” flights practiced with aplomados in Brazil, initiated by falconer Gilmar Tomiello and later taken up by Alex Teixeira of São Paulo State. It is also common to practice flying aplomados in a cast. In my conception, hawking in which aplomados fly over, then dive to capture, quarry is not strictly a waiting on flight in its historical sense, which other falconers may comment upon. *Altanaria* consists of the falcon gaining height before stooping and either striking down or binding to quarry in the air, before despatching it on the ground by breaking the neck. By convention, this always utilises a fast, penetrating and direct stoop. However, the aplomado doesn’t do this: it always dives by phases, braking and, in the end, resulting in a tail pursuit.

It’s important to remember that many falconers don’t slip aplomados at *Vanellus* because of the specificity and the high degree of training the falcon must have. The aplomado has to be in optimal physical condition to endure, often, six minutes of punishment, which is not merely straight line pursuit, but fantastic loopings and various comings and goings. (Photo 5, 6)

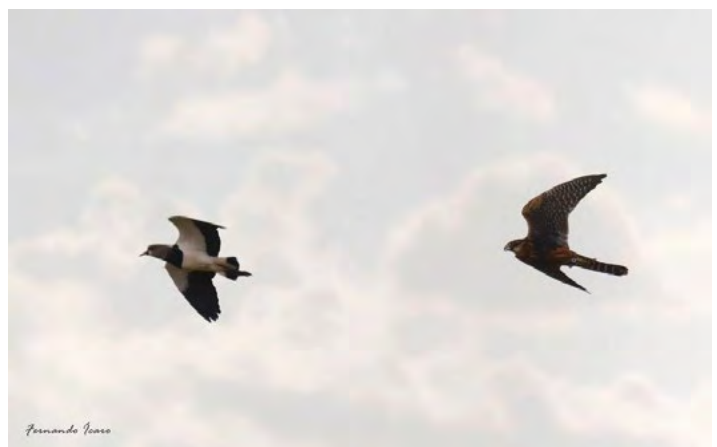


Photo 5 – Aplomado vs. *Vanellus* (personal archive Fernando Icaro).



Photo 6 – Aplomados.





Falconers from all over the world are fascinated by aplomados' slips: it is one of the only birds of prey in South America that is watched by everyone with enthusiasm and great delight. This fascination is mainly due to the fact that the falconer can watch the whole flight, since the prey is so audacious that it often relies on its flight power and manoeuvres to mislead and try to fatigue the predator.

Another important point is that the *Vanellus* uses the water to escape, and aplomados used to the field are not deterred by with this. They expect the falconer to remove the *Vanellus* from the puddles, often hovering and resuming the chase when the quarry is reflushed.

In all South American territories, there is no better flight for the aplomado than the *Vanellus*; one of the most audacious quarries for a daring and shrewd falcon. In the case of *femorialis* we have the right quarry and ideal terrain in abundance in many states. Prey and predator were made in the right measure: manoeuvrability, agility and speed.

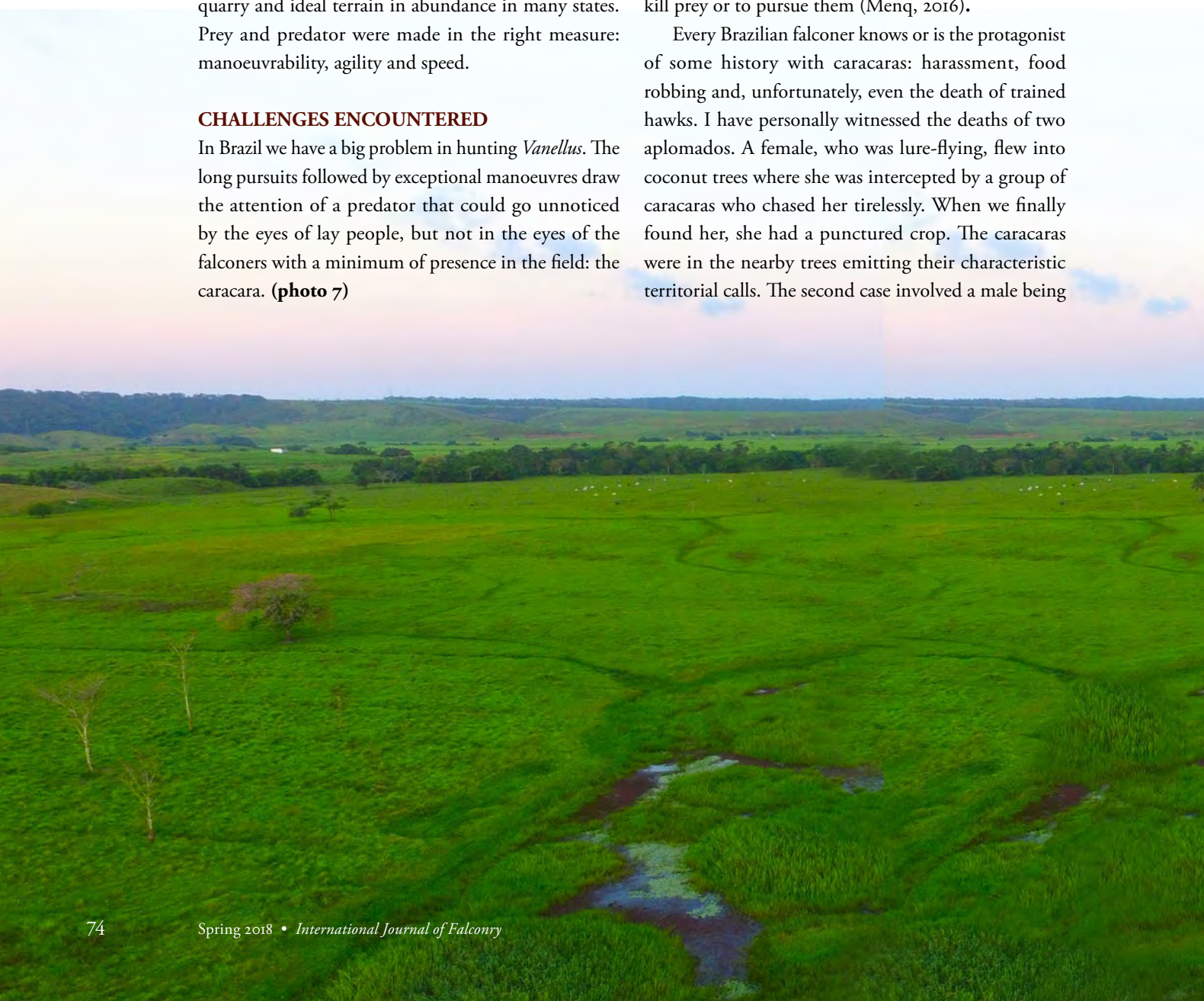
#### CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED

In Brazil we have a big problem in hunting *Vanellus*. The long pursuits followed by exceptional manoeuvres draw the attention of a predator that could go unnoticed by the eyes of lay people, but not in the eyes of the falconers with a minimum of presence in the field: the caracara. (photo 7)

#### *Caracara plancus* (Caracara)

This is one of the most common and frequently sighted raptors in Brazil, being able to be found from fields to pastures. A true generalist, its food ranges from invertebrates and small mammals to dead animals and roadkill. It can also hunt. When hunting, it usually kills its prey by pecking at the nape of the neck. Caracaras perform kleptoparasitism (stealing food) from other birds and also usually gang up with other caracaras to kill prey or to pursue them (Menq, 2016).

Every Brazilian falconer knows or is the protagonist of some history with caracaras: harassment, food robbing and, unfortunately, even the death of trained hawks. I have personally witnessed the deaths of two aplomados. A female, who was lure-flying, flew into coconut trees where she was intercepted by a group of caracaras who chased her tirelessly. When we finally found her, she had a punctured crop. The caracaras were in the nearby trees emitting their characteristic territorial calls. The second case involved a male being





tame-hacked with his brother. Both were caught playing on the floor by an individual caracara and, after I saw it, I ran and shouted. The two males began to chase the caracara: the most nervous brother returned to me but the bravest continued the pursuit. After running a few kilometres I saw both the caracara and the young *femoralis* landing in high grass. I kept running, and three more caracaras came up from the ground where the young aplomado went down. We only found him later with the telemetry: the caracara was eating him.

These birds of prey don't always attack to feed themselves; sometimes they only disrupt flights. Falcons that have been persecuted by caracaras consider them to be a dangerous predator, and many times when they visualise the caracara's silhouette in the immensity of the sky they get scared. Many abandon pursuit when the caracaras get very close, though some, more experienced and greedy for the reward that the kill will bring, continue to chase and trust that the falconer will help. We've already seen some experienced females who abandon the chase and head for the caracara to drive it away, then return later to their flight at the *Vanellus*.

The caracara is a mystery to both the falconer and his hawk; you never know when it will use its cunning.

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ALESSANDRA OLIVETO

Alessandra Oliveto is a Brazilian falconer and environmental manager, who, for the last five years, has worked in the control of pest fauna species using falconry techniques with Falcontrol SA. She plays an active role in falconry organisations both at home and on an international basis. She is president of Falcoeiras BR and Vice President of the Northeast Association of Falconry and Conservation of Birds of Prey in Brazil, and is also President of the IAF's Women's Working Group.





# Love since childhood

by Vadim Gorbatov

Since childhood, as long as I can remember, predatory birds have aroused my admiration and great interest. I was about three or four, perhaps, when I experienced this acute feeling for the first time. There was a war: my father was at the front, and my mother spent whole days at work.

I, like most children, was at kindergarten from the morning until late at night. One day, before the New Year, while the children slept, adults brought stuffed birds from some museum to decorate the rooms. When I woke up, I was amazed: real birds! So close! They sat but did not fly away. A hawk on a branch with open wings; a kestrel; a buzzard and an eagle owl. Sharp claws, crooked beaks, lively shining eyes and a thin

pattern of plumage. For the first few first minutes it was scary, but then I grew bolder and even touched these strange still birds.

At home, I tried to draw them and then, in the morning, I was in a hurry and hassled my mother to go to the kindergarten.

I remember one more incident from my childhood. I was ten at the time. It was a dry, warm autumn and everyone was digging potatoes. When I went home from school, a bird was sitting on some potato-plant waste which had been thrown onto the fence of our house. I moved closer, but the bird did not fly away. Yellow eyes, striped chest, long tail – it was a sparrowhawk! Slowly, I put my schoolbag full of books on the ground and took another step forward . . . s

The hawk tried to break away, flapping its wings, but could not fly. Somehow he had become tangled in the wilted potato roots. I rushed to him and tried to grab him and, for a fraction of a second, the bird was in my hands, but then it escaped and flew away. To this day, I remember the wind whipped-up by the beating of wings, the yellow eyes of a hawk and mottled plumage.

By the age of fourteen, I already knew of several raptors' nests in the surrounding forests and purposefully went to them with binoculars and a notebook. I drew them, climbed the trees, kept records and collected the remains of their prey. Thanks to the patience of my parents and despite cramped conditions, our home became shared with all manner of living creatures, including many representatives of the subgenus of birds of prey, whilst I tried to feed and heal them – and constantly painted them.

Later, already in adult life, predatory birds still remained at the centre of my interests. I met with zoologists, travelling with them on expeditions which allowed me to observe and paint birds of prey in their natural habitats in different geographical areas. I drew captive birds in aviaries and zoos.

In the seventies, falconry began to revive in Russia, primarily in Moscow and St Petersburg. Without experience or knowledge, blindly and alone, enthusiasts, in love with birds of prey, took their first steps. Together





with them I trapped wild hawks, helped to train them and went hawking. Sometimes, some of the falconers left their hunting companions with me for a few days and then I could not only make sketches, but could also quietly create more elaborate drawings. I took care of the hunting bird, fed it, carried it on a glove and cleaned its accommodation.

I did not become a falconer. This occupation requires too much energy and time! However, as before, as in childhood, everything that is connected with birds of prey excites and fascinates me. This topic has become one of the predominant themes of my artistic career and, to the best of my ability, I try to convey in my works my admiration for the beauty of birds of prey and show the romance of the ancient art of falconry.



VADIM  
ALEKSEEVICH  
GORBATOV

An internationally recognised painter, graphic artist, and book-illustrator, Vadim was born in 1940 in Moscow and studied art and industrial design to PhD level, going on to teach at the Stroganov State Academy of Art, Industrial Design and Applied Arts where he had previously studied. He spent 17 years as Russian TV's Head of Graphics and Illustration, but in 1987 decided instead to pursue his vocation as a freelance wildlife artist. Vadim's work, inspired by extensive field research, frequently focuses on field-sports, and is well-known to falconers for its vivid depictions of modern and historical hawking. He has illustrated publications from Flint and Sorokin's *Falcon on the Glove* (1999) and Fedorov and Malov's title on falconry *Sokoliniya okhota* (2005) to Remmler and Hollinshead's *Memoirs of a Hunter* (2009). Vadim's stunning illustrations are also inspiring younger audiences in Stacey Patterson's educational books *Fidget's Freedom* (2006) and *Fidget's Folly* (2012), and feature in galleries, museums and private collections around the world.

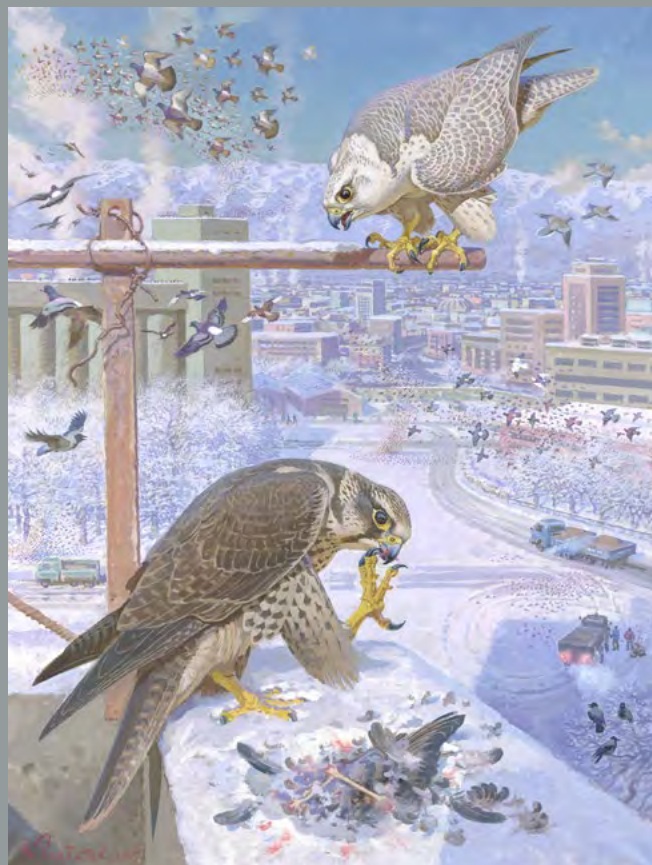
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# IAF AGM 2017 Kyrgyzstan

*by Keiyo Nakajima*







Kyrgyzstan Video



IAF AGM Video







Photo credit: Nirav Bhatt

