

**SOUTH AFRICAN
NORMS AND STANDARDS
OF
FALCONRY**

THIS NORMS AND STANDARDS HAS BEEN

**COMPILED BY THE SOUTH AFRICAN FALCONRY ASSOCIATION
WITH THE INPUT OF THE MEMBER CLUBS OF SAFA**

**Acknowledgement is made of the use of similar documents provided by The
British Falconry Club and The Zimbabwe Falconry Club.**

**FALCONRY IS THE ART OF HUNTING WILD QUARRY
WITH A TRAINED HAWK.**

CONTENTS

<u>Section A</u>	Pg. 3
A brief background to Falconry	Pg. 3
An overview of falconry in Southern Africa	Pg. 4
The South African Falconry Association – SAFA	Pg. 5
The purpose of SAFA	Pg. 5
The functions performed by SAFA	Pg. 6
South African Falconry Association current contact details	Pg. 6
Species used for falconry	Pg. 7
“Falco domestica”	Pg.7
<u>Section B</u>	
Falconers Code of Conduct	Pg.9
Preamble	Pg.9
1. General	Pg.10
2. Legislation with respect to Falconry	Pg.10
3. Conservation	Pg.11
4. Wild Take	Pg.12
5. Captive Bred Hawks	Pg.13
6. Register of breeding sites	Pg.15
7. Grading of falconers	Pg.15
8. Ethics of care and training of hawks	Pg.15
9. Flexibility of procurement	Pg.16
10.Housing and Equipment	Pg.16
11.Identification tags	Pg.17
12.Commercialisation	Pg.17
13.Ethical Hunting	Pg.18
14.Definitions in the norms and standards	Pg.18
15.Enforcement	Pg.19
16.Ethical and Scientific aspects concerning animal welfare and falconry	Pg.19
Appendix 1 – Grading	Pg.20
Appendix 2 – Ethical and Scientific aspects	Pg.23
Appendix 3 – Hybrid Raptors	Pg.32
Further Appendixes – Changes in SAFA Office Bearers as and when	Pg.35+

SECTION A

A BRIEF BACKGROUND TO FALCONRY

The Art of Falconry is the oldest sport in the world, probably four thousand years old, developing on the plains of central Eurasia. The hunters of the Middle East and Central Eurasia trained falcons to catch game for food and sport. Sir Henry Layard, discovered a bas-relief depicting a falconer in the ruins of Khorsabad in Mesopotamia during the last century, and this may date from about 1700 BC (Harting 1891 *Bibliotheca Accipitraia*, in Glasier 1995). Falconry spread to the West. By the 4th Century AD falconry was well understood in Europe, and by the 6th Century AD it was introduced to Britain where the Kings of Southern England became enthusiasts. Alfred the Great (849 AD – 899 AD) was a competent and keen falconer.

The social history of Britain from before the Norman Conquest, until the end of the 17th Century, is full of reference to falconry; the falcons used were looked on as symbols of power and influence, while hawks were used by “yeomen” to help fill the larder. They are to be found in crests and on coats of arms. Sometimes they were given in payment of ransom and as rents for grants of land. The middle ages represented the Great Age for Falconry.

However, by the end of the 17th Century with the advent of the shotgun, and the “Enclosures Act”, falconry as the means of filling the larder lost popularity. The gun became the sportsman’s delight. Falconry entered the realm of being a recreational sport, usually associated with the aristocrats and was known as the “Sport of Kings”. The nobility were the only ones who had the luxury of leisure time and hunting land.

In today’s society with more and more people having leisure time available, there has been a dramatic revival in interest in falconry. The great expanses of wild habitat in countries such as the USA and South Africa lends these countries to falconry, which is, by definition, the pursuit of wild quarry, in its natural surroundings, with trained hawks. Falconry has continued and has been improved upon since the early nineteen hundreds and was first practiced in South Africa in the mid 20th century.

Technological advances, such as telemetry, have been of great advantage to the sport of falconry, and coupled with the up-surge in interest, we are seeing a new Golden Age of the Art of Falconry.

The dramatic increase in World population seen in the 20th century, coupled with the revolution in agriculture, are two factors that have seriously affected the population of raptors. First there has been a period of persecution of raptors and secondly, the

increased use of agricultural pesticides, particularly the residual chlorinated hydrocarbon group (DDT etc.). The raptor, as the last link in the food chain was found to take up accumulated doses of these persistent poisons, causing the production of thin – shelled and infertile eggs. Strict legislation on the use of these pesticides in developed countries led to recoveries in the affected raptor populations. Changes in land use and alteration of the ecology have affected raptor populations both positively and negatively.

Not all development has been detrimental to raptors. Many that are popular species for use in falconry have benefited from changes in the environment. Peregrine and Lanner Falcons thrive on the increased dove populations that result from grain production, while high rise buildings and quarries have provided additional nesting sites. Many accipiters also benefit from the dove population and also find nesting places in exotic forests and suburban gardens.

It is interesting to note that much of the energy devoted to the sport is now also channelled to the passion for conservation. Leading conservationists and falconers in the U.S.A. established “The Peregrine Fund”, which pioneered and streamlined the captive breeding of Peregrines for release into the wild. There are several areas in the Eastern U.S. where Peregrines became extinct in the early 1960’s, through the influence of DDT, which now have these captive bred Peregrines breeding successfully in the wild. By 1999 the Peregrine had recovered, through these efforts, to the extent that it was de-listed off the threatened species list in the USA – a uniquely successful event in the history of wildlife conservation. Similar achievements by falconers include the rescuing of the Mauritius Kestrel population, the restoration of the Northern Goshawk in Britain, while attempts to restore the tree-breeding Peregrine population of northern Europe are ongoing.

AN OVERVIEW OF FALCONRY IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

The earliest record of falconry in Southern Africa can be found at the museum of “The Great Zimbabwe” near the town of Masvingo in Zimbabwe, where a metal object is identified as an “Arab Falconry Bell”. Several soapstone birds found at the site, which flourished between the 11th and 16th centuries AD, show a remarkable similarity to a falcon perched on a block perch as used by falconers.

The next record of falconry in Southern Africa is in the late 1930’s with Major W. Eustace Poles who settled in Zambia. Major Poles mentored several youngsters on the art of falconry.

Just prior to the Second World War (1939 – 1945) a German immigrant, Heinie Von Michaelis, is thought to be the first active falconer in South Africa. Be this as it may, falconry is a relatively young sport in South Africa with both falcons (longwings) and hawks (shortwings) flown at a great variety of quarry.

There are currently (2008) just fewer than 200 active falconers in South Africa who are members of the various provincial falconry clubs. Falconry is, therefore, a sport practiced by a very small number of dedicated individuals in South Africa.

In 1990 the South African Falconry Association was formed to regulate and coordinate all aspects of falconry. Falconry is legal in all nine provinces of South Africa.

THE SOUTH AFRICAN FALCONRY ASSOCIATION – SAFA

The South African Falconry Association (SAFA) is an umbrella body that represents South African Falconers. Its membership currently comprises nine Provincial Falconry Clubs, these being:

1. The Boland Falconry Club
2. The Cape Falconry Club
3. The Eastern Cape Falconry Club
4. The Free State Falconry Club
5. The Limpopo Falconer's Club
6. The Mpumalanga Falconer's Club
7. The Natal Falconry Club
8. The North West Hawking Club
9. The Transvaal (Gauteng) Falconry Club

There are no individual members of SAFA. Falconers belong to SAFA through their membership of a provincial club.

SAFA is governed by an Executive Committee that is composed of two representatives of each of the provincial clubs. The ExCo meets annually but is in regular e-mail contact.

SAFA defines falconry as “The Art of hunting wild quarry with trained hawks”

The purposes of SAFA are:

- 1) To uphold and develop the standards of falconry practiced in South Africa.
- 2) To improve communication between falconers throughout South Africa
- 3) To represent South African falconers and their interests nationally, regionally and internationally

- 4) To encourage and facilitate the participation of falconers in conservation and scientific research with respect to raptors and the environment
- 5) To represent South African Falconers in negotiation and collaboration with Conservation Authorities.
- 6) To ensure the welfare of raptors used in falconry.

The functions performed by SAFA:

- 1) An annual field meet held by SAFA and open to all provincial falconry club members.
- 2) An annual magazine “Mews Views”, which is circulated to all provincial falconry club members, as well as various interested parties including representatives of Provincial Conservation Authorities, The Endangered Wildlife Trust and its Bird of Prey Working Group, other interested parties within South Africa and to various falconry organizations world-wide, including the International Association for Falconry and the Conservation of Birds of Prey.
- 3) Active engagement in conservation and research, including participation in the Bird of Prey Working Group of the Endangered Wildlife Trust, with whom a memorandum of understanding has been signed.
- 4) Participation in the International Association for Falconry and the Conservation of Birds of Prey, of which SAFA is a member.
- 5) Participation in the Union of African Falconry which looks to improving communication and co-operation between African Falconers and encouraging Raptor conservation on the continent.
- 6) Active engagement with conservation authorities and other parties on falconry related issues.
- 7) In early 2008 SAFA was unanimously accepted as an Affiliated Member organization of CHASA (Confederation of Hunters Associations of South Africa) and is recognized by CHASA as the authority on falconry related issues in South Africa.

The South African Falconry Association looks to furthering these aims and encouraging the conservation of raptors, quarry species and of the environment. SAFA wishes to form links with organizations that have similar aims and objectives and to engage positively with those who share our concerns for raptors and the environment.

South African Falconry Association current contacts details:

Chairman: Timothy Wagner, timothy.wagner@tigerbrands.com
 Secretary: Adrian Lombard, lombarda@mweb.co.za
 Website: www.safalconry.org.za

Species used for falconry.

The principal birds flown are:

1. Shortwings – Black (*Accipiter melanoleucus*), Ovambo (*Accipiter ovampensis*), Rufous-chested (*Accipiter rufiventris*) and Little Sparrowhawks (*Accipiter minullus*), Shikra (*Accipiter badius*), Gabar (*Micronisus gabar*), Chanting (*Melierax sp.*) and African Goshawks (*Accipiter tachiro*).
2. Broadwings – African Hawk Eagle (*Hieraaetus spilogaster*), Martial Eagle (*Polemaetus bellicosus*), Verreaux's Eagle (*Aquila verreauxii*), Crowned Hawk Eagle (*Stephanoaetus coronatus*) and Jackal Buzzard (*Buteo rufofuscus*).
3. Longwings – Lanner (*Falco biarmicus*), Peregrine (*Falco peregrinus*), Red-necked (*Falco chicquera*) and Taita Falcons (*Falco fasciinucha*), Common Kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*) and Greater Kestrel (*Falco rupicoloides*).

“Falco domestica”

Raptors have been employed by man for, at least, the past 4000 years, making them one of the first species to be “domesticated” along with the dog and the horse. The necessity to breed the birds in captivity did not arise until the collapse of the Peregrine populations in various parts of the world as a result of DDT. Since then (mid 1960s) the technology to breed raptors has been developed and refined. Worldwide, falconers have, since the 1960s, successfully bred various species of birds of prey. South Africans have shared in this success. Each year more South Africans are having breeding successes with a variety of species. To date we have bred the following falconry species:

Peregrine Falcons (Indigenous and Exotic), Lanner Falcons, Red-necked Falcons, Taita Falcons and various exotic falcons

African Goshawks, Black Sparrowhawks, Gabar Goshawks, Rufous-chested Sparrowhawks and Harris Hawks (exotic)

“The Concise Oxford Dictionary” has two interesting definitions –

“domestic animal” – “kept by or living with man, fond of home life”

“domesticate” – “bring under human control, tame”

Another definition of “domestic” is – “an animal that readily breeds in captivity”

By these definitions, what falconers in South Africa have achieved over the past three decades is create animals that in real terms should not be classified as “wild” anymore but domestic.

The captive breeding of falconry birds is not necessarily the desirable source of falconry birds, if conservation and enforcement concerns are considered. We believe by allowing a sustainable wild harvest the use of exotic and hybrids will be kept to a minimum and the involvement of falconers in conservation is encouraged. The use of exotic birds will always be extremely limited in view of their cost and, particularly, if access to a wild harvest of suitable raptors is maintained. International studies have shown a clear inverse correlation between the use of exotic raptors in falconry and the accessibility to wild taken birds. The limited sustainable harvest of wild raptors for falconry has definite advantages as it reduces the reliance on captive breeding and makes the policing of falconry activities much easier. Similarly, access to a wild harvest is perceived by falconers to be a considerable privilege and encourages their efforts in self-policing and compliance with the law.

Section B

Falconers Code of Conduct

Preamble

Falconers have taken note of “Animal Welfare” issues. The welfare and good husbandry of falconers’ birds is paramount to the practice of our art. We believe that we are the experts in this area and deny the ability of others, not versed in our art, to determine what constitutes or does not constitute good husbandry of raptors.

By means of a system of Apprenticeship and Grading, maintained through self-policing, falconers have an established system of ensuring standards of good husbandry. There are individuals, recognized internationally as experts in this field, such as Dr Nick Fox or Prof. Thomas Richter as well as organizations such as “The Peregrine Fund” who have established the standards that we follow and whose expertise can be sought if need arises.

Falconers are concerned about the degree of involvement of Animal Rights organizations in the process of establishing objective standards in animal welfare. While recognizing the right of all citizens to express an opinion, we would expect the authorities to take care not to afford excessive influence to organizations simply because they are vociferous. Further, while recognizing that animals have rights which need to be protected, we have concerns that this can be pursued to a point where it is to the detriment of human freedom of expression; that it will act to polarize our society without respect for its diversity and, most importantly, will be to the detriment of conservation of Nature and its biodiversity. Falconers urge reasonable and objective standards be applied, with reference to international norms and, in particular, the accepted practices in developed nations, such as the United States of America or those of the European Union.

A genuine interest in raptors and their conservation is a prerequisite to being a falconer. Falconers support the principle of conservation in Nature through sustainable use of both raptors and prey species. Provincial Falconry Clubs assist conservation authorities wherever possible to this end. Breaches of discipline are severely dealt with and could result in the confiscation of birds, expulsion from Provincial Falconry Clubs as well as legal action by the relevant authorities.

Falconers subscribe to the IUCN's principle of "sustainable utilization". Falconers recognise that raptor populations are being increasingly threatened by habitat destruction, pesticides and human persecution. The harvesting of wild raptors for falconry is considered a privilege and is only allowed under carefully controlled conditions approved by provincial conservation authorities. Provincial conservation authorities, accept that falconry is a legitimate sport and a widely accepted method of hunting, permit this harvest while ensuring that wild raptor populations are not negatively impacted.

Please Note – This Code of Conduct is a minimum requirement of SAFA and the provincial falconry clubs will have variations of the following:

1. General

Falconers will observe the laws and customs of the Republic of South Africa and foreign countries with regard to the taking of, import and export of hawks, the taking of quarry and the right of access of land. In South Africa it is necessary to obtain a permit from the provincial nature conservation department before capturing or keeping any bird and before any bird can be imported or exported, either temporary or permanently. All permit conditions must be adhered to.

Falconers will adhere to the well being of the birds in their care, as the animals are reliant on the falconer for all their basic needs. The "principle of five freedoms" should be strictly enforced in the falconer's husbandry:

- Freedom from hunger and thirst – ready access to fresh water and a diet to maintain full health and vigour
- Freedom from discomfort – providing an appropriate environment including shelter and a comfortable resting area
- Freedom from pain, injury or disease – by prevention, rapid diagnosis and treatment
- Freedom to express normal behaviour – hunting
- Freedom from fear and distress – ensuring conditions and treatment which avoid mental suffering

2. Legislation with respect to Falconry

I) National legislation.

- a) The National Environment Management: Biodiversity Act, 2004 (Act No. 10 of 2004) – NEMBA.

- b) Threatened or Protected Species Regulations (TOPS) issued in terms of the provisions of NEMBA.
- c) The Performing Animals Act 24 of 1935. The license and certificate are valid for one year and stipulate the specific animals to be used. An application must be submitted to the local magistrate annually – application forms are available from Magistrate Courts.
- d) The Animals Protection Act 71 of 1962. The object of this act is to prevent cruelty to animals in captivity or under the control of any person. The act prohibits maltreatment of animals, including neglect, unnecessary confinement, starving or underfeeding of animals. Any such action constitutes a criminal offence.

The Animals Protection Act 71 of 1962 in section 2(1)(g) states “... *provokes any animal or incites any animal to attack another animal*”. This section was incorporated into the Act to outlaw Dog and Cockerel fighting. Falconers do not act in opposition to this law. Raptors have a natural propensity to pursue quarry. They do not need to be “provoked” or “incited” to follow their natural inclination to hunt. Indeed, it is only because of this natural propensity that Falconry is possible.

II) Provincial Legislation.

- a) Each province has its own Nature Conservation Ordinance or Act that amongst others covers the keeping of “wild animals”.
- b) Falconry will be administered within a Province in accordance to Provincial Notices and Policies. Provincial Policies should be developed in consultation with Falconers.

III) Municipal By-laws.

Compliance with municipal by-laws maybe required as well as a letter of “No Objection” might have to be sought from the relevant municipality.

IV) CITES Regulations - These regulate the trade and international transport of raptors.

3. Conservation

The breeding stock necessary for the survival of any raptor species is the wild population, so the capture of passage hawks and the taking of eyases, must be strictly controlled to ensure that the wild population remains in a healthy and viable state.

Most clubs negotiate an annual quota of birds which may be harvested from the wild and made available to club members, with their respective provincial conservation departments. The quota represents the maximum number of individuals of each species which may be harvested for falconry in a particular year. (To date no club has taken up their full negotiated annual quota.)

It is a known fact that birds of prey throughout the world have a very high natural mortality rate, especially in their first year of life. There are various scientific papers that have been written on this subject and it is not our intention in this Norms and Standards to cover all the existing scientific data, we will leave it as just that – a scientific fact. (Peregrine Falcon Populations: Their Management and Recovery – Tom Cade, James Enderson, Carl Thelander and Clayton White; Understanding the Bird of Prey – Dr. Nick Fox)

The figures quoted vary quite substantially between species, ranging from 60% to 85% dying before they are a year old. It can be said with certainty that in most species well over half the young fledged will die during the first year of life (Birds of Prey – An Illustrated Encyclopedic Survey by International Experts 1990).

From a falconers perspective the harvesting of certain species from the wild is seen as borrowing from the wild as many birds are released after serving as Falconer's birds. Such a harvest may be seen as "saving" youngsters from a near certain death, as well as probably increasing the survival rate of the remaining immature birds by reducing the competition and stress placed on them by the environment.

4. Wild Take

- i) The wild harvest of falconry birds is very small and entirely sustainable
- ii) The wild sourcing of falconry birds limits the use of exotic raptors
- iii) The wild sourcing of falconry birds keeps falconry within the reach of the less-affluent members of our society and mitigates against the trade in falconry birds
- iv) The wild sourcing of falconry birds limits the number of birds confined to breeding pens for life
- v) The wild sourcing of falconry birds encourages the involvement of falconers in the conservation of wildlife and specifically raptors. The banning of this source of falconry birds will negate this involvement, as seen elsewhere in the world where this situation pertains, as falconers will not be able to afford to run the risk of accusations of illegal trapping and laundering of wild birds

- vi) The wild sourcing of falconry birds is acceptable internationally and is permitted in diverse nations including the USA, Ireland, Germany, Mexico and Zimbabwe, to name a few

It must be reiterated that many wild-taken birds are released back to the wild in good condition after their use.

Only Master, A. and B. Grade Falconers (See Appendix 1) may trap hawks, with the necessary permits, issued by the provincial conservation authorities. The issuing of these permits is mandated by the various national and provincial legislation.

i. Accepted methods of capture.

Permits to capture passage hawks may be issued to those authorized to use such hawks for the purpose of falconry. SAFA's accepted methods of capture are:

- a) bal-chatri trap
- b) "dho gaza" nets
- c) Bow-net
- d) Swedish box trap
- e) pigeon harness
- f) harvesting of young or eggs from the nest

Passage hawks may be captured throughout the year.

ii. Control

a) The taking of eyases from well known and easy accessible nests may be regulated to ensure breeding pairs do not suffer annual disturbance. Therefore, falconers will advise their club when chicks are taken, together with all details as to the whereabouts of the nest, so that vulnerable eyries can be given added protection should the need arise. Permission of the landowner, on whose land the nest is situated, is required.

b) The trapping of Passage hawks requires the permission of the landowner on whose property the trapping will occur.

5. Captive bred hawks

i. Captive bred hawks are subjects to the same conditions as if taken from the wild.

All captive birds must be individually marked with a closed ring bearing a unique number. This number will be entered on the permit of the falconer holding the bird. Tampering with the ring is prohibited. The breeder should maintain a record of all breeding birds in his possession and their progeny. Included in this record may be one feather from each bird, including both parents and progeny, if required by the Nature Conservation Authorities. Duplicates of these records with feathers could be lodged with the Provincial Conservation Department. The purpose of this is to avert disputes regarding the paternity of progeny produced and to facilitate D.N.A. testing.

ii. Exotic or Hybrid Hawks

There is concern regarding the use of Hybrid and Exotic Raptors.

The SAFA Executive has applied their minds to this issue and has taken advice from the International Association for Falconry.

To date there has been no species of raptor that has demonstrated any trend towards becoming an invasive species. The risk of exotic raptors surviving in the wild is very small and this risk can be reduced to negligible levels if the following precautions are observed:

- a) Falconry birds may be trained in such a way that they are entirely dependent upon their co-operation with man for hunting success and cannot survive by hunting independently.
- b) No Exotic or Hybrid hawk shall be “Wild- Hacked”. (see definitions Section 13)
- c) All Hybrid or Exotic raptors shall be reared so that they are sexually imprinted on man or on a parent-raptor species that does not occur in the wild in South Africa.
- d) All Exotic or Hybrid hawks will be flown with two transmitters at all times.
- e) All Exotic and Hybrid Hawks will be flown by “A” Grade falconers who have already successfully flown a Peregrine Falcon. The only exception to this is the Harris Hawk. In this case the Harris Hawk may be flown by a “B” Grade falconer who has demonstrated proficiency with telemetry to their Provincial Club committee.
- f) In the event of loss of a Hybrid or Exotic hawk, every reasonable effort must be made to recover the lost hawk. In the event of failure to recover or re-trap the hawk the hawk should be exterminated if it is considered a significant threat to biodiversity.

SAFA rejects any suggestion that surgical sterilization is either a safe or necessary option.

To further ensure that there can be no adverse ecological impact from the use of Hybrid Raptors, SAFA undertakes to use or produce only hybrids of sympatric or parapatric species. SAFA voluntarily determines not to produce hybrids of allopatric

species, while noting that there is only theoretical objection to such hybrids and reserves the right to review this decision. (see Appendix 3)

Under the TOPS regulations local breeding centres for Peregrines must be registered and TOPS would regulate the breeding of hybrids.

6. Register of breeding sites

Some provinces require Falconers to register with their conservation authorities as well as their club all known breeding sites of the Peregrine and Lanner Falcon, African Hawk Eagle, Black Sparrowhawk and other raptor species as they or the provincial falconry club see necessary from time to time. This information is necessary to justify the issue of permits for capture and taking of birds from the wild.

7. Grading of falconers

- i. Falconers will be graded according to their experience and the hawks they will be authorized to capture or hunt with, will be specified accordingly. The grading criteria are attached as Appendix 1 of this document.
- ii. Master, A and B grade falconers will be invited to become examiners who will be required to assess the capabilities of novices and less experienced falconers aspiring to higher grades.
- iii. Applicants must be paid up members of their provincial club and he or she is required to maintain this membership while in possession of a raptor.

8. Ethics of care and training of hawks

- i. Hawks must be properly housed, fed, trained, exercised and used for hunting according to recognized rules for falconry.
- ii. In accordance with the above principle, most provincial falconry clubs allow “A grade” falconers a maximum of three hawks and “B grade” falconers a maximum of two hawks as permanent establishment unless by special permit. More hawks may, however, be kept for a period not greater than 7 days by any one falconer, without prior permission, provided that they has adequate housing etc, should they be asked to look after such additional birds by a colleague for any valid reason. Any period longer than this period will only be allowed with the necessary temporary keeping permit. The exception to this would be:

- a) Those hawks held for a breeding program, thus not counted as falconry birds.
- b) Birds held for bone-fide educational displays, for conservation purposes.

iii. Exotic hawks should not be released back into nature or hacked back in any province of South Africa where they do not occur naturally, but should be passed onto another falconer approved by the provincial falconry club, returned to the area where they do occur naturally, or handed to their club or to whomsoever their club may nominate.

iv. Indigenous hawks that are no longer required may be hacked back to the wild, passed onto another falconer approved by their club or passed to their club or to whomsoever their club may nominate.

9. Flexibility of procurement

i. Falconers may be permitted to capture passage hawks and to take eyases of the species listed against their grading, in accordance with the conditions of their permits and the principles of their provincial falconry code of conduct. Each hawk captured or taken is reported to the Secretary of the relevant provincial club, within a prescribed time period but not later than fourteen days after its procurement.

ii. It is accepted that even well trained hawks, flown by experienced falconers, are lost for various reasons and that the risk of losing birds is even greater when they are only partly trained and flown by falconers with limited experience. SAFA considers that a hawk thus lost has at least as good a chance of returning successfully to the wild state as does the average eyas, which is fledged naturally. Exotic and Hybrid hawks may only be flown under the conditions as stipulated under point 5 above. Hawks, which are lost, die or killed, must be reported to the Secretary of the relevant provincial falconry club within 14 days. Likewise the subsequent recovery of a lost hawk.

iii. Hawks that die should be handed to an appropriate veterinary surgeon for a post mortem. Skins should be handed to the provincial nature conservation office or an appointed person recommended by the conservation department.

10. Housing and Equipment

- i. All falconry birds must be housed in a secure and safe environment to afford the birds' adequate protection from the elements and any stray animals which could harm them.
- ii. All falconry furniture (equipment) must be of the highest standard to ensure both the safety and welfare of the raptors used under falconry conditions.

- iii. Any Committee Member of a provincial falconry club may inspect a falconer's equipment.
- iv. Falconers must use Almeri jesses with only the anklet, free running thongs or cords, without slits, when flying their hawks free.

11. Identification tags

Falconers may be required to attach numbered "tamper-proof" rings on legs of the hawks or have them microchipped.

12. Commercialisation (including safaris)

- i. The exhibition or display of raptors is not considered falconry, but the various falconry clubs appreciate the conservation and education value of these exhibition or displays, however SAFA would recommend to the Conservation Authorities that such exhibition or displays are managed by A or Master grade falconers only. Such activities are to be dealt with on a case by case basis between the operator and the conservation departments.
- ii. Club members, who are approached to take part with their raptors in shows, television or sound broadcasts, shall first seek authority from their Club Committee.
- iii. Safaris – SAFA would recommend that only A or Master grade falconer's may operate falconry safari operations. Such activities are to be dealt with on a case by case basis between the operator and the provincial conservation authority. Registration as a Professional Hunter may be required.
- iv. Sale of raptors is only allowed with captive-bred raptors and is permissible only in cases where the express written authority of the club has been obtained, as well as approval of the provincial conservation authority.
- v. Commercial falconry, which includes Falconry Safaris, hunting outing by paying guests with falconers and Falconry Displays; as well as the use of falconry methods to control pest birds around factories, farmland or airfields etc, is considered a legitimate practise. Never-the-less, these practises may bring falconry into disrepute, therefore SAFA would recommend to the Provincial Conservation Authorities that:
 - a) All falconers undertaking these practices should be graded members of a Provincial Falconry Club
 - b) All such projects should be approved by both the Provincial Falconry Club and the Conservation Authority

c) The Provincial Falconry Club and the Provincial Conservation Authority should recognize the financial commitment made by the commercial falconer and respect his/her financial constraints in so far as these do not result in illegal activity, poor falconry practice, raptor husbandry, raptor welfare or negatively affect the conservation effort.

13. Ethical Hunting

All falconers will follow the principles of ethical hunting. These principles will include the principle of fair chase. They will ensure that all hunting is on wild quarry and follows the principles of sustainable use.

It is recognized that it is impossible to control the actions of the falconer's bird absolutely, but every effort must be made to avoid the catching of non-target species. Similarly, it is recognized that raptors need to fly and hunt year round, so cannot be strictly bound by hunting seasons. It must be noted that falconers take very small numbers of quarry when compared to other hunting methods. Every effort should be made to avoid hunting quarry that is actively breeding or which have dependant offspring. When non-target or off-season quarry is taken, the hawk should be fed up in the field and the carcass left in the field.

14. Definitions in the Norms and Standards

i. *Hawks/Raptors* include all birds in the order Falconiforms, such as falcons, hawks, eagles, goshawks, sparrowhawks, etc.

ii. *Hacking back* means to return to the wild state by allowing the hawk to fly free, for an indefinite period, in order that it can develop power of wing and the ability to kill for itself. During this period of free flight, food should be left out at a place where the hawk has previously been conditioned to feed before it is set free. Throughout this hacking period, food should be provided each day, at the same time, in the same place, until the hawk no longer returns regularly. Thereupon it can be presumed to be killing for itself. The hawk should be ringed by a licensed ringer or under the auspices of one.

iii. *Passage hawk* means a wild, free-flying hawk still in juvenile plumage. In the case of a dispute, when the hawk is in moult it shall be judged as a passage only if it has more than 25% of its juvenile plumage. The decision of the Committee of the provincial falconry club shall be final.

iv. *Eyas* means a young hawk in the nest; and taken from the nest for training purposes; or an adult bird which was originally taken from the nest and has advanced

into adulthood under the care of a falconer (*intermewed*). Young birds, which have just left the nest but are still jumping around the branches near the nest immediately prior to flying free and commonly known, as branchers, are also to be considered eyases in this code of conduct.

v. *Falconry* – the art of hunting wild quarry with a trained raptor.

15. Enforcement

Any breach of the provisions hereof shall be deemed in default of the undertaking given by the falconer to the director of their Provincial Conservation Authority, the National Departments of Environmental Affairs and Agriculture and their Falconry Club, rendering the falconer's permit null and void at the option of the Province. Notwithstanding the cancellation of the falconer's permit/s, certain breaches of this Code may also render the falconer liable for prosecution.

16. Ethical and Scientific aspects concerning animal welfare and falconry

This point is covered by a leading international expert in this field Prof. Dr. Thomas Richter. Please see Appendix 2 a paper by Prof. Dr. Richter.

APPENDIX 1

All active ordinary members of the Provincial Falconry Clubs are graded into one of the following grades:

1. Apprentice – D grade

All new members will undergo a formal apprenticeship. This will comprise a period of time (usually one year) in which they can observe active graded falconers (one of whom should be nominated as “mentor” or “sponsor”) and prepare their equipment and mews. As soon as they feel up to it they will undertake a written examination set by the provincial falconry club. On successful completion of the exam, they will elect a Master, A or B grade falconer to act as their mentor. The mentor will be responsible for checking their mews and equipment. When deemed ready by their mentor, they may undertake to care for and train their first hawk. This will be performed under close supervision and the mentor will be answerable to the committee for their apprentice’s performance. The hawks that a D grade would have access to would be Jackal Buzzards, Rock and Greater Kestrels and African Goshawks.

2. Novice – C grade

Acceptance into this grade will principally be based upon:

- a) The condition of the hawk
- b) The state of manning of the hawk
- c) The hawk's response to stimuli offered by the falconer and the general relationship between the hawk and falconer in other respects
- d) Answers to informal questions put to the falconer, by the examiner/committee and their mentor

Birds available to the C grade will be any of the four D grade birds as well as Gabar and Chanting Goshawks and Shikras.

3. General Falconer – B grade

A “B” grade falconer must show that he/she can manage a hawk correctly and responsibly, using acceptable falconry techniques. It is important that the applicant shows a strong interest in hunting the hawk. General falconers should have access to

pigeons, and must have a trained pointing type dog. Furthermore the B grade falconer must be in possession of at least a telemetry transmitter with a suitable receiver readily available to him or her.

The birds available to the General falconer shall include the previous two grades as well as the eyas/passage Lanner Falcon, female Rufous-chested Sparrowhawk, Ovambo Sparrowhawk, Black Sparrowhawk and Harris Hawks. Other species may be applied for under special consideration of the provincial falconry club Committee based on merit and circumstances.

May act as a mentor, after practicing as a General Falconer for at least two years or under special consideration of the provincial falconry club Committee based on merit and circumstances, for D and C grade falconers.

4. Falconer – A grade

Any eligible falconer can be appointed as an A grade taking into consideration their ability, years of practical falconry and loyalty to the art. It will be compulsory for a B grade to fly both shortwings and at least one Lanner Falcon in order to be considered for A grading. Any General Falconer aspiring to a Falconer status i.e. fly Peregrine Falcons, must achieve a high standard of hunting proficiency with a Lanner Falcon and must use suitable pointing dogs to assist them in locating game for their falcons to catch. The Falconer will have access to all of the previous hawks as well as male Rufous-chested Sparrowhawk, Little Sparrowhawk, Peregrine Falcons, Hybrids and Exotics Falcons. The latter two will only be allowed to the A grade after at least having flown Peregrine Falcons successfully.

5. Master Falconer

Master Falconer will be an honorary title granted to a Falconer (A grade). Their dedication and development of falconers in the old art will credit this honour.

All grades of falconers except a Master Falconer will revert back to their previous grade following two consecutive years of not actively practicing falconry unless otherwise considered by the Club Committee.

The Provincial Falconry Clubs, in line with the South African Falconry Association policy, will respect the grading (with written proof from their previous club) of falconers moving and joining another provinces falconry club.

The various falconry clubs issue all graded falconers with a laminated identity card. This card is carried in the field to identify them as members of a provincial falconry club in good standing. It will indicate their grading and that they are permitted by the provincial nature conservation department in the province in which they live. The

Falconry Clubs will notify their conservation authorities on the change in status of a falconer i.e. change in grading or failure to remain in good standing. This ID card remains the property of the provincial falconry club and will be returned to the Club Committee on request.

Currently many of the provincial conservation authorities are agreeing to the falconers ID Card being used as a temporary import and export permit should the falconer visit one of the other provinces. The onus is on the falconer to establish whether or not the province he or she intends visiting accepts the ID Card. If the ID Card is not accepted, the required import/export permits must be acquired.

As can be appreciated over time SAFA's grading criteria might change however these changes would only be semantics changes with the basic principle of above applying.

APPENDIX 2

ETHICAL AND SCIENTIFIC ASPECTS CONCERNING ANIMAL WELFARE AND FALCONRY

**By Prof. Dr. Thomas Richter of the University of Neurtingen in Germany
and Dr. Peter Kunzmann**

Every type of interaction humans have with animals is, at the moment, being tested and scrutinised by society. This is true for hunting and especially for hawking as well. The present paper shall evaluate whether hawking and falconry go morally and biologically together with the ideas of animal welfare. Morality, to our thinking, is advice for how to behave properly. Morality gives the answer to the question: "how shall we act?" In the Middle Ages at the times of pope and emperor, decision making was quite easy, decisions came from the authorities. In the present day there is no universal morality left. Everybody is forced to think by themselves whether his or her behaviour is right or wrong.

In the present day I am allowed to decide many various subjects by myself personally. If I don't like the taste of spinach, I am not forced to eat some. But if my aim is to regulate the living of other people by law, I have the duty to justify the way I think. The arguments have to be reasonable and without contradiction. How much better it would be if other people could agree with my decision; in case of spinach this would fail. One basic principal in philosophy is the principal of equality. Equal things should be treated equally, unequal things should be treated differently. A person is acting reasonably, when he or she makes decisions on comparable items in the same way (Wimmer, 1980, by Mueller, 1995, P.87). This means: If the ethical assessment is known for a possible option of acting, and if there is a second possible option of acting comparable to the first, the assessment has to be the same. By this means we will compare the keeping of Birds of Prey with other animal keeping and hawking with other hunting methods. Ethics is the part of philosophy which does scientific research on morals. The relationship between moral and ethics is comparable to the relationship between disease and medical science. Ethics is super-individualistic. To forbid spinach for the only reason, that I personally do not like it, would not fit into a critical overview by ethics.

In order to decide whether falconry and hawking fits to the principles of animal welfare, we have to do four steps:

1. an ethical and scientific overview concerning the quarry.
2. an ethical and scientific overview concerning the hawking birds, using the concept of Meet Demands and Avoid Damage, an ethological scheme accepted by most of scientists dealing with animal welfare in the German speaking countries.
3. regarding the fact that there is no action done by human beings that has only positive or negative aspects, there is a comparison to be done to weigh the benefit by the human action(i.e. hawking)versus the harm it may probably cause.
4. a synopsis and conclusion.

I. Overview concerning the quarry,

To ask if falconry and hawking can be accepted morally, you have to first answer the following questions:

- 1 is hunting acceptable to all
- 2 is killing of one animal by another animal to human benefit acceptable?
- 3 Is hawking less acceptable like other hunting methods?

To the first question:

What objections can be given against hunting? Hunting means the killing of animals. The first question is of course: is killing of animals acceptable? The killing of animals in our opinion is allowed, provided there is a justifying reason. What reason can be considered as justifying depends on the cultural context and the personal options of an individual. The range varies from no reason at all to self-defence, defence of human property, defence of nature(by pest control as well as by sustainable use of the quarry for sporting purposes) and consummatory use (especially for human nutrition) to any reason at all.

The most usual answers to the question of what might justify killing (while hunting) are:				
No reason	Just self defence	Self defence and	Self defence and	Any reason
		Defence of human property or	Defence of human property and	
		Nature conservation or	Nature conservation and	
		food	food	

Although there is no method to verify which is the one and only, but you may have a look at the consequences that occur, if you advocate one of these opinions.

- If there is no reasoning that justifies the killing of any animal, than you must not take a drug if you are occasionally infected with a tapeworm.
- If ‘only self-defence’ is acceptable as justifying reasons, you may kill the tapeworm and you may even kill the fox, if you can show that it endangers you with *Ecchinococcus multilocularis* or rabies.
- If the defence of property is acceptable as a justifying reason, you may kill different animal species causing problems, for example rats and mice, wild pigs, which are a big item of farmers concerning crops and wild rabbits that destroy railway installations, camp grounds or graveyards.
- If nature conservation is acceptable as justifying reason, you may control predators to avoid the extinction of rare species (like fox-control in Germany to protect Grouse-Populations) as well as saving white rhinos in Southern Africa for hunting purposes.
- If consumption of animal products (like meat, fur or skin) is acceptable as a justifying reason, then it must be allowed to use wild animals as well. By the way, harvesting wild animals usually does mean less suffering for the animals than the use of farm-animals, which mostly are kept under quite poor circumstances.

Now you can decide, what consequence you personally are willing to bear, and you can ask your compatriots what their opinion is. In Western Europe, to accept the killing of animals for self-defence, defence of property, nature conservation and nutrition supply is common sense for most of the people.

We are coming now to the second question, whether it is allowed to use an animal to kill others. The most common predator that kills animals for human benefit, is the cat that catches mice. It is our duty to study if the mice-catching of a cat – lets say to a farmer benefit – is more acceptable, morally, than catching rabbits with a goshawk by a falconer. Indeed there are two substantial differences between theses two cases – but in both cases the goshawk has an advantage over the cat. First the cat does not respect closed seasons and catches for example lactating mother-mice with the result that the dependent offspring will die. The second problem is that cats do not respect nature protections laws and do catch protected species like songbirds as well. If there is consensus among people, that catching mice by a cat is acceptable, we can see no reason, why catching rabbits with a goshawk (or partridges with a peregrine and so on) should be immoral.

In order to give the answer to the third question, if hawking is more immoral, than other hunting methods, we shall compare it with hunting by using a gun. This comparison leads to a better result for the hawking method. The hawk is part of

nature and the quarry knows it very well. Both hawk and quarry share a long period of evolution. Hawking is silent, it disturbs only the potential quarry, and not other wild animals and it involves the human to a much lesser extent than shooting. Additionally it is worth mention that the absence of lead-shot leads to less pollution of the environment. From an ecological point of view hawking is the less disturbing hunting method.

Killing and injuring: while shooting quarry animals that are injured but not killed immediately escape occasionally. They will die after a certain time with significant suffering. This is very unlikely while hawking. The hawk catches the quarry properly or it will escape unhurt. Falcons kill their prey quickly, quarry captured by a short wing, can usually be reached and killed by the falconer within seconds.

There is no risk for humans being injured due to hunting, if hawking is the method. There is even no risk of human property becoming damaged. For this reason, falconers are quite popular if the aim is to reduce the rabbit-populations in graveyards, industrial areas or camping grounds. Another interesting possibility is to chase away crows, seagulls or herons from airfields, rubbish tips or fish farms. For this it is often successful just to let falcon fly. To cause the birds to leave the area.

II. Overview concerning hawking birds

In order to decide whether there are special problems in keeping and training hawking-birds, you have to deal with the following questions:

1. is keeping of animals, especially of “wild animals” in the hands of man acceptable?
2. is the special kind of keeping and training of birds of prey used by falconers acceptable?

“wild” versus “domestic” animals

Most citizens do accept the keeping of animals. This is verified by the enormous number of pets that are kept, assessment tells that 100 millions pets are kept privately in Germany alone. Humans do have a big urge to live together with animals. The position “the one who loves animals does not keep animals” is only shared by a minority of our fellow citizens.

This leads to the sub question if the keeping of animals whose conspecifics are usually living in nature (“wild animals”) is allowed or just the keeping of domesticated animals? This is also accepted by the majority of our compatriots, think of the huge amount of fish kept in aquariums, as well as parrots, reptiles and amphibians, virtually

all of them wild. We need also to clarify whether the status of being member of a (sub) species (23) living usually in the wild constitutes a special status. Following the principle of equality – that means using moral principles – you have to refuse this idea. Every in human hands has to be cared for properly, with no difference between “wild animals” and “domestic animals”. A special moral status of “wild animals” has to be refused as well, if you take biological points of view into account. There is no evidence that there have been behavioural patterns raised up by domestication, only an increase or decrease of intensity in existing behaviours. The criteria for animal welfare can not be how long an animal or its ancestors have been kept in the hands of man, but whether it is possible to fulfil the demand of the animal while it is being kept. In other words, whether the housing conditions are suitable for the adaptability of the animal or not. To give an example: we can see no problem keeping an animal of usually free living (sub) species if there is no evidence of suffering, damage or pain. However, to keep a domestic horse that shows stereotypical behavioural problems like wind-sucking, or has injuries at the hoof, because of being reared in an impoverished environment is, in our opinion, a big welfare problem.

Meet Demands and Avoid Damage Concept.

As a tool for the decision whether falconry has a significant relevance to animal welfare, one can use the concept of *Meet Demands and Avoid Damage*. This concept was elaborated by a group of Swiss and German ethologists (ethological working group of the German Veterinarian Society, Tschanz et al. 1987) and first published in 1987. At present it is the most often used method to decide whether a certain phenomenon has an animal welfare relevance or not.

The concept of *Meet Demands and Avoid Damage* arises from the assumption that every organism is able to self-creation and self-maintenance. Whether an animal can manage self-creation and self-maintenance sufficiently, can be evaluated if the animal is able to fulfil its demands and prevents itself from damage. The animal uses for these aims its physiological morphological and ethological equipment acquired by evolution and by individual ontogenesis. With this equipment animals use or avoid structures and conditions in their environment (if an animal is kept, the structures and conditions are ruled by men). If the adaptability of an animal is overstretched, physiological, morphological and/or ethological damage will occur. Physical damage can be seen easily with most, mostly even without knowledge about animal species and there is no dispute about the relevance of the injury to the welfare of the animal. Ethological damage will be recognised as disturbed behaviour like stereotypes. It is most often not so easy to detect, and there is much more discussion, whether disturbed behaviour does really indicate poor welfare. The concept of *Meet Demands and Avoid Damage* claims if there is a significant amount of injured or damaged individuals correlating to a certain keeping or managing system, this system will be recognised as

not compatible with the approach of animal welfare. For this judgement the seriousness of the damage is to be taken in consideration as well.

⁽²³⁾ By a biological point of view domestication creates no new species, the animal remains a member of the original species (dogs of the species *Canis lupus*, pigs of the species *Sus scrofa*), therefore you just talk about wild or domesticated subspecies.

In order to answer the second question we shall have a view on the methods used by falconers typically. At first is to say, that during the moult period the birds are mostly kept in aviaries (or so called moulting pens). During the hunting season, especially previous to the hunting act, the bird will mostly be tethered at both of the two legs and fixed to a perch or the fist. The so called falconry method is only justified for birds engaged in hunting that are also allowed to fly freely and often during the season. (By the way: while keeping other species of pets, tethering is a very common method for leading an animal as well and is completely accepted morally. Nearly all dogs and a lot of cats are led by collars and leads, horses wear a halter and are steered by reins which force much more power to the sensitive mouth than the jesses to the legs of the hawk.)

Does tethering cause suffering in the birds? Concerning the locomotion activities most people have a wrong idea. This idea may result from human dreams of freedom (see the advertising the Marlboro Tobacco Company does world wide) and from the behaviour of buzzards, who are sailing in the thermals. This ringing costs considerably less energy than the active flight of a peregrine or even a goshawk. And even the buzzards don't fly just for fun. They need to soar either to look for carrion as food or to mark out their territory. Scientific results show, that Birds of Prey are very keen on saving energy by resting and avoiding flying. Wild living peregrines at the shore in the Netherlands have been observed during the winter period when a lot of quarry (ducks, seagulls etc.) is available easily. They flew on the average one and a half minutes per day – just enough to catch a duck (Bednarek, 2002) then they rested, till hunger grew the next day and they hunted again for about one and a half minutes. Falconers are very interested that their birds are very well trained physically, because a less fit bird will not catch as much quarry, if any. They take a lot of care that their birds have a lot of flight opportunity and experience.

The training of the hawk firstly means taming. Even if this is quite different between the various species of Birds of Prey used for hawking, it just can be done by patience.

Negative sanctions like those used a lot in the training of dogs and horses for example, are deadly bad for the learning process in Birds of Prey. All birds have in common, that they are much less capable of learning than mammals. They are

basically too “stupid” to understand sanctions. They would only become frightened as a result. If we accept the training of dogs or horses for human purposes, we have to accept the training of birds of prey even more.

Birds of prey no matter if they are living freely or together with men, do not hunt unless they are hungry (or mating, or rearing offspring). Birds of prey, like all predators, are capable to eat much more than the demand for one day, if they had the luck to hunt successfully. While hawking the falconer has to control the food intake of the bird carefully to keep it still motivated, but strong enough to hunt successfully. If this food management is done carefully, the bird is in the same condition like its conspecifics in the wild. If we are asking whether feeding a bird less food than it could eat as a maximum can be accepted morally, we have to compare the feeding of birds with the feeding of other animals and even of humans. A lot of animals have a controlled diet to get them at a maximum rate of fitness. We are not able to see a moral difference between feeding a diet that fulfils the demands but prevents from becoming too fat, to birds, or to dogs, horses or (wo)man.

Using the Meet Demands and Avoid Damage Concept we can state:

Successful hunting falconers birds do not show physical damage in general. There is just a single pathological problem left, that had been cause of a severe illness, the so called bumble-foot disease. This occurred especially in wild caught (passage) falcons. The reason is supposed to be a too rapid change in metabolism (Heidenreich, 1996) additionally are poor perches discussed (Trommer, 1992). Bumble-foot can be prevented by good housing, food and management in captive bred and wild caught birds. Successful hunting with birds of prey presupposes they are in perfect condition.

Disturbed, especially stereotypic behaviour (see Lawrence and Rushin, 1993), as we do know very well from domestic and non-domesticated animals kept under poor environmental circumstances, like weaving, wind- sucking and crib-biting in horses, bar-biting in sows or feather-picking in poultry and parrots has not been recognised in falconry birds. There is no evidence that their ethological needs are not met by the keeping and training typical for falconry.

And even if you face falconry from an aesthetic point of view, you will find no contradiction. As far as we know, animals have no thirst for freedom. Hawking is the very best example of a voluntary cooperation between an animal (who’s conspecifics live freely) and a human being . I personally am fascinated by hawking, because the hawk has to be physically and by its behaviour fit at a very high level, to be a successful hunter. And this successful hunter accepts to cooperate with little me by a positive learning experience. The bird co-operates even if it flies completely free, it could fly away easily and – as a successful hunter-it could survive without problems

in the wild. All keeping of animals requires resources of material and of knowledge. Successful falconers prove that they have access to these resources, otherwise they wouldn't be successful.

III. Advantages

There are no particular animal welfare problems with falconry. Furthermore we can see some significant benefits resulting from it:

1. Benefit for Humans: falconry is a great pleasure for a lot of people – in Germany it belongs to the constitutionally protected freedoms (by High Court Ruling). The tame hawk with undisturbed behaviour is a great chance for science. Most of the knowledge we have about the behaviour of hawks, especially of the reproductive behaviour, comes from trained birds.
2. Benefit for Nature Conservation: It was only the intimate rational and intuitive knowledge falconers have from their birds, especially from their ethology, gave us the chance to breed birds of prey successfully. This was the basis not only to serve falconers' own demands for their birds, but for many release programs worldwide. Especially the peregrine populations, both in Germany and in the US, which have had a great advantage from the several thousand captive bred birds that have been released to the wild.
3. Benefit for Animal Welfare: Injured or otherwise helpless birds of prey require proper medical treatment – after that they must not be released without special training based on the methods and experiences of falconers.

IV. Summary and Valuation

Weighting the pros and cons:

There is a long list of benefits from falconry.

For the falconers hawking is a source of fulfilment, challenge and delight.

Falconry is the most suitable hunting method from an ecological point of view. The stress for the quarry is, compared to other hunting methods, quite low.

Falconers birds are indispensable for science, especially for ethological and reproductive research. Watching the natural behaviour of a bird of prey – and hawking means nothing else – is a basis of invaluable merit. The knowledge and the engagement of falconers made the new foundation of many populations possible that had been extinct. Falconers' knowledge and techniques are the basic requirements for successful rehabilitation of injured or otherwise helpless wild birds. Is there any obstacle? A moral disadvantage from falconry and hawking cannot be seen. From a biological point of view, there could no welfare relevance detected by the *Meet Demands and Avoid Damage Concept*. Compared with living in nature a tame hawk has a much more comfortable and secure life.

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APPENDIX 3.

HYBRID RAPTORS - A CONSIDERATION OF THE ISSUES.

(THIS DISCUSSION DOCUMENT DOES NOT REPRESENT POLICY OF ANY ORGANISATION)

Background

Falconers started to breed hybrids almost as early as they could breed falcons, the first well-documented case being the saker-peregrine crosses produced by Ronald Stevens in 1971. The first crossings were mainly to show that falconers really could breed falcons: hybrids could not readily have been taken from wild pairs. In the USA, hybrids produced by Jim Weaver gave impetus to the creation of the Peregrine Fund and its release program. Particular crosses may have advantages for falconry, in providing quality flights in circumstances and surroundings where pure-bred birds are more likely to fail. In artificial landscapes of modern countries, hybrids may allow falconry to continue in places and at quarry which were previously impractical. In desert countries, hybrids of gyrfalcons are preferred to pure-bred sakers or peregrines because they are larger and faster, and less stressed by heat than gyrfalcons.

Concern about hybrids centres on loss into the wild of domestic hybrids or species that may hybridise in the wild. Falconers have always lost some birds, and are skilled in the deliberate releases that have frequently been used for conservation. Although radio-tagging has now made accidental loss a rare occurrence, the hacking of untrained domestic progeny, as a means of improving flying skills, may create a greater risk of losing hybrids than after they are trained.

The extent of concern depends on the type of hybrid, which may be between species that occur together in the wild (sympatry), between species that occur in adjacent areas (parapatry) or between species from geographically isolated areas (allopatry). Concern may also depend on the health of local wild raptor populations, and is likely to affect public perception of falconry.

1. Sympatry and parapatry

Species that occur in the same area or adjacent areas, such as gyrfalcons, peregrines and sakers, have opportunities to breed together naturally. Behavioural and physiological mechanisms usually prevent them hybridising, although occasional natural raptor hybrids have been recorded. In the long-term, traces of such rare hybrids are likely to be eliminated by natural selection, possibly aided by physiological mechanisms. Therefore, no risk can arise from pure-bred species hybridising with sympatric or parapatric species after loss by falconers. This statement is valid for any sub-species a species may have, because a species is defined as a population of individuals with natural gene flow between them.

However, hybrids of sympatric or parapatric species that have been bred by enforced proximity or artificial insemination may lack natural isolating mechanisms. They may cause problems if either their genetic fitness is higher than that of native birds or if lost in numbers where natural populations are depressed, for example in areas where peregrine populations have not recovered after the pesticide era. In such cases, natural selection through competition is reduced, and hybrids may tend to persist in the wild. They may also have added strength during the interference with breeding that occurs naturally in healthy populations. There are many reports from Germany of such interference

by hybrids, and hybrid falcons have produced young in Germany, Sweden and the United States. Some records probably result from hybrids that disappear while at hack with inadequate precautions against loss.

2. Allopatry

Some sympatric or parapatric species allopatric species, which are from geographically isolated areas, lack natural mechanisms that prevent hybridisation. An example is the American Ruddy Duck, which hybridises with the European White-Headed Duck and aggressively displaces it following release at wildlife parks. Agreement has now been reached to try to eliminate the Ruddy Duck in Europe. It is too late to eliminate the Mallard from North America, where its hybridisation with the native Black Duck has produced such a large "hybrid swarm" that pure Black Ducks may be lost entirely. Thus, pure-bred species introduced to an area they could not reach naturally, or hybrids between allopatric species, sometimes prosper at the expense of a less robust native equivalent.

In raptors, which are very mobile creatures, allopatry is likely only between the American and Eurasian super-continent, Australasia and oceanic islands. Among raptors of wide interest to falconers, the only species with less robust allopatric equivalents are Red-tailed Hawks (for Common Buzzards in Europe), and Sakers (for Prairie Falcons in North America). Falconers have avoided producing hybrids between allopatric raptors. Red-tails are not hacked and Sakers only in their native Eurasia. Harris Hawks, flown widely in Europe, create no risk because there is no closely related ecological equivalent. Compared with deliberate release of wildfowl, it has long been accepted that there is negligible risk from rare losses of single trained raptors.

3. Public relations

Although natural selection should eventually eliminate hybrids, it may not act fast, and if many hybrids are lost they could represent a small proportion of the total wild population at any time. This might offend people who worry about wild raptor populations. Falconry is at present fairly well understood across a spectrum of conservation organisations, for whom sustainable use is becoming an important part of conservation. This improved understanding recently gave falconry explicit exemption from Bern Convention constraints on use of exotic species. Moreover, falconers are gaining increased access to wild populations in some countries, which reduces motivation to fly non-native species. At a time of growing cooperation in conservation, it behoves falconers and other groups to engage positively to handle any issues arising from production of hybrids.

Position Statements

In a recent Position Statement, the main biological issues affecting falconry were reviewed by the Raptor Research Foundation (RRF), which is the largest international organisation specifically for research and conservation of raptors. RRF's position was that "escape of sympatric or parapatric species or their hybrids is unlikely to pose any significant threat to wild populations", but that "hybrids between allopatric species (defined as from different super-continent) should not be bred for falconry" and that steps should be taken to reduce risk of breeding by any lost hybrids. It also noted that, to avoid wasting conservation resources, the intensity of regulations on falconry should be consonant with the risk to raptor populations.

A recent review by the Advisory Committee of the International Association for Falconry and Conservation of Birds of Prey (IAF) endorsed this position. It was concluded that current regulations and practices are adequate to prevent risk to raptor populations from hybrids. However, IAF was concerned to preserve its positive relationships with other wildlife interest groups, and therefore also issued a Position Statement on the subject.

(THE PRECEDING DISCUSSION DOCUMENT DOES NOT REPRESENT POLICY OF ANY ORGANISATION)

**The Position, on Hybrid Raptors in Falconry, of the
International Association for Falconry and Conservation of Birds of Prey**

The International Association for Falconry and Conservation of Birds of Prey (IAF) has examined in depth the practical and theoretical considerations that arise from the production of hybrid raptors. After a review of the available data and taking expert advice, we consider it unlikely that a problem for wildlife conservation will arise from the breeding of hybrid raptors if their loss to the wild is rare. We recommend, as a minimum, that:

1. hybrids be fostered if possible by a parent that does not occur locally in the wild;
2. hybrids only be hatched in large conditioning pens;
3. hybrids only be flown with reliable telemetry equipment;
4. maximum efforts be made to recover any hybrid that is lost;
5. hybrids should never be deliberately released.

We ask IAF member clubs to bring these considerations to the attention of falconers world-wide. We accept that individual clubs may feel obliged to endorse stricter measures. However, we strongly believe that self-regulation is preferable to regulatory supervision. In that spirit, we appreciate a growing tendency of falconers in some countries to fly pure-bred falcons rather than hybrids. We are keeping this issue under review and will remain actively involved in the political consultation processes at all levels of regulation.

Adopted by the delegates of the member states at Amarillo, Texas, on 21 November 2000.



SOUTH AFRICAN FALCONRY ASSOCIATION

APPENDIX 4

South African Falconry Association current (2013) contact details:

Chairman:

Dr. E.R. (Robbie) Robinson
 Email: er48rob@mweb.co.za

Secretary:

Mr. Bruce Padbury
 Email: padbury@telkomsa.net

Treasurer:

Mr. Tim Wagner
 Email: Timothy.Wagner@tigerbrands.com

SAFA Ex Officio Executive Committee Members

Dr. Adrian Lombard
 President – International Association for Falconry and the Conservation of Birds of Prey
 Email: Lombard@iaf.org

Mr. Trevor Oertel
raptor@icon.co.za

www.safa.za.net/

www.iaf.org/



SOUTH AFRICAN FALCONRY ASSOCIATION

APPENDIX 5

South African Falconry Association current (2014) contact details remain the same as Appendix 4 bar the former Chairman Dr. Robbie Robinson stepped down due to ill health:

Chairman:

Mr. Ross Kramm
 Email: rossk@yebo.co.za

Secretary:

Mr. Bruce Padbury
 Email: padbury@telkomsa.net

Treasurer:

Mr. Tim Wagner
 Email: Timothy.Wagner@tigerbrands.com

SAFA Ex Officio Executive Committee Members

Dr. Adrian Lombard
 President – International Association for Falconry and the Conservation of Birds of Prey
 Email: Lombard@iaf.org

Mr. Trevor Oertel
raptor@icon.co.za