

FALCON CLASS

AUG '86

1. Instructor -- Bill Saunders. 805-252-3166. Nice guy, seems solid.
2. Events -- North American Falconers Association
3. Getting a bird. Now you must trap your own bird. You can't sell your bird. You can't give it away. You don't own it. (One can't start off with more than two birds.)
You must notify Fish and Game when you get it and when you finally let it free, or maybe you can give it to Fish and Game.
4. There are three major types (families) of birds used in falconry:
 - a. Falcons, which include peregrins, sparrow hawks, and gyre falcons;
 - b. Accipiters; and
 - c. Buteos.
5. A girl by the name of Karen Reinings (805-255-4770/4110) would offer to take me on a tour up at Magic Mountain regarding their animals around the end of September.
6. Personality of the falconer must be very systematic.
7. Large falcons make good pets.
Red-tailed hawks and owls need to hunt.
8. Patience is very necessary with the birds. They are like people. No two birds are the same.
9. 1% of falcons can't be trained.
10. Falconry started around 4,000 years ago and probably started in the Middle East as a religious symbol.
11. It used to be a sport of nobility only.
12. The Department of Fish and Game issues falconry regulations.
13. There are the following books on falconry:
 - a. Falconry and _____, by Charles I. Brandford and Phillip Glasier (?);
 - b. Manual of Falconry, by Phillip Woodward;
 - c. American Hawking, by Hans J. Peters;
 - d. North American Falconry and Hunting Hawks, by B.B. and Webster;
 - e. Desert Hawking II, by Harry McElroy.
14. The bookstore for falconry books: Isaac Delgart, 34 Charles Street, Newbury Port, MA 01950, 617-465-9445.
15. To take a test on falconry with the Department of Fish and Game, one needs a sponsor.
16. There are three levels of falconry.
Level One -- Apprentice
Level Two -- General Falconer
Level Three -- Master Falconer
17. To pass a test, you need a checklist of equipment.
 - a. First, you take the test.
 - b. Shortly thereafter, they come to see you in your residence and check out your facility and check out your equipment.
18. Equipment needed:
 - a. A scale to weigh the bird and the food (the tolerance should be 1/4 ounce);
 - b. A hawk bath (it should be two to three inches deep and slightly wider in diameter than the wing spread);
 - c. A perch (it depends on the type of bird -- a sparrow hawk, falcon, or red-tailed hawk needs a block perch or ring perch for large flat feet, etc.);
 - d. A glove (it's necessary to feel the bird's grip; one can tell the mood of the bird by the grip);
 - e. Jesses (straps for the bird's legs, connected to a swivel);
 - f. A swivel (a very solid one);
 - g. A leash;
 - h. A calling device (a "whistle");
 - i. A hood (needed for some types; in transport or in darkness; in darkness, they are quiet; in old days, there were given hoods with pointer dogs, so a hawk won't make a false start);
 - j. Bells (unless sparrow hawk, will need bells; usually in pairs, different octaves, so they don't sound like birds; get an alloyed bell; that's two different bells on each bird);
 - k. A bag for odds and ends (nice but not mandatory).
19. The three types of falcons previously mentioned are called raptors. The general definitions are:
 - a. Falcons -- Long wings; they hunt from height and hunt aerial prey; they hunt from the sky;
 - b. Accipiters (phonetically: ack-cipaters) -- Short-winged birds; goss hawk is the best or Cooper's hawk; they're long and thin; they can run fast; they're the most efficient hunters; they're very, very fast; hard to train; they make very rapid turns; they're not for amateurs;
 - c. Buteos (phonetically: beau-tee-o) -- It's a red-tail hawk and in large use; broad wing or red shoulder.
20. The government test is 100 questions; all multiple choice; four choices on each; and here's the following sections:

Literature review --	4 points
Species age/sex ID --	4 points
Ecology/food distribution --	10 points
Breeding and biology --	5 points
Equipment and facility --	12 points
General health/food and water --	20 points
Injury, disease, and parasites --	15 points
Training and hunting practices --	12 points
Ethics --	4 points
Regulations --	5 points
Other --	1 point
Not sure --	<u>8 points</u>
	<u>100 points</u>

One needs 80% on the test to pass.

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21. Every year a person with a license must send in an annual report to Fish and Game. An apprentice can only have one bird at a time.
22. It normally takes three years of apprentice falconry to have a general license, and a master in maybe six years.
23. You can't take a bird from a nest unless you're a master falconer. An apprentice can only trap a bird.
24. The trap would be something made out of 3/4-inch plywood, with a trap door on the bottom, diameter depending on the bird, stretched chicken wire, and a bell-shaped dome over it, and put fish line with slip knots waxed so they stand out all over it.
25. Drive out to the country. When you see a hawk, set it down and slip a mouse in the trap door. The sparrow hawk will circle and drop on the mouse and will get its feet tangled and fall over, at which point you take the bird home and put equipment on it.

After a couple of days, it won't bite. Inside, leave it alone for a few hours.
26. You can only trap a passage bird if you're an apprentice, and apparently only in the fall.
27. The bird must be conditioned to having you around.
28. Food does that.
29. The best food for your animal is rodents, pigeons, fur and feathers, beef kidneys.
30. Rule of Thumb: If it's a new bird, it's keel bone in the front should not stick out. It should have bright eyes. Its breath should be OK.
31. Beef kidneys are a cheap and easy way to get vitamins.

If the bird is healthy, it can lose about 10% of its weight from when you first catch it. You always want the bird to be slightly hungry.
32. The bird should eat once a day.
33. Weigh food and keep the weight constant. Bird must be slightly hungry to hunt. Vitamin and mineral supplement -- fur and bones clean out its system. Get 100% pure cotton flannel, dip it in egg yolk -- they eat it like candy.

Only be around the bird at the same time at feeding time around dusk, with a dim light. Feed the bird always on your hand. If it won't eat, play with it. The bird will be stubborn at first.

On one hand, the bird should be held in one hand. The bird should face in towards you when it eats. Be quiet and quickly leave. Don't touch the bird that much. They normally don't like to be touched. (Oil comes off on their feathers, and they don't really often like to be petted.)
34. Reason for handling is the get them comfortable. The bird should first see you and think of food. Whenever it last sees you, it should be when you give it food.
35. If the bird won't eat, try again later. (A sparrow hawk that doesn't eat for two days is a problem. Then try grasshoppers and the other.)
36. Prolong feeding each day. (Sneak into its life.)
37. A "tireing" should be used to prolong the feeding. I don't remember what this means.
38. While feeding, tie the bird's feet down tight.
39. Once bird is freely eating on hand, take him outdoors.
40. "Manning" -- Getting the bird used to people (while it's eating).
41. In the beginning, seeing you means he is eating the total time he is with you.
42. Birds like to be higher than people (i.e., on a pole, etc.).
43. Birds stare at what they eat, so they don't like to be stared at.
44. Use the whistle each time you give him food (behavioral conditioning).
45. The next step is getting him to take a step for food (a big deal). Then slowly increase the distance, using a fishing reel with a drag.
46. Increase the distance to 50 yards (line is called a creance), which is the last step before the bird flies free.
47. Introduce the bird to the lure light with sliding weight.
48. Tie meat to the lure. He eats 1/2 of meal from lure, then throw lure on ground while blowing whistle, and put more food on lure (on ground) with whistle.

The last piece of food you give him is after you put the lure away.
49. Then make it harder and harder for the bird to get the lure with food.
50. Force him to miss the lure, but work the bird harder and harder to get food on lure.
51. The beginner can train a sparrow hawk in ten days to three months.
52. High anxiety the first time a bird flies free, because you never know if it will come back.
53. Constantly exercising your bird is very important.
54. One can legally keep a bird for a pet, but that isn't what the license is issued for. It's issued for hunting the bird, not having it just sit around.
55. You want to maximize the chance of a bird's hunting success. (In the wild, hunting success ratio is low.) When a bird makes a catch, he has probably landed further than you think, so pick up a reference point in back of where the kill is, and walk quickly to the kill.

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56. When a bird makes a kill, it also makes him nervous.

Regarding the kill, be careful and keep low. Feed and grab the life line and cover up the kill simultaneously with a cloth and give the bird some more food. (The bird has been trained to get the last bite from you.)

57. The first kill, give it a few bites of the kill, but don't let it fill up at all.

58. Life span -- Bill has a friend with a red-tailed hawk that he's had for 21 years.

59. The bird can/does chew through jesse.

60. Bird that hunts on the ground -- drag lure on the ground. Once a bird has made its first kill, it's a hunting bird.

61. Fly a bird two to three times per week.