



Peregram

Velma Morrison Interpretive Center News

Fall 2009



Nick Dunlop

Clara of San Jose—See article on Nick Dunlop photography exhibit.

Falling Leaves & Flying Falcons!

Daily flight demonstrations commencing in October—Trish Nixon, Raptor Specialist

As the long days of summer wane, brisk breezes and the golden hues of autumn bring a change to our hilltop here in Boise. We begin to prepare our birds for outdoor flights; one of the highlights of our education program. Our Gyrfalcons perk up, hopping from perch to perch and vocalizing as we arrive on cool mornings. They much prefer the stimulating temperatures of autumn and winter to the oppressive heat of summer – as is to be expected for these hunters of the Arctic. They are bright-eyed and active - and, having recently completed their molt, they're also sporting new plumage.

The Peregrines, American Kestrels and other raptors that complete our 'fleet' of education birds feel the change in the air as well. Each of them is more active and attentive.

Traditionally, autumn is the time of year falconers prepare their birds for the hunting season. Some with young or inexperienced birds begin conditioning the raptors in late August or September. Generally speaking, most falconers start hunting in October.

While we don't hunt our education birds, we follow the long-established falconry techniques that remain virtually unchanged after thousands of years. Before those first free-flights outdoors, there is a lot of preparation to complete.

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Bob, a male American Kestrel on a scale.

Each bird is weighed daily and kept within a range that has been established as that particular bird's best weight for performance. Like human athletes, raptor athletes function most efficiently when they are at a weight that is neither too high nor too low.

Our previously flown birds have weight records that tell us details about their flights at various weights, and help us define our ultimate goal. We begin with short flights to the fist, then longer flights on a creance (think of a long leash for birds), and finally free flights, in which the birds are wearing only anklets and telemetry. Consistency is the key to attaining good flying condition. Regular training, a good diet and increasingly difficult work-outs result in more powerful, longer flights.



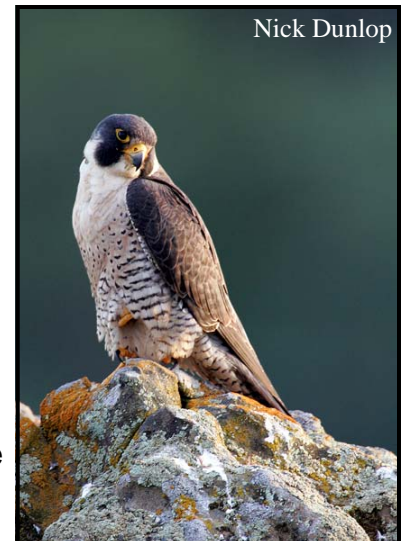
Join us in October and watch the outcome of this training! You'll witness the dives (called stoops when referring to raptors), rolls, twists and turns of these magnificent avian athletes as you're warmed by the autumn sunshine. Learn more about how our birds are kept, trained, and handled. But ultimately, enjoy one of the most awe-inspiring sites in the natural world; birds of prey racing through the air – combining grace, power and speed as only *they* can do!

Details: Thursday – Sunday, 3:15 p.m. The flights are included in your paid admission.

Art show celebrates 10th anniversary of return of Peregrine Falcon from brink of extinction

Ten years ago, a large international crowd gathered at the World Center for Birds of Prey for a four-day celebration as the Peregrine Falcon was officially removed from the U.S. Endangered Species List. After nearly being wiped out by DDT, the Peregrine Falcon today can be found throughout its historical range in North America.

The Peregrine Fund is celebrating the 10th anniversary of this remarkable recovery with a display of 22 stunning photographs of Peregrine Falcons by award-winning photographer Nick Dunlop of Sebastopol, Calif. The show opened Saturday, Aug. 1, and runs through Oct. 31 in the gallery at The Peregrine Fund's World Center for Birds of Prey Interpretive Center.



"We are delighted to feature the incredible work of this eminent wildlife photographer," said Jack Cafferty, Interpretive Center Director at the World Center for Birds of Prey. "This is a great opportunity for us to showcase one of the most successful conservation stories in U.S. history."

Nick Dunlop's love for birds of prey started in high school when a friend got him interested in falconry. About the same time, he picked up a 35 mm camera and has been taking pictures ever since. Merlins, Peregrine Falcons, and Golden Eagles are his favorite subjects. Dunlop is a regular contributor to American Falconry Magazine, Peregrine Fund publications, and newspapers. In 2005 he won a National Wildlife Magazine photography competition with his image of a Belted Kingfisher. His images are featured in "Falcons of North America," published in 2008.

<http://www.nickdunlop.com/>

All photographs may be purchased, with proceeds to benefit The Peregrine Fund.

U p c o m i n g E v e n t s

August 29, Saturday – Kokanee Outdoor Day

12:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. at the Idaho City Park – The first Annual Kokanee Outdoor Day is being held to celebrate Idaho’s fish, wildlife and promote getting outdoors. Trish Nixon, Raptor Specialist, and volunteers will be presenting birds and kid activities.

September 5, Saturday – International Vulture Awareness Day

See article in this issue for details.

September 11-12, Friday and Saturday – Project Wild Raptor

This workshop is provided for teachers who have taken Project Wild. The workshop is presented by the Idaho Department of Fish and Game in partnership with The Peregrine Fund’s World Center for Birds of Prey and the BLM.

September 18, Friday – Volunteer BBQ

6:00 p.m. in the courtyard of the Interpretive Center. Volunteers and a guest are invited to eat BBQ and meet fellow volunteers. See Nick Piccono for details about volunteers bringing side dishes.

October – Thursday – Sunday – Flight Demonstrations

3:15 p.m. daily Thursday through Sunday (weather permitting) – Trish Nixon, Raptor Specialist, and Jim Willmarth, Curator of Birds, will be flying birds. See article in this issue for details.

October 31, Saturday – Quilt Raffle Ends

See article in this issue for details

November 1, Sunday – Winter Hours Begin

Open Tuesday – Sunday, 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m., closed Mondays through February.

November 13, Friday – Volunteer Training

6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. Details will be distributed to volunteers.

November 26, Thursday – Thanksgiving

The Interpretive Center will be closed.

December 12, Saturday – Volunteer Holiday Party

Details will follow

December 25, Friday – Christmas

The Interpretive Center will be closed.

January 1, Friday – New Years Day

The Interpretive Center will be closed.



Contact Us

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The following two articles show the range of individuals associated with The Peregrine Fund. The first article is by a senior scientist who has written a reflection about Golden Eagles; the other article is by a fledgling scientist who spent the summer on field work in Mongolia studying Saker Falcons. The Peregrine Fund attracts some amazing people to work with our organization.

Living Bird Article by Peregrine Fund Senior Scientist

The Spring 2009 issue of **Living Bird** magazine by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology has an article by Peregrine Fund senior scientist Grainger Hunt and illustrated with photographs from freelance photographer Nick Dunlop.

Grainger first saw arctic Peregrines on the Texas coast in the late 1950s, became a falconer, and wrote his Master's thesis on Peregrine migration in 1966. He received his doctorate in Zoology from the University of Texas in 1970 and has since conducted numerous field studies on the ecology of eagles and falcons. As a pilot, he radio-tracked them on long-distance migrations and conducted aerial surveys of ranging, survival, and habitat selection. After retiring from the Predatory Bird Research Group, University of California at Santa Cruz, he joined The Peregrine Fund in 2001 to serve as Senior Scientist for the California Condor and Aplomado Falcon restoration projects.



Grainger Hunt—Senior Scientist

The article is titled **Golden Eagles and Us: Reflections On A Most Remarkable Raptor**. Scientific writing can be dry and pedantic, so it is very refreshing to read an imaginative article by a scientist who has long experience studying Golden Eagles. The article is truly a reflection on us in relation to this magnificent raptor with the added enjoyment of Nick Dunlop's amazing images.

Nick Dunlop currently has a collection of superb Peregrine Falcon photographs on exhibit here at the Interpretive Center. See our article in this issue on the celebration of the anniversary of the delisting of the Peregrine Falcon from the Endangered Species List.

If you do not subscribe to Living Bird, the article can be read on this web site provided by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology: <http://www.allaboutbirds.org/NetCommunity/Page.aspx?pid=1308#top>

Emails from a Fledgling Scientist in Mongolia

Imagine yourself in a different land, with people you don't know, living under extremely demanding circumstances, doing something you've never done before. Field-tested biologists and researchers expect this and adapt to such conditions after seasons of experience. But for a "fledgling" biologist, entering into her first season of what is hoped to become her career that first experience is akin to living on another planet. Performing back-breaking work in conditions that would make most people run for the nearest airport is routine for "old timers" accustomed to field work. Thanks to these dedicated scientists, we know a lot more about our natural world. Happily, there are new generations of enthusiastic, albeit green, students plunging in to continue the daunting tasks of field research to learn more about the world's wild inhabitants.



Yozora holding a Golden Eagle chick.

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Here is a glimpse into the mind of one such biologist-to-be, her feelings, and reactions to her first foray field research in Mongolia. Yozora is a student at Boise State University studying raptors. She is a former hack site attendant with The Peregrine Fund, and has been a docent at our Interpretive Center. This summer she went to Mongolia, to study Saker Falcons, their habitat, and the threats to their continued success as a species. The following are excerpts from emails Yozora Tadehara sent to her family while in Mongolia.

Sain'uu from Mongolia~

It has been such a great experience so far! When I get home the first thing I am going to do is shower. I haven't showered in two weeks, but rumor has it next time we go to the well there will be enough water for me to shower :) The thing about Mongolia is that they have their own time system and nothing happens as scheduled so 'we will see' is the most common expression used at camp. For example, we were supposed to move to the summer camp last month and the date has been moved about 8 times...it is set for June 8th now...we will see. So I have learned not to plan anything, which is really hard for me.



Yozora releasing an Upland Buzzard

It took me a good 2 weeks to adjust. I was soooo disgusted and shocked the first few days. It was cold when I arrived and in the Steppe of Mongolia there is NOTHING. It is flat, windy, and bare! There are 2.8 million people roughly, 40 million goats and double that in sheep, horses and cows. The livestock roam free to graze and the herdsman are all that is left in the nomadic country, which is about 10% of the population and decreasing. The capital Ulaanbaatar has about 1 million people. When it is cold, it is really cold and since there is nothing to burn for a fire, and we don't have the luxury of heat let alone electricity, we burn livestock poop. YEP! The first night I was given a lesson to pick the best dried poop to burn. At first it freaked me out and every time they would start the fire I would run out coughing in disgust. Now I think it is one of the best ideas in Mongolia. Since there are so many livestock animals the entire Steppe is COVERED in poop and once it is dry it is perfect to burn. It took me awhile to get used to it, but now to see someone light their cigarette by a burning piece of poop from the fire or get pieces of poop on your head after heading the soccer ball are all ordinary for me.



Yozora by a ger or yurt

WARNING! Do not read this part before eating!!!! The thing that I still haven't got used to is the dead goat or sheep hanging on the ger [yurt] walls for weeks at a time until all of the meat is used. Every dinner here has some sort of meat, but one dinner in particular stands out. They had skinned and smoked the head of a sheep and set it on the table. Enkhee did not waste time in cutting out and eating the eyes which I honestly gagged at before he even ate them. Then he cut the roof of its mouth out (the part with all the ridges), rolled it up and ate it. Then Dimitar (from Bulgaria) ate the ear...which he confessed was weird and was finished with dinner after that.

We live in two gers next to a herdsman family. We need to live close to them so their dogs protect us in the night. At night we all pull out our sleeping bags and the first night I was so tired from jetlag I went to bed early. As I was getting all set up I was informed my head had to face one direction because their feet stink so bad and I couldn't be crooked because there are so many of us that need to fit on the floor. We work every day, long hours. I have no idea what day of the week it is and it

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really doesn't matter. Every now and again I look at my planner from home and see what I missed. I missed my brother's birthday and Lyndsey's too – you know I love you and Happy Belated birthday! If I come back next year I am dragging you with me...field work just isn't the same without you!- I missed Mother's Day. I missed Sumiko's Wedding...that was sad for me. My heart aches every time I think about it. I should have been there. Tell Sean welcome to the family and I love you guys so much! I have loved my time here and it is a once in a life time experience, but I will be more than ready to come home.

I was sick with a nasty cold for 17 days five days after I left. The first couple of days I was really sick, but after that I just had horrible cough attacks and congestion.



Mongolian boy on his horse.

The ticks are bad because of all the livestock. When Huyagaa and I sat on the ground there were two lines of ticks coming toward us in less than a minute. Every morning you have to check your head and clothes for ticks and since I have long hair and foreign blood I have had the most!

The lavatory (if you may) is a hole in the ground with two boards across it for your feet. Even in the city there are many designated "holes" in the ground since they don't have running water either. I try to hold it as long as possible!

I am pretty obsessive about keeping under my nails clean and when I first saw everybody's dirty nails I clipped mine so short they were bleeding. Now it is one of the many things I just got used to.

One night they said I could eat dinner with them because it didn't have meat in it...I sat down and analyzed the soup substance and asked about something I didn't recognize. Turns out they had boiled a sheep's fat flap, but since it was fat not meat they thought I could eat it.

I had to write this in a word document because when we go to town we don't have very much time to do things like food, gas, and use the internet. Plus, I don't get to town very often. But I told my boss that if we don't go tomorrow I am walking. I haven't heard from my family in a month and I don't even know if they are alive. I am extremely homesick and I break down sometimes, so I told him I have to hear from somebody and let them know that I am alive and getting along just fine.

I love and miss everybody so much! I have so many more stories to share when I get home. Maybe I will be able to use the internet again...we will see! I hope all is well in the states and everybody is doing well :) I love and miss every minute..

Part 2 of my Mongolian adventure~

Well Huyagaa surprised me on my birthday. He brought me a cake, chocolate, and some waffle crisps and then 1 beer for all 10 people and they split a bottle of wine. I didn't drink but I pretended to because it is the custom. It was miserable rainy on my birthday all day and it soaked through the ger at night. But I did have fun and I was surprised by the treats. Then they took turns singing Mongolian songs to me....that was the best!!



The surprise birthday cake!

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A Saker Falcon on her nest.

We moved to the "summer camp" yesterday. At 6:30am the neighbors decided to move and by 4pm we took down and put up 4 gers in a new grassy area. This is so that the grass grows back in the wintering area for the livestock next winter. It is really interesting to see how simple they live yet it is so hard for me.

I am in Ulaanbaatar right now.. My boss loves me so he took me here with him on his business trip. He got my laundry done, sent a letter, took me shopping, and out to eat and now he took me to an internet place. AND I SHOWERED!!!!!!! It had been two weeks!!

I am looking forward to spending the summer that will be left in the beautiful state of Idaho! I never missed it until I didn't have it. I can't wait to go running and to the lake and river!!

I completely forgot to tell you about my work with the falcons last time. Well, it is GrEaT! The days are long and sometimes hectic but this is the type of work I love. So we have 138 artificial nests occupied by Upland buzzards (*Buteo hemilasius*), Common Kestrels (*Falco tinnunculus*), Ravens (*Corvus corax*), and of course the Saker Falcons (*Falco cherrug*). Depending on the day we will trap buzzards and Sakers to put wing tags or satellites on them, track the marked bird's movement, or monitor nests. My specific job is measuring chicks every 10 days to record their growth in comparison to the abundance of food in addition to taking growth stage pictures. I love buzzard chicks, but Saker chicks have scarred my hands more than the cats did working at an Animal Hospital. Their talons are long, wicked sharp, and quick to strike.



Yozora holds a Saker Falcon.

I don't know when I will be able to write again so I figured I better send an email while I can.

I love and miss everyone so much and I want to thank everyone for supporting me in my adventure in the steppe of Mongolia. I will be home before long and then jump into my M.S. in Raptor Biology (there is talk that my research might be here...if so I will be here for the next 3 summers for my MS). We will see.

~Bi chamd hairtai~

Now that I am home safe and getting my health and nutrition back, here is what I came home with.

- First of all don't take America or running water for granted.
- Many people in the world think your life would be a dream come true no matter how plain and simple it may be.
- People are people. No matter who you meet they have a story, and no matter how different it is from yours it is still possible you may end up best friends.
- I love being a Biologist and working in the field with wildlife!



This nest was started by a Upland Buzzard using rib bones. A Saker took over the nest and laid some infertile eggs, then laid a new set of eggs. Yozora had to be a bit of a detective to figure it all out.

What's Going on Back There? Visitors get an Eye-full during Behind-the-Scenes Tours!

A few months ago, we began offering guests the “Secret Lives of Raptors” Tours; in-depth visits of our “staff only” areas where we train, house, and feed our education birds. The tours developed as a result of questions we frequently answer for visitors: “what do you feed them?” “How do they act when they aren’t in front of an audience?” “How do you train them?” “What is it like to work with birds of prey all day?”

These tours are hosted by Jim Willmarth and I and include an hour to an hour and a half visit, accompanying us while we feed education birds, fly them in their chambers, weigh them or run through training sessions. We explain the details of keeping birds of prey healthy and well-adapted. Photo-ops and chances to feed a raptor are some of the perks awaiting those who sign up for the tour.

Our behind-the-scenes tours are popular with a wide variety of people – one such guest was Parker - very young and quite remarkable. His interest in birds of prey began at the age of 2. His mother bought two admissions for the tour to compensate for not being able to take him to Panama to see a ‘real live Harpy Eagle’ – a trip he requested as a 4 year old when he first learned about the eagles while exploring raptor sites on the internet with his father! Parker was quite fascinated with every bird he met behind the scenes and he asked a series of great questions. Jim and I saw an ornithologist in-the-making! He even sent our Swainson’s Hawk and the male Harpy Eagle enrichment toys after his visit; both of which were given to the birds as part of their enrichment.



Parker tosses a ball to *Bug*, a Gyrfalcon.

A couple from Japan who are involved in both falconry and raptor rehabilitation have signed up for the tour, as well. They hope to learn more about different varieties of raptors and pick up additional raptor husbandry and health tips they can take home to Japan with them. We are greatly looking forward to meeting with them and exchanging ideas with them!

We’ve also hosted several bird watchers from various states who just wanted to be able to experience something unique. Looking into the eyes of a Swainson’s Hawk, giving our crow the cue to recycle something, handing a tidbit to one of our raptors – these are all aspects of the tour that make for great memories!

If you’d like to take the “Secret Lives of Raptors” tour, the cost is \$45 for Peregrine Fund members, \$75 for non-members and *includes* a one-year membership! Tours must be arranged in advance. To reserve a spot for you or a bird enthusiast you know, call Nick Piccono @ 208-362-8257 or Trish Nixon @ 208-362-8258 for additional details.

Daka recycles a water bottle.



Dollars to Daka Program Results

Last year, one of the new birds added to our education program was Daka, an American Crow. Trained to perform several behaviors related to the natural tendencies of crows, Daka is used to help illustrate the vast differences between raptors and the Corvid family of birds. Audiences are first introduced to one of our birds of prey

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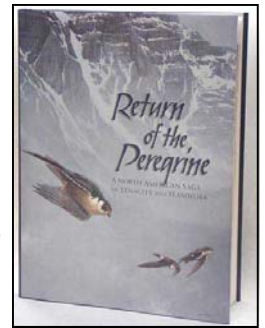
while learning about the adaptations that are essential to raptors that hunt; a sharp hooked beak for tearing meat, extremely large eyes that comprise about 50% of their skull area, and sharp, hooked talons and grasping toes to seize and kill prey.

After their introduction to a hawk, falcon, or eagle, visitors meet Daka and can immediately recognize that he's different. Crows' tendencies to cache objects and to use their problem solving skills are illustrated as Daka demonstrates environmentally important concepts such as recycling to the audience. At the end of these demonstrations, visitors are given the opportunity to hand a donation to the crow to help support our Education Program.

Thanks to all those who have given dollars to Daka. Through your generosity, we've raised more than \$5,000 to help defray the costs involved in the upkeep of our education birds. We appreciate the help of all who made it possible for Daka to reach this benchmark in these tough economic times!

Buy This Book!

This month The Peregrine Fund is celebrating the 10th anniversary of the delisting of the Peregrine Falcon from the Federal Endangered Species List. How do you tell the story of the restoration of the Peregrine Falcon in North America for an article in our Interpretive Center newsletter? How do you convey the thousands of hours of work involved, the frustrations with the Endangered Species Act, the strange behavior of agents of the Fish and Wildlife Service, the roadblocks put up by certain environmental organizations, and the incredible cooperative effort by a number of dedicated people?



How do you convey the fact that even though humans used Peregrine Falcons for falconry for thousands of years, no one had propagated the birds in captivity? Once birds are bred in captivity, how do you accomplish a successful release of birds to reestablish nesting pairs to get natural propagation going again?

The answer is simply this story cannot be told in a newsletter. But, it can be told in a book, and in fact the full story has been documented in a book with 400 pages, 450 photographs, and authored by 68 people. The book is published by The Peregrine Fund and is titled *Return of the Peregrine – A North American Saga of Tenacity and Teamwork*. It is important to understand the editor in chief was Dr. Tom Cade, the founder of The Peregrine Fund.

The visionaries who achieved the historic restoration of Peregrine Falcons in North America tell their story in this full-color hardcover book. The Peregrine Falcon restoration is the largest and most comprehensive endeavor to restore wild populations of an endangered species ever accomplished. Why and how this effort was achieved is documented in this book and serves as an example of what can be accomplished when people are willing to work cooperatively.

For the statistically minded here are some numbers that help establish the scope of the recovery effort:

1970, the Peregrine Falcon is extinct east of the Mississippi river

1970, only 39 pairs known to remain in the west

1970 – 1992, The Peregrine Fund raised and released 4,000 Peregrine Falcons

1970-1992, the combined efforts of all programs raised and released over 7,000 falcons

The Return of the Peregrine can be purchased from our gift shop or online store. The web site for the store is: <http://www.peregrinefund.org/rcProdmain.asp>

Two New Exhibits at The Archives of Falconry

By David Wells, Administrator

Recently, President Obama signed into law legislation re-naming southern Idaho's Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area in honor of Morley Nelson. Through films, technical reports, formal talks to groups and individual advocacy since the 1950s, Nelson brought the world's attention to this precious area and worked tirelessly for most of his life to promote its conservation. He used his trained hawks and eagles in films made by Walt Disney and Marlin Perkins' Wild Kingdom, and he filmed his own documentaries with celebrity spokesmen like John Denver, Lynn Redgrave, Paul Newman and Joanne Woodward — all of which showcased the Snake River area.



Norm Nelson accepts a plaque commemorating the change of name for the conservation area.

The conservation area, comprised of 600,000 acres is home to one of the largest concentrations of birds of prey in the world. The area hosts 16 nesting and 8 migratory species, which either winter or use the area during migration. The recent renaming of the conservation area is a fitting tribute to Morley Nelson for his great personal effort and all he accomplished. Morley died in 2005 and a plaque in his memory is mounted on our Wall of Remembrance.

A few years ago, author Steve Stuebner donated his extensive files of background research used to write his book, *Cool North Wind: Morley Nelson's Life With Birds of Prey*. These primary materials include notes, photographs, correspondence, and audiotapes of interviews. In addition, the Archives has technical reports related to Morley's work as a consultant for the Idaho Power Company to find solutions to the then-widespread problem of bird electrocution.

Sons Norm and Tyler Nelson recently donated 45 reels of Morley's films to the Archives. With the help of leadership in the Idaho Falconers Association, we are now applying for grants from historical and film preservation organizations to fund digital conversion of these films to preserve them for posterity.

In conjunction with these events, the Archives of Falconry has created a special exhibit on Morley's contributions to conservation. The display case showcases photos of him at different ages in life and with his family. It displays some technical drawings and photos of his designs with power lines and nesting boxes. There are several newspaper and magazine articles on display with catchy titles, such as "The Man Who Saved the Birds," "Morley Nelson's Lonely Crusade," and "A Refuge for Kings of the Air." A unique item on display is a photograph of four Presidents (Nixon, Ford, Reagan, Bush Sr.) paying tribute to Nelson and signed by each of them.

(Note: *Cool North Wind* can purchased from our online store at: <http://www.peregrinefund.org/rcProdmain.asp?id=1>)

A second new exhibit at the Archives features the role of dogs in the sport of falconry. In many types of hunting, dogs are frequently used to spot and track game. In some cultures and throughout history, dogs have been used to actually chase and kill game. In most situations, involving dogs and falconry, the dog is used to flush the game, like using spaniels to flush duck from a pond or pointers and setters to locate pheasant or grouse in a field. Then the bird of prey chases or stoops to target its prey. The dog is trained not to interfere with the kill lest either dog or raptor be injured or killed in the fray.

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However, in some illustrations in books, such as a recent one we received spotlighting falconry in Turkmenistan, the scene depicts the raptor seizing a rabbit's head while the sighthound seizes its foot. That book states, "A falconer, a falcon and a greyhound — that is a perfect formula for the physical and spiritual bond between a human being and wildlife."

We have recently received half a dozen books on falconry as practiced in Central Asia (Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, and Mongolia). These books provide numerous illustrations of falconers using dogs, specifically Tazis and Salukis, the fastest dogs on earth. Supremely adapted to the desert steppe, these dogs have deep chests for processing oxygen better, streamlined bodies, extra long legs with large feet, excellent coordination and agility. Coupled with keen vision, these speed demons can even chase down gazelle! Other breeds in the sighthound class are Afghans, Borzoi, Pharaoh hounds, Greyhounds. Whippets, a modern mixed breed (a miniature-sized Greyhound) also do lure-coursing. Coursing is the term for hunting with dogs where the dogs chase prey.

The exhibit on dogs illustrates different dog breeds as used by different cultures of falconers at different periods of history. For example, you'll see a poster of a Turkmen falconer with his Saker Falcon, camel, and Saluki. Another illustration shows a Peruvian conquistador with a scenthound and a sighthound. A Gorbатов drawing depicts a Mongolian on horseback with his Goshawk, Saluki, rifle, and bow and arrow. Some photos show Americans, Europeans, and South Africans hunting with different birds of prey and using pointers or setters. Three Dutch trading cards depict falconry dogs as used in 3 different cultures (Dutch, Belgian, and Persian). Finally, there is a short article by Diana Durman-Walters, entitled "Falconry Dogs" which briefly explains the use of dogs in war, hunting, and falconry.



International Vulture Awareness Day

Vultures may not be the prettiest of birds but they perform a crucial clean-up and recycling role in our environment by consuming dead animals that might otherwise spread disease and contamination. The Peregrine Fund's World Center for Birds of Prey is celebrating this important bird at International Vulture Awareness Day on Saturday, Sept. 5.



Long Billed Vultures

Lucy, a Turkey Vulture in the World Center for Birds of Prey's education program, will demonstrate her flying skills throughout the day. Children will be able to make and take a California Condor Visor. Two videos will be shown: "The Last Flight" describes the vulture crisis in India, where vultures are rapidly disappearing; "Curious as a Raven" is about the reintroduction of the California Condor, one of the most endangered scavenging birds in the world. The Peregrine Fund raises condors at the World Center for Birds of Prey and releases them to the wild in northern Arizona near the Grand Canyon.

The Peregrine Fund also helps monitor and study vultures in Africa and Asia, where many vulture populations are in severe decline. In 2004, The Peregrine Fund discovered that the veterinary drug Diclofenac, used to treat sick and dying cattle, was responsible for massive vulture die-offs of vultures in India, Pakistan and Nepal. The drug was banned by those nations but is still in wide use.

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Populations of White-backed Vultures, for example, have dropped by 99.7% since 1990 in India and no breeding pairs have been found in Pakistan. There are now fewer than 11,000 of these birds, down from 40 million. Loss of such scavengers has far-reaching ecological, economic, cultural and public health effects.

This is the first time that Vulture Awareness day is being celebrated internationally. It is organized by the Bird of Prey Working Group in South Africa, Hawk Conservancy Trust in England and its partners. The aim of the day is to create awareness of the plight of all vulture species and highlight the work done by conservationists who monitor vulture populations and take steps to conserve the birds and their habitat.

For an excellent online interview with Munir Virani, program director of The Peregrine Fund for Africa and South Asia, on the vulture crisis in Kenya, go to the following web site:
<http://allafrica.com/stories/200908241286.html>

New Bird at the Interpretive Center

We recently received a captive– raised Teita or Taita Falcon as an addition to our group of education birds. Some obvious features of this rare falcon are the very large eyes, large feet, and very short tail.

Here are two Peregrine Fund web sites where you can learn more about this falcon:

Global Raptor Information Network or GRIN
<http://www.globalraptors.org/grin/SpeciesResults.asp?specID=8238>

Explore Raptors
http://www.peregrinefund.org/Explore_Raptors/falcons/teitafal.html



Jim Willmarth, Curator of Birds, introduces “Mighty Mouse” to our courtyard.



Quilt Raffle Ticket Sales End October 31st

It is not too late purchase tickets for a quilt by Ruth Kassens titled “Midnight Rhapsody.” Tickets are available and the drawing will be held on October 31st. Tickets can be purchased from the Interpretive Center gift shop for \$2 a ticket or six tickets for \$10. It is also possible to purchase tickets by calling (208)362-8687. You do not need to be present to win. All proceeds from the ticket sales benefit the education programs of The Peregrine Fund.

“Midnight Rhapsody,” is the fifth quilt Ruth has made to be raffled as a fund raiser for the Education Program at the Velma Morrison Interpretive Center.