



Dear Falconers, Associations and all people associated with Falconry.

The 4th **"World Falconry Day 2016"** is approaching on **November 16th** when we celebrate the anniversary of the recognition of falconry by UNESCO as Intangible Cultural Heritage. On this occasion we invite you to celebrate with a common theme regarding falconry. This year we have chosen the slogan **"Celebrating Recovery of the Peregrine falcon"**.

World Falconry Day Celebrates the Global Restoration of the Peregrine Falcon – A Conservation Success Led by Falconers.

Falconry and the Peregrine falcon are almost synonymous, particularly in the West. There is a history of sustainable use of this species for at least 2 thousand years but almost certainly much longer. This relationship between man and falcon relied on wild-taken birds which could be released after use and captive breeding was virtually non-existent until the 1950s. This use was abruptly ended with the collapse of Peregrine populations, mainly in the northern hemisphere in the 1950s. So, what on earth went wrong? The collapse was first recognized by falconers who noted nesting failures and alerted conservation authorities. The immediate response by conservationists was to assume that unsustainable trade was the cause. Scientific research showed that organo-chlorine pesticides, principally DDT, were the culprits – not trade. Conservation pressure resulted in the removal of these products from general use, paving the way for recovery of this species and the many others severely affected by a toxic environment.

Fears of unsustainable trade resulted in the listing of the Peregrine Falcon in CITES Appendix I. The essential requirement for restoration, however was recognition of the real cause and a clean environment. A global effort ensued to re-establish this iconic falcon which could be seen as environmental indicator species. The Madison Conference in 1965 resulted in the decision to use captive breeding as a tool to restore this species. The response of falconers in North America was to establish The Peregrine Fund which pioneered captive breeding of the species, while similar efforts were started by the DFO in Germany. Development of effective techniques for the captive breeding of peregrines resulted in thousands of captive-bred birds being released. All over the world, falconers and other enthusiasts, contributed to the restoration through breed and release projects, provision of artificial nesting sites, rehabilitation and public education. The last population of this species to recover are the tree-nesting peregrines in central Europe. As this population was completely extirpated, release required imprinting of new birds on tree-nests; a process which could possibly take centuries without intervention. **There are now probably more Peregrines in the world than ever before.** Increasing populations of pigeons in cities and as a result of modern agricultural methods have favoured this species. Traditional cliff eyries are occupied and there are nests on novel sites such as high-rise buildings and quarries.

The Peregrine Falcon has been successfully restored in nature and that this is a real cause for falconers and other conservationists to rejoice! World Falconry day is a very suitable time to proclaim this success and to recognize that this is due to the efforts of falconers all over the world.

HOW TO PARTICIPATE:

All Individuals, clubs and organizations are welcome (irrespective of membership of the IAF). The only important consideration is that the activity should be designed to develop a good image of falconry at local and global level. You can download the logo at www.iaf.org

If you wish, your activity can be part of the official program of the IAF and subsequently be disseminated internationally. To arrange this, you have to send your proposal to wfd@iaf.org. The members of the IAF WFD working group will evaluate proposals. All selected Activities will be registered on the website of the IAF and can then use the logo of the IAF.

Thank you for helping by sharing this letter to where-ever and who-ever you consider appropriate. You can find updated information both on www.iaf.org and Facebook

Dr Javier Ceballos; WFD's Coordinator ceballos@iaf.org
Dr Adrian Lombard; IAF's President lombard@iaf.org