



Falconry – Inscribed by UNESCO as Intangible Cultural Heritage of Mankind

Minutes of the Meeting of the Hawk Board held on 13th October 2016
UCMK, 502 Avebury Boulevard, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire, MK9 3HS

The Chairman opened the meeting at 12:30.

Present:

Gordon Mellor (GM); Graham Bennett (GB); Steve Eastwood (SE); Nick Havermann-Mart (NHM); Graham Irving (GI); Martyn Standley (MS); Mark Upton (MU); Rachelle Upton (RU)

Apologies:

Gary Biddiss; Jim Collins; Andrew Knowles-Brown; Terry Large; Paul Manning; Richard Newton; Jemima Parry- Jones; Martin Perryman; Don Ryan; Derek Stotton; Mike Warren; Dean White

Minutes of last meeting / Matters arising:

GM: Previous meeting was not quorate and this is happening more often, so let's look to change the quorate number. We will look at this during the constitution section of the meeting.

Chairman's Report:

So we are well into the hawking season and I for one am in a far better state, psychologically, than during the moult.

We still await news or action from the Welsh Assembly about the Circus Animal legislation. The CA have a watching brief on political matters but they are much reduced in numbers and their staff are stretched very thin.

Our lack of capacity to attend in decent numbers, many of the Country Shows, reinforces for me the need for us to look at our commitment again. I believe that we must only consider venues where we are invited, our attendance is not charged, and the footfall is likely to be significant. We also need to be able to attend in numbers – a lone HB representative, no matter how willing, does us no favours.

GM: We shouldn't attend a fair if we have to pay for a stand as the HB is not in a position to pay.

MS: I don't think many would want the HB there.

GM: Until a problem arises the HB is anonymous and not wanted.

MU: If we do attend a fair then we have to look professional.

RU: Need more help to man a stand as well.

It was not unexpected, although still disappointing, to receive the news that the European block vote effectively scuppered the Canadian proposal to down-list the Peregrine at the recent CITES Conference of the Parties. There was no direct benefit to falconers or hawk keepers in Europe or the UK, other than the opportunity to celebrate the success of the Peregrine's recovery. But recognition of what is one of the great conservation success was denied by dogma and protectionism. CITES has shown itself to be weak at best and deeply flawed at worse. The IAF President published an excellent response.

We are going ahead with the Symposium (of sorts) and hopefully we will make progress on content at this meeting. We are hoping to launch the new constitution and get some traction on the new membership categories.

Last month I spoke at length with two journalists from the shooting press, specifically about the seemingly growing voices criticising driven grouse shooting – largely focused on the Harrier issue. This is an area where we are damned if we do and damned if we don't.....

MU: We can fight from a conservation point.

GM: The current political scene in Britain is increasingly concerning. Uncertainty how people are going to respond. Corbyn's close allies have close animal rights roots and so field sports will come into the crosshairs.

It seems that increasing numbers of injured or fledgling Peregrines are coming into rehab centres and the like. I wonder if it is time that we had a strategy outlining our approach to the handling and ultimate release of these?

GI: Suggest we do it in tandem with Raptor Release – they are the norm to go to.

GM: You are right and we would have to work with them.

NHM: Honeybrook could help to do this. Have been working for 3 years to get mute samples from injured/lost peregrines. Rehabilitators don't want to do this. Bio Tracker. We could put something together and monitor this.

GM: Could we find out what are the good protocols for release and what are not?

GI: You could ask for DEFRA backing. You would need APHA blue document.

MS: A young bird needs to be shown how to hunt whereas an old bird already knows how to hunt.

GI: Garland does hack back rehabilitated birds.

GM: Is this something we should be looking at? Could ask for a biologist's advice.

MU: Talk to people in EU and USA who have successfully released.

GI: NHM comment about Bio Track, Natural England trialing on Goshawks.

MS: 1 in 4 survive in wild.

MU: This has come up because peregrines are doing so well now.

GM: Will look into this.

I have had one or two invitations to talk at club meetings, the next being at the BFC Wessex Region later in October.

That is about all after a quiet summer.

Treasurers Report:

At present the current and the Savings accounts are holding a healthy amount.

The only club not to pay their subs are Home Counties Hawking Club, they have until October 31st.

The CFF account has a small amount in, but their donations are paid into the HB current account. Just historical direct debits go into this account. The CFF have banked £1,289, (over £100 is from sales), into the HB.

MS: How does this compare to this time last year?

RU to do a breakdown year on year

GM: Questions have been asked about our finances, but if HB doesn't exist then someone else would have to do the work; this would probably fall on the BFC and cost a lot more than they pay at the moment.

MS: Some people are stuck in a time warp.

MU: Be crazy to loose the HB and rely on IAF to help and the IAF would then rely on the BFC to work on anything coming up.

NHM: The HB has the contacts.

SE: Is there any conflict between the IAF and the HB.

MU: No.

MS: IAF only represents falconers in the true sense, so not displays, etc.

GM: When the government set up the HB it was to cover all raptor keepers so that they would have fewer bodies to deal with.

Election of Treasurer:

GM: When I took over as chair RU got the treasurer role by default. I believe it works well and I would like that to continue. There are some differing views and also Doreen Page put herself forward at one point and

although she is not attending meetings due to the new job giving her less time she is still our Lantra contact.

My position is that the chair needs a good working relationship with the treasurer. Views please?

MU: I don't feel that I should comment or vote in the circumstances.

MS: Combined role that works.

NHM: Does it carry remuneration?

GM: No.

MS: Just because Mike Clowes did it for free doesn't mean the next treasurer will.

GM: There is a precedent that the co-ordinator does the role and means there would be no extra expenses.

Proposals: Either confirm RU continues in the role or
 We go out to the board and ask for nominations
 Secretary does it or formal elections?

NHM: Most economic for RU to continue.

GM: Can RU leave the room for discussions to continue?

GM: Show of hands for first proposal – carried unanimously

GM to go to the board for confirmation

Constitution:

GM: No constitution is ever perfect; the HB constitution was looked at by some falconry centres, etc., wanted HB membership. Feedback has been incorporated. It has been circulated round the clubs and there are no new comments. The only section to be changed is the quorate section, from 8 to 6 board members (2 of which to be specialists) plus 1 chair, or vice chair.

MU: Could launch at the same time as a new website.

NHM: Derek Hartshorne has created a new website for the BFC using free software.

GM to speak to Derek Hartshorne

GM: Push it out to clubs and put on the website. To be adopted as of 1st April 2017.

Symposium:

NHM: We were going to combine the Symposium with the end of falconry season feast/weekend.

Unfortunately the council have refused a licence for the flying events. So would just have the hotel for the Symposium only and wouldn't raise enough money to cover it,

GM: It doesn't have legs on its own.

MU: I would question if we could get more attending than the last symposium without extra activities.

GM: Does the board support that if we don't do the weekend then we pull it for this year?

Agreed

RU to email all involved thanking them for their help.

GM: Look to press on with the Symposium ideas with DW and GB.

SUN Update:

See Appendix 1

GM: DS has proposed that we increase our SUN contribution from £700 to £1,000, seconded by JPJ. I agree that SUN are absolutely vital to us, but should wait until they ask us for more money.

MS: Do we know what their figures are and where their funding comes from? We have no idea of their financial standing.

GI: Biggest would be the Aquatic Keepers, but would be interesting to see their breakdown.

MU: Find out a bit more before taking a decision.

GI: We also need to be quorate.

GM to contact Jim Collins for more information

Legal/Guidelines Update:

See Appendix 2

IAF Update:

See Appendix 3

MU: When I originally came on as IAF rep it was agreed that HB would cover some expenses, I have only asked once and want to ask again if this would still hold?

MS: Should be in the minutes of that meeting.

GM: We should pay for representation, but we do have limited resources.

MU: I wouldn't expect all my costs, BFC also pay a certain amount.

NHM: HB have paid others in the past.
GM: You would need the support of the board.
NHM: You would have to apply each time.
GM: IAF important at the moment so I would back this.

CA Update:
See Appendix 4

A.O.B:
GM: We have to work at being quorate

The meeting closed at 15:07

Next Meeting: 12.30pm Thursday, 12th January 2017

Location TBC

Rachelle Upton, Co-coordinator – 16th October 2016

Sun Report from Jim Collins

Most activity in this past quarter has focused on preparation for the CITES Conference of the Parties, including meeting the main European Commission delegates in Brussels, face-to-face lobbying, written submissions and teleconferences with both the UK Management Authority and Scientific Authority and obviously attending the conference itself with all the lobbying that this involved through the two weeks. However, we have also seen more action on the push by the protectionists and animal rights lobby (aided and abetted - disgracefully in my view - by a number of the veterinary bodies) for the introduction of Positive Lists across Europe and, additionally, the second List of Invasive Species for prohibition is near to being voted upon with the third (and potentially much more significant List) being worked upon.

CITES Conference of the Parties

Regrettably, the European Commission took a fundamentally different approach to this CITES CoP than they have in all the previous ones. They have always been reluctant to present species proposals for anything that was not ordinarily resident within Europe (this time they proposed or co-proposed a raft of species - mainly reptiles - that are not indigenous to Europe), they have always had an approach not to propose any species for which the Range State was not supportive (this time they proposed the Banggai Cardinal Fish for a CITES II listing against the express wishes of the only Range State, Indonesia) and they have usually taken an unfavorable view of block-listing proposals (this time around they not only supported block-listings but were party to making the proposals themselves). The change in approach appears to have been very generated as a result of heavy lobbying from the protectionists - as evidenced by the gloating references in the publications of the latter.

The CoP undoubtedly shifted more towards a protectionist agenda and away from sustainable use and trade. Several countries, including South Africa as host country but also perhaps most passionately from Swaziland and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, made excellent interventions to lament this shift and to point-out that without an economic worth local communities are likely to see the animals around them as pests, inconveniences or something only for the pot. The CoP was also dominated by the NGO's not just clapping but whooping at each new CITES listing or upgrading from CITES II to CITES I (like a bunch of over-excited school girls, most of them indeed being earnest young ladies) as though this signified success. As the former Chair of the CITES Animals Committee commented a few years ago, such behaviour is perverse in the extreme - clapping should be reserved for when species are removed from CITES because that signifies a conservation success! The push towards protectionism was particularly absurd given that, in Committee II of the CoP, strong endorsement was given to the belief that sustainable trade in wildlife was an extremely important aspect for preserving many rural livelihoods and should be given every encouragement!

For the first time the European Commission was present not as an observer but as a member of CITES in its own right. This meant that on a number of occasions it was the European Commission representatives who spoke for the 28 Member States rather than the latter intervening on their own behalf. The European Commission maintained a tight rein with very little wriggle room for Member States and irrespective of individual preferences all 28 had to vote as a block - much to the resentment of many of the other countries present and, I suspect, to some of the EU Member States themselves. Of course, given 2-3 years, the UK will be removed from those particular constraints.

All the species proposals for which the European Union were associated as proposer or co-proposer were adopted with the single exception of the Banggai Cardinal Fish where Indonesia remained firm in their rejection of the proposal. This was embarrassing for the EU since it gave every impression of a powerful First World block seeking to impose their view of the world on a developing country who was/is the only Range State for the species. I suspect the EU could see the righting on the wall if they had forced the proposal to a vote and instead agreed to drop the listing proposal and instead pass a Resolution on wording that Indonesia needed to do (for which Indonesia was in agreement) in terms of sustainably trading the species for the aquarium hobby.

For members of the Hawk Board, beside the important general factors referenced above, the main area of interest was Canada's proposal to down-list the Peregrine Falcon from CITES I to CITES II. The proposal was very well presented by Canada and received the enthusiastic support of many countries with usually diverse opinions - from South Africa and Australia to Brazil and several Middle Eastern countries. All pointed-out that this was a conservation success story and should be acknowledged and rewarded. Even the proper conservation organisations like WWF and IUCN called for support for the Canadian proposal as

did the CITES Secretariat. It was the EU's block vote of 28 that in essence guaranteed the failure of the proposal - with the EU putting itself alongside the bulk of French-speaking West African countries whose voting pattern is, interestingly, indistinguishable from the advisory recommendations of the main protectionist bodies, as well as the usual protectionist leaning countries (the likes of Israel - where falconry is prohibited - Kenya and Iran). The EU's quite ridiculous contention is that though they could support down-grading the listing for North America and Europe they couldn't for down-listing the species as a whole in case there was then widespread illegal capture in these other parts of the world (ignoring the fact that it is birds from the more northerly regions of the globe that are more predominantly desired for falconry purposes) it put the EU's 'logic' on a par from one of the more extreme protectionist NGO's who suggested the different colour forms of the species around the globe would be highly attractive to keepers and cause a lot of illegal off-take rather ignoring the fact that the species is required for falconry not visual aesthetics.

We do, together with like-minded organisations, intend to make representation to the CITES Secretariat as to our disappointment with how CITES is 'developing' and, perhaps more importantly, are looking at undertaking a joint communication of complaint to the European Ombudsman in respect of how the months preceding the CoP and the CoP itself were conducted by the relevant part of the European Commission and its officers (DG Environment).

Positive Lists

The push to install Positive Lists (i.e. species allowed to be kept and traded with all other species prohibited) has gathered a further success by securing a large majority in favour in a vote at the European Parliament. The protectionists have used this vote to lobby hard with the European Commission to push Member States into enacting legislation bringing in Positive Lists (at the moment, Belgium has for mammals and reptiles and stating they will move on to birds and fish in due course; whilst the Netherlands is currently going through one on mammals and reptiles with the intent to do the other animal taxa afterwards; several countries such as Austria, Cyprus, Malta and Finland have all hinted at support as well). Since this is currently a Member State Competency not an European Commission Competency (i.e. legislation would ordinarily be enacted by each country individually) we are relatively safe at the moment since the current UK Government (like it's Coalition and Labour predecessors) has shown no willingness to engage with such policies despite it now being pushed by the official veterinary bodies as well as the usual bunch of protectionist/animal rights malcontents. However, things can easily change either domestically or within the EU. Hence, several countries adopting Positive Lists could persuade the European Commission that this was an appropriate area for having a Directive much as they did in the case of the invasive species issue.

Invasive Species Directive

The vote on the Second List of banned species is expected before Christmas. Despite strong hints to the contrary, the European Commission is again demanding a yes or no vote on the List in its entirety rather than allowing votes on a species by species basis - there's real democracy for you! The Second List has a limited number of species (proposed by one or more Member States) but includes two species commonly kept in captivity, namely the Raccoon Dog and the Egyptian Goose. Although on the provisional Second List, I've been informed by the lead for the UK Government, that the European Commission has vetoed the European Bison from the list as not meeting the listing criteria (it never did but then that didn't stop ludicrous listings like that of the Coati from the First List). In a way I view this climb down as a shame since listing the European Bison would have represented the final nail in the coffin for the credibility of this piece of legislation. The Third List promises to be the most extensive of the three and we need to guard against a rush of important species being listed upon it. Whilst it is true that the UK does not have any raptor species 'in its sights' as invasive species this does not need to be the case for us to have the species banned. All that is required is for one EU Member State to propose the species, for the European Commission to accept the proposal and then it is on the list for voting upon *en bloc*. As we have seen on the First List, the UK then votes in favour of the whole list even if it has reservations on some of the species listed (witness Coati and Red-eared Slider on the First List). We need to remain active and vigilant on this front.

Legal/Guidelines Update from Graham Irving

Law commission review.

It was hoped that an update on how this was proceeding would have been available by now but it looks as if Brexit may be having an impact on it being debated within parliament. The law commission review contained significant pieces of new legislation based on EU legislation, something that may well now need to be unpicked. When and if it will continue to be debated is currently unknown.

COTES review.

Brexit aside, the news on this issue is also not too good, the individual within the UK CITES Management team who was keen to work with us to get the designated ports issue sorted has left DEFRA as part of the recent round of voluntarily redundancies, his post has been temporarily filled by an individual from JNCC, news on the proposed way forward has not been communicated yet but there is a feeling that Brexit may actually stall the COTES changes, but again, it's all a big unknown for now.

BREXIT What will it mean for UK falconers?

Unfortunately, this is going to be a very short comment, the simple answer is that it is far too early to tell. We were told by the former prime minister that the government had no plan B in place when the results were published. In the few months that have passed since the results, the negotiations' with the EU as a whole and individual member states seems to be revolving entirely around maintaining some sort of trading deals, where the likes of COTES, CITES and the various directives (especially the Birds Directive) we have signed up to will sit is any ones guess. Its effect on falconry is more likely to become clearer when the government in power during the un-picking of our legislation that is influenced by the EU, seeks comments on their proposed changes, re wording and re drafting. Another thing that cannot currently be predicted is what the government in power will do once the Brexit button is pushed fully, will the EU insist that all the current agreements in place end on that day ... we simply don't know at this moment in time.

Natural England licences to control buzzards and sparrowhawks.

I doubt if there are many of you who are not aware that in July Natural England issued a licence to a gamekeeper to undertake lethal control by shooting of up to 10 buzzards on the farm where he operates a pheasant shoot. The fallout from this decision, as you can probably guess, has been substantial and NE have decided that they would upload various documents and provide updates on the decision making process etc onto the .Gov website. An update in September reported that they are currently processing 4 additional applications to the one that had been licensed and updates would be posted on the web site once they had all been assessed and decisions made. The following link takes you to the relevant page on the Gov website- <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/buzzard-licensing-applications>

The BFC was contacted by NE to see if any falconers local to the locations of the various application being considered wished to receive any buzzards that were trapped under licence (NE were considering this option as part of the requirement to consider other non-lethal options, especially as club members had previously received passage and haggard buzzards via a licence issued in 2013), unfortunately no club member could be identified at such short notice and this option was ruled out by the NE advisor undertaking the assessment. There is, I believe, potential for clubs to be approached with similar requests to take passage and haggard buzzards (and possibly sparrowhawks as well) if further applications are received in 2017).

WELSH GOVERNMENT REVIEW ON ANIMALS USED IN CIRCUS'S.

The findings of this review group were published in July and can be found by following this link- <https://sites.google.com/site/circuswelfarestudy/>. It makes some comments about "mobile zoos" (in respect to compliance with the Animal Welfare Act) on pages 23-24 which is where falconry displays, educational talks and shopping centre exhibitions fall. For those of us who have voiced concerns about displays and shopping centre exhibitions in particular, there are comments covering welfare issues and acknowledges that these types of "shows" are virtually un-regulated and seem to fall within the cracks between the legislation that covers zoos, centres and circuses. As the target of this review is aimed at the commercial (entertainment/educational?) use of animals, falconry as a sport is not covered in its findings, but if this does move forward to some sort of licensing being adopted in Wales, it appears that it might finally put an end to the likes of begging displays outside your local Tesco as an example. The only problem I can see though is that for it to be effective, all the devolved governments would need to adopt similar legislation, something that I can't see happening in a hurry, if at all.

IAF Report from Mark Upton

The IAF Biodiversity Group is moving forward. They released a press release to the European Parliament on the International Day for Biodiversity in German and English. Following up from this they had a meeting with German MEP Karl-Heinz Florenz where they put forward their views on the dangers to biodiversity and the effect it is having on the environment in Europe.

Work is going ahead on the Biodiversity Perdix-Portal: this platform will be arranged together with the GWCT. The Portal offers multilingual information concerning partridges and conservation. A German biologist of the Göttingen University has been asked to manage the platform. The portal is being supported by the BFC, DFO and hopefully other European Clubs.

Gary Timbrell & Dr. Michael Greshake joined their INTERREG-meeting in Brussels on January 12 & 13 on IAF's behalf, representing the Perdix group.

A Statement was made by the International Association for Falconry on the use of Glyphosate for the European Parliament's discussions on banning the chemical. Since then the European Parliament has allowed a limited 12 to 18 month extension of license for further scientific study. It is looking like they might well ban Glyphosates, not because of conservation concerns but due to studies suggesting its link to cancer.

IAF Interpol Liaison Officer Willem Vrijenhoek, Public Relations Officer Véronique Blontrock and the Executive Officer attended an event run in the European Parliament by the "MEPs for Wildlife" group on EU Action Plan Against Wildlife Trafficking.

The IAF Women's Group attended the International Women and Sustainable Hunting conference in the Netherlands on 2nd and 3rd July with a focus on Education. Collaboration has been sought with Wageningen University which holds a chair in wildlife management, the only such chair in Europe.

The major story since my last report is the Cites vote on the Canadian proposed down-listing of the Peregrine. As has been reported by Jim Collins and others the vote didn't go through and the Peregrine remains on schedule 1. The IAF fought heavily in support of the proposal and lobbied hard in Europe. As well as direct lobbying of MEP's as large expense they put a piece in The Parliament Magazine which is issued to the European Parliament.

The breakdown of votes was follows: 52 in Favour, 47 Against, 12 Abstentions. A 2/3 majority was needed to win. Europe block voted against with 28 votes, which carried the vote.

The Thought Leader is sponsored by WAF

**THE PEREGRINE FALCON'S
DOWN-LISTING IS AN
OPPORTUNE TIME TO REFLECT
ON THE CITES CONVENTION,
WRITES ADRIAN LOMBARD**



THE PARLIAMENT MAGAZINE'S

THOUGHT LEADER

At the upcoming Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species Conference of the Parties in Johannesburg (CITES COP17), Canada, with the support of the International Association for Falconry (IAF) will propose the down-listing of the Peregrine falcon from Appendix I to II in response to a dramatic improvement in the species' conservation status. The Proposal, supported by major international conservation NGOs, clearly shows that Appendix I criteria under CITES are no longer met, thus an Appendix II listing is more appropriate under the species' current biological and international trade status. I believe this celebrates a very significant conservation success.

Falconry and the Peregrine falcon are almost synonymous having a history of over 2000 years of sustainable use. This relationship between man and falcon relied on wild-taken birds which could be released after use. This use ended abruptly with the collapse of Peregrine populations in the 1950s. The immediate response was to assume that unsustainable illegal trade was the cause. In time, organochlorine pesticides, principally DDT, were identified as the culprits. 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 Peregrine being listed in the CITES Appendix I. The essential requirement for restoration, however, was recognition of the real causes and a clean environment. A global effort ensued to re-establish this iconic species. The 1965 Madison Conference in Wisconsin resulted in the use of captive

breeding as a restoration tool, while North American falconers established The Peregrine Fund which pioneered captive breeding releasing thousands of birds across that continent. All over the world, falconer-led projects contributed to the Peregrine's restoration including breed-and-release, artificial nesting sites, rehabilitation and public education.

"Falconry and the Peregrine falcon are almost synonymous having a history of over 2000 years of sustainable use"

There are now probably more Peregrines than ever before. The downlisting call would recognise this considerable success following 60 years of effort. As falconers, we support this proposal as recognition of that success but would not seek increased trade in wild birds. Such trade could be prevented by national legislation while access to a carefully controlled harvest of wild birds for personal use and to increment breeding stock may be reasonable in some countries. For this purpose, CITES encourages countries to undertake Non Detrimental Findings (NDFs) prior to any international trade of CITES listed species.

Reflection on this conservation success is essential. Where trade is not the conservation issue, then up-listing at CITES is not appropriate. CITES' merit as a conservation tool and its role in restricting trade is undoubted. The wisdom of the Parties in the use of CITES as a fine tool to effect conservation success or as a blunt instrument to bludgeon the use of natural resources will be critical to future conservation and the success of this Convention.

Adrian Lombard is President of the International Association for Falconry (IAF)

The IAF have since written to Cites with the following response.

Response of the International Association for Falconry and the Conservation of Birds of Prey to the failure of the Proposal to down-list the Peregrine Falcon at the CITES CoP17.

The International Association for Falconry and the Conservation of Birds of Prey (IAF) notes with great sadness the decision by the Parties to the 17th Conference of Parties to CITES to reject the Proposal by Canada to down-list the Peregrine Falcon from Appendix I to Appendix II of the CITES Convention.

This Proposal was strongly supported by the IAF, as the global representative of falconers from 80 different nations, not because we seek any increase in trade but because this would have been a celebration of the very real conservation success, following 50 years of work resulting in the restoration of this species.

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. The collapse was first recognized by falconers who noted nesting failures and alerted conservation authorities. The immediate response was to assume that unsustainable trade was the cause. In time, organo-chlorine pesticides, principally DDT, were identified as the culprits. Conservation pressure resulted in the removal of these products from general use, paving the way for recovery of this and the many other species severely affected by a toxic environment.

Fears that unsustainable trade could add to existing threats to the species, 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. Falconers led a global effort ensued to re-establish this iconic species. The response of falconers in North America and Germany was to pioneer captive breeding of the species and thousands of peregrines have been released to the wild as a result. 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. With ongoing work in Germany and Poland, the last population of this species to recover are the tree-nesting peregrines in Central Europe. As this population was completely extirpated, restoration required imprinting of new birds on tree-nests; this success represents 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 because of modern agricultural methods have favoured this species. Traditional cliff eyries are occupied and there are now nests on novel sites such as high-rise buildings and quarries. The down-listing would have recognised this considerable success.

All of the significant conservation NGOs, including World Wildlife Fund, TRAFFIC and the World Conservation Society, as well as the CITES Secretariat, acknowledged that the Peregrine falcon no longer warrants inclusion in Appendix I and down-listing is appropriate.

The Proposal to down-list failed, largely through the block-vote of the European Union which commands 28 votes and acts as effective veto, on the basis that there was insufficient information available to conclude that the precautionary safeguards are met in all exporting countries. This ignores the scientific evidence and the recommendations of major conservation NGOs. We salute Canada for presenting this sound Proposal. We understand that Canada courageously supported its Proposal despite suggestions that it may be more acceptable if the Proposal were limited to only part of the distribution range of this species.

This decision by the CoP 17 of CITES is a success for those who oppose the sustainable use wildlife and it fails to recognize this conservation success. This Congress of the Parties was characterised by statements paying lip-service to rural communities and those whose livelihoods and cultures are intimately involved with wildlife while imposing restrictions on use even to the detriment of demonstrable conservation benefits. The failure of CITES to respond to a dramatic conservation success must bring into question the whole mechanism of this Convention and highlight the inordinate influence of anti-use and animal rights groupings on its function. Finally, the strategic decision for the 28 European Union votes to be applied together instead of as independent Parties must bring into question the access of other Parties to fair democratic participation.

Falconers can and will continue to rejoice in the successful restoration of the Peregrine falcon. We hold our heads high in recognition of this notable achievement. We will use this as a focus for our celebrations on

World Falconry Day (16th November). Falconers, around the world will look to other conservation challenges which need to be addressed including the devastation of bird of prey populations by electrocution and we will continue to oppose illegal trade in wildlife.

Adrian Lombard,
President – IAF
1st October 2016.

As I mentioned in my last report the 47th IAF Council of Delegates Meeting is being held in Ireland in November this year. Information can be found at <http://www.internationalfalconrymeetireland.com>

Countryside Alliance Update from James Legge

POLITICAL

People Moves

Theresa May formed a new administration on 11 July and made the following appointments:

- Amber Rudd – Home Secretary
- Brandon Lewis – Minister of State for Home Office (policing and fire service)
- Andrea Leadsom – Secretary of State for DEFRA
- Therese Coffey – Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for DEFRA
- Lord Gardiner of Kimble - Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for DEFRA
- George Eustice – Minister of State for Defra remained in place

Jeremy Corbyn was re-elected as Labour leader and made the following appointments:

- Rachel Maskell – reappointed Shadow DEFRA Secretary of State
- Mary Glendon – Shadow Minister for Farming and Rural Communities

Parliamentary Briefings

Since July the political/policy team have produced briefings documents on: Grouse Shooting – The Facts; Hare Management; Air Guns; and, The Effects of Brexit on Tourism.

Party Conferences

The Countryside Alliance political/policy team attended the main party conferences this autumn. We hosted events at all three conferences entitled “Tackling Digital Exclusion in the Countryside” and at the Conservative Party Conference a second event was held entitled “Does the BBC Deliver for the Countryside?”

EFRA Select Committee – Animal Welfare and Flooding Inquiries

The Inquiry has concluded oral evidence sessions and we are awaiting the final report and recommendations. We are also awaiting the report on flooding.

EFRA Select Committee – Rural Tourism Inquiry

We have submitted written evidence to the inquiry highlighting the importance of tourism to the rural economy and the role that hunting, shooting and fishing play within this.

Environmental Audit Select Committee – Natural Environment outside EU Inquiry

We have submitted written evidence highlighting concerns about ‘rewilding’ which was one of the questions in the terms of reference for this Inquiry.

DEFRA – Animals Establishments Licensing Consultation

The consultation has closed and we are expecting the Government’s response in the autumn. We expect this to be handled by Lord Gardiner of Kimble.

Petitions Committee – Driven Grouse Shooting

The petition to ban driven grouse shooting was considered by the Committee on Tuesday 6 September. The petition has reached over 100,000 signatures and the Committee agreed to allocate time in Westminster Hall for a debate but have established an inquiry in order to “hear evidence” about grouse shooting before setting a date for the debate. We are working closely with MPs and co-ordinating the Westminster campaigning with other shooting organisations to ensure that the Government and MPs of all parties are fully briefed on the enormous and proven contribution which grouse shooting makes to the economy and management of our uplands. The oral evidence session will take place on 18 October. Liam Stokes, Head of the Campaign for Shooting, will be giving evidence on behalf of the Alliance.

Policing and Crime Bill

The Bill has had its Second Reading and one day in Committee in the House of Lords. A further Committee day is scheduled for 26 October. The Alliance continues to work for amendments on firearms and police powers, and two Government amendments addressing our issues have been tabled to date.

CAMPAIGNS

Rural Police Funding

The Government is beginning to look at the funding of police forces. The Countryside Alliance has briefed Conservative rural MPs making the case for fair funding for rural forces.

Angling Summit

The Countryside Alliance attended an Angling Summit, chaired by farming minister George Eustice MP, discussing the implications of Brexit for fisheries. The paper also called for the development of a national fisheries policy, covering both marine and freshwater fish, which needs to take much greater account of the needs and role of recreational fisheries.

Press Office

A new press officer, Tom Hunt, has joined the Political, Media and Campaigns team at Spring Mews in London. Tom previously worked in Parliament for Oliver Dowden MP, is a local councillor and has a sound grasp of our campaigning priorities.

Countryside Alliance Awards

The 2016 Countryside Alliance Awards, aka the Rural Oscars, have opened to nominations on our website. Nominations will be accepted until 4 November.

Casting for Recovery

The fourth and final Casting for Recovery retreat took place over the weekend of 24-25 September, at Forbes of Kingennie near Dundee. Plans are underway for 2017's retreats.

HUNTING

Prosecutions

There are currently two prosecutions involving hunts.

Hunting and the Community Campaign

The Countryside Alliance's annual Hunting Newcomers' Week will this year take place from 22 – 29 October. The aim of this week is to introduce as many new faces to the hunting field as possible and to encourage those that have never been hunting before to give it a try. The Countryside Alliance is encouraging hunts to organise an activity during the designated week which could range from a meet to a talk at the kennels and hunts taking part will be listed on our website.

We will also be launching our annual Hunt Tumbler's photography competition, sponsored by Pol Roger Champagne, ahead of the start of the season in November. The competition will run until 1 March 2017 and winning photos will be awarded with Pol Roger Champagne plus a feature piece in the Countryside Alliance magazine.

SHOOTING CAMPAIGN AND MOORLANDS

Lead Ammunition

The then Secretary of State for the Environment, Liz Truss, announced on 14 July that she had rejected the recommendations of the controversial Lead Ammunition Group (LAG) Report, and confirmed that there will be no further restrictions on the use of lead ammunition. She also confirmed that the LAG process had now ended. Despite this the Group's Chairman, John Swift, has publicly stated that the Group will remain in place for the time being, and we have asked Therese Coffey MP to do what she can to prevent them continuing and using the name and structure of the LAG. We have also responded in full to a European consultation on the continued use of lead shot, stating that there is no need for further restrictions on lead shot in the UK, a position supported by Defra in its recent letter to the remaining members of the LAG.

Hen Harrier Joint Action Plan

The RSPB announced in July that it was withdrawing its support for the Hen Harrier Joint Action Plan on the grounds that a voluntary approach to the Plan had failed, leaving licensing as the only viable option. We issued a statement expressing our disappointment at the RSPB's decision, but welcoming the fact that, as a member of the Action Plan, the Hawk & Owl Trust would be able to fill any gap in the expertise that might otherwise have resulted from the RSPB's departure.

Snaring in England

A Backbench Business Debate on banning the manufacture, sale, possession and use of snares was held on 21 July. A brief was circulated to all supportive MPs, and the Chairman of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Shooting and Conservation was briefed personally. The Minister has now written the foreword for The Code of Good Practice on the use of Snares for Fox Control in England that has been produced by the sector, rather than the Government, and this is to be published shortly.

Agreement on International Humane Trapping Standards (AIHTS)

A letter has been sent to Therese Coffey MP asking why it is necessary to continue with the significant cost of implementation of AIHTS by July 2018, given the vote to leave the EU. Outside the EU, AIHTS standards will not apply to the UK as the UK is not an independent signatory to the Agreement, and it also has minimal relevance to trapping practices in the UK.

Moorland Visits

The visit to Bingley Moor by Gerard Tubb, North of England correspondent for Sky, on Thursday 14 July was a great success. The moorland walk which was arranged for local groups on Ilkley Moor, also on 14 July, was also highly successful.

British Medical Association (BMA) and Firearms Licensing

The new Home Office guidance on the role of the medical profession in firearms licensing is not functioning as agreed, and the BMA have advised GPs to plead a conscientious objection to firearms ownership. We have written to the BMA representative on the Medical Evidence Working Group without response and are now contacting the Chairman directly. The Government have been made aware of the problem and we are assured it will be taking action.

Campaign for National Parks (CNP)

Our campaign against the implicit anti-shooting bias in the CNP's "Big Conservation" survey was extremely successful. Shooting was registered as the second most popular activity in national parks among those who do not live in them, third most popular among those who do, despite an attempt by anti-shooting campaigners to hijack the survey.

WALES

Natural Resources Wales (NRW)

NRW have decided to hold a public consultation on whether to allow recreational shooting on public land. This is the result of pressure from Animal Aid. A task force of NRW board members has been set up to review shooting on public land and they have received the Alliance briefings as requested.

Petition to ban the use of snares

The League Against Cruel Sports has launched a petition at the National Assembly for Wales calling for a ban on the use of snares. The figures used in the petition are completely disingenuous and as such the Alliance, along with the National Gamekeepers' Organisation and the Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust, has jointly written to highlight the abuse of the statistical

Mobile Animal Exhibits

The report on the use of Wild Animals in Circuses authored by Professor Stephen Harris has been published. This report goes far beyond its original remit and covers what are now termed "mobile animal exhibits" including birds of prey and even animals used in TV and film. This could have widespread implications for falconry displays, education days etc. The Welsh Government is expected to make an announcement before the Christmas recess.

Animal Welfare Codes of Practice

The Welsh Government are to review a selection of the animal welfare codes of practice via the Animal Welfare Network Wales (AWNW) group. The Alliance is part of a small dog code working group within the AWNW. Codes for dogs, rabbits, cats, equines, pigs, sheep and cattle are to be reviewed but despite pressure from the RSPCA, and as a result of Alliance intervention, there is no imminent review of the gamebird code of practice. The other codes will go out to public consultation early 2017.

EUROPE

EU Firearms Directive

The trilogue process has begun. This involves discussions between the Parliament, Commission and Council before the final approval of the amendments to the Directive.