



**SUME - thematic group for  
Sustainable Use and  
Management of Ecosystems**

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ERO # 019-1806: Proposal to expand the live capture of wild raptors (birds of prey) by licensed falconers

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This message is from the Chair of group on Sustainable Use and Management of Ecosystems (SUME), a 750-member group in IUCN's Commission on Ecosystem Management. It is written at the request of a Vice President from the International Association for Falconry and Conservation of Birds of Prey (IAF, a long-standing International NGO member of IUCN) who is also a valued coordinator for North America SUME. Setting quotas for sustainable use of raptor species is also of relevant to IUCN's parallel group on Sustainable Use & Livelihoods (SULi), which works across two other Commissions. My representation of IUCN for raptor issues (e.g. in UNEP's Convention of Migratory Species) includes both SUME and SULi.

These roles for IUCN follow peer-reviewed publications since 1974<sup>1</sup> on raptors and falconry-based conservation, most recently on population modelling for raptors including, as featured in a standard-series 2006 monograph, the Goshawk<sup>2</sup>. My message makes two supportive points in connection with a letter of September 14, 2020, from Louise Engel of the Ontario Hawking Club to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry.

The letter from Ms Engel is exemplary engagement with government on a sustainable use issue. You may also find useful the linked 2008 review of [scope for conservation through falconry](#)<sup>3</sup>, which reports survey by the European Commission's ORNIS Standing Committee. Falconers now not only play an important conservation role in IUCN Commissions and through IAF, but also represent the most widespread inscription on UNESCO's list for Intangible Cultural Heritage.

The letter from Ms Engel also makes a very good case for an increase in quota of wild raptors in terms of demand analysis. However, in terms of supply analysis, more recent work on potentially sustainable yield shows the request to be conservative. Using survival rates from radio-tagging, which tend for reasons of 'finding-bias' to be higher than estimates from leg-bands, potentially sustainable yields of goshawks procured as juveniles were estimated to far exceed 5% (see Table 4 in the [linked paper from Journal of Wildlife Management](#)<sup>4</sup>), especially for females (the larger sex which is preferred by most falconers); the smaller males survived less well as juveniles in Europe, although reduced size dimorphism and different prey may change this dynamic somewhat in Canadian goshawks.

I hope this information may be useful for the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry.

With best wishes,

Prof R E Kenward, chairing for IUCN on Sustainable Use and Management of Ecosystems

<sup>1</sup> Kenward, R.E. 1974. Mortality and fate of trained birds of prey. *Journal of Wildlife Management* 38:751-756.

<sup>2</sup> Kenward, R.E. 2006. *The Goshawk*. T. & A.D. Poyser / A. & C. Black, London, U.K.

<sup>3</sup> Kenward, R.E. and Gage, M.J.G. 2008. Opportunities in falconry for conservation through sustainable use. Pp. 181-204 in Sielicki, J. & Mizerta, T. (eds.): *Peregrine Falcon Populations - status and perspectives in the 21st Century*: EPFWG/Turul, Warsaw.

<sup>4</sup> Kenward, R., Katzner, T., Wink, M., Marcström, V., Walls, S., Karlbom, M., Pfeffer, R., Bragin, E., Hodder, K., & Levin, A. 2007. Rapid sustainability modelling for raptors with radio-tags and DNA-fingerprints. *Journal of Wildlife Management* 71:238-245.