

MANATEE COUNTY GOVERNMENT AGENDA MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT	DUETTE PARK WILDLIFE PROGRAM	TYPE AGENDA ITEM	CONSENT
DATE REQUESTED	DECEMBER 8, 1998	DATE SUBMITTED/REVISED	NOVEMBER 24, 1998
BRIEFINGS?/WHO?	NONE	CONSEQUENCES IF DEFERRED	NONE
DEPARTMENT/DIVISION	PARKS & RECREATION RECREATION	AUTHORIZED BY TITLE	DANIEL P. HOPKINS DIRECTOR
CONTACT PERSON TELEPHONE/EXTENSION	CINDY TURNER/NANCY HILL 5923	PRESENTER/TITLE TELEPHONE/EXTENSION	DANIEL P. HOPKINS DIRECTOR 5923
ADMINISTRATIVE APPROVAL			

ACTION DESIRED

INDICATE WHETHER "REPORT or "DISCUSSION, "FORM OF MOTION, or "OTHER ACTION REQUIRED:

AUTHORIZATION FOR THE PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT TO CONDUCT A FALCONRY HUNT AT DUETTE PARK FROM JANUARY 8, 1999 TO JANUARY 10, 1999

ENABLING/REGULATING AUTHORITY

Federal/State law(s), administrative ruling(s), Manatee County Comp Plan/Land Development Code, ordinances, resolutions, policy.)

ORDINANCE 92-29 - HARVESTING OF WILD GAME ON MANATEE COUNTY PROPERTY
RESOLUTION R-92-133 - IMPLEMENTATION OF HARVESTING OF WILD GAME ON MANATEE COUNTY PROPERTY

BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION

- 07/07/98 - BOARD APPROVED THE 1998/99 WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM AT DUETTE PARK.
- 02/26/98 - MASTER FALCONER, KITTY CAROL, REQUESTED A FALCONRY HUNT AT DUETTE PARK. THE HUNT WILL FOLLOW REGULATIONS SET FORTH BY THE GAME AND FRESH WATER FISH COMMISSION AND THE FEES AND GUIDELINES ARE CONSISTENT WITH THE CURRENT WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT HUNT PROGRAM.
- 11/23/98 - ENVIRONMENTAL LANDS MANAGEMENT AND ACQUISITION ADVISORY COMMITTEE (ELMAC) REVIEWED AND RECOMMENDED APPROVAL OF THE FALCONRY HUNT AT DUETTE PARK.
- THERE WILL BE NO IMPACT ON PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT OPERATIONS.

HAS COUNTY ATTORNEY REVIEW BEEN REQUESTED? Indicate "NO" or "YES" @ right. (If "NO," proceed to 1) below; and if "YES," proceed to 2) below)

NO

1) IF "NO" TO ABOVE.

A) PLEASE EXPLAIN BELOW: (see also following section 1B) re: contract, agreement, lease, etc.:

THIS IS A POLICY DECISION, NOT A LEGAL ISSUE

APPROVED IN OPEN SESSION

B) IF A CONTRACT, AGREEMENT, LEASE OR OTHER DOCUMENT WAS PREVIOUSLY APPROVED, STATE YEAR OF LAST USE @ RIGHT:

DEC 08 1998

2) IF "YES" TO FIRST QUESTION IN THIS SECTION.

A) HAS ENTIRE MATTER, OR ONLY A PORTION, BEEN REVIEWED? IF ONLY A PORTION, WHICH PORTION?

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
MANATEE COUNTY, FLORIDA

B) HAVE ALL COMMENTS/SUGGESTIONS RAISED BY COUNTY ATTORNEY BEEN ADDRESSED/INCORPORATED; IF NOT, PLEASE EXPLAIN. A COPY OF FINAL COUNTY ATTORNEY MEMO RE THIS MATTER **MUST BE ATTACHED** (if comments were verbal, so indicate.)

13.

ATTACHMENTS: (List in order as attached) FALCONRY HUNT GUIDELINES	INSTRUCTIONS TO BOARD RECORDS: NONE
COST \$40,000 - REVENUE	SOURCE (ACCT# & NAME) 117 000000 347500 00000 - HUNT PERMIT FEES
COMMENTS NONE	AMT./FREQ. OF RECURRING COSTS (ATTACH FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT) N/A

DUETTE PARK

WILL BE HOSTING A FALCONRY HUNT
FRIDAY, JANUARY 8, 1999
THRU
SUNDAY, JANUARY 10, 1999



DRAFT

APPLICATION FEES AND PERMIT FEES WILL BE ACCEPTED THE MONTH OF DECEMBER
TUESDAY THRU SATURDAY 7:30 AM TILL 11:30 AM OR BY MAIL-INS
AT THE DUETTE PARK ADMINISTRATION OFFICE
2649 RAWLS RD RR2
BOWLING GREEN, FL 33834
941-776-2295

MAKE ALL CHECKS PAYABLE TO MANATEE COUNTY

NOTE: DUETTE PARK WILL BE CLOSED DECEMBER 24-27 FOR CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS!

APPLICATION FEE FOR <u>RESIDENTS</u> OF MANATEE COUNTY	\$ 22.00
PERMIT FEE FOR <u>RESIDENTS</u> OF MANATEE COUNTY	\$ 27.00

TOTAL FEE RESIDENTS...3-DAY HUNT.....\$49.00

APPLICATION FEE FOR <u>NON-RESIDENTS</u> OF MANATEE COUNTY	\$ 22.00
PERMIT FEE FOR <u>NON-RESIDENTS</u> OF MANATEE COUNTY	\$ 22.00

TOTAL FEE FOR NON-RESIDENTS...3-DAY HUNT.....\$44.00

RULES AND REGULATIONS:

1. HOURS FOR THE FALCONRY HUNTS ARE 7:30 AM UNTIL 6:30 PM
NOTE: (ALL GATES TO DUETTE PARK WILL BE LOCKED PROMPTLY AT 7:00 PM)
2. ALL PERSONS UTILIZING DUETTE PARK ARE REQUIRED TO HAVE APPROPRIATE LICENSES AND PERMITS. CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF 18 CANNOT POSSESS A PERMIT AND WILL BE REQUIRED TO ACCOMPANY A PARENT OR GUARDIAN IN ORDER TO HUNT. (ONLY ONE CHILD PER PERMITTED ADULT).
3. ONLY PERSONS WITH HUNTING BIRDS MUST PAY FOR PERMIT. HUNTERS ARE ALLOWED HELPERS IN THE FIELD AT NO CHARGE.
4. ALL HUNTERS SHALL CHECK IN AND OUT AT THE CHECK STATION AND SHALL CHECK ALL GAME TAKEN.
5. HUNTING IS PROHIBITED IN AREAS POSTED AS CLOSED TO HUNTING.
6. NO HUNTING ALLOWED IN 500- FOOT BUFFER ZONES.
7. THE TAKING OF FOX SQUIRRELS IS PROHIBITED.
8. DRIVING A METAL OBJECT INTO ANY TREE IS PROHIBITED.
9. NO PERSON SHALL CUT OR DESTROY ANY TREE, REMOVE ANY TREE, SHRUB, OR PROTECTED PLANT AS LISTED IN FS 581.185.
10. IT IS UNLAWFUL FOR ANY PERSON TO LEAVE ANY GARBAGE OR LITTER IN DUETTE PARK.
11. NO PLANTS OR THEIR PARTS OR ANY ANIMALS SHALL BE INTRODUCED, LIBERATED, OR PLACED ON ANY PART OF DUETTE PARK EXCEPT AS SPECIFICALLY AUTHORIZED BY MANATEE COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT.
12. FIRES ARE PERMITTED IN GRILLS AND FIRE RINGS ONLY
13. NO FIRE ARMS WILL BE ALLOWED DURING FALCONRY HUNTS
14. IF DOGS ARE USED DURING HUNTS THEY MUST WEAR A COLLAR BEARING THE NAME AND ADDRESS OF THE OWNER, AND HAVE CURRENT RABIES VACCINATION. (OWNERS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ACTIONS OF THEIR DOGS)
15. ANY VEHICLE ENTERING THE PARK MUST HAVE CURRENT LICENSE PLATE MEET FEDERAL AND STATE SAFETY REQUIREMENTS AND BE OPERATED BY A LICENSED DRIVER.
16. VEHICLES MAY BE OPERATED ONLY ON VEHICLE TRAILS
17. VEHICLES SHALL NOT BE PARKED IN SUCH A MANNER AS TO OBSTRUCT ROADS, GATES, OR FIRE LANES
18. PRIMITIVE TENT CAMPING IS AVAILABLE DURING THE HUNTS ON FRIDAY AND SATURDAY NIGHTS. THE CAMPGROUND IS LOCATED ACROSS FROM THE CHECK STATION. PLEASE SEE PARK RANGER FOR MORE DETAILS.

PLAY IT SAFE. GOOD LUCK. AND HAPPY HUNTING!!

10
Submit
2
8

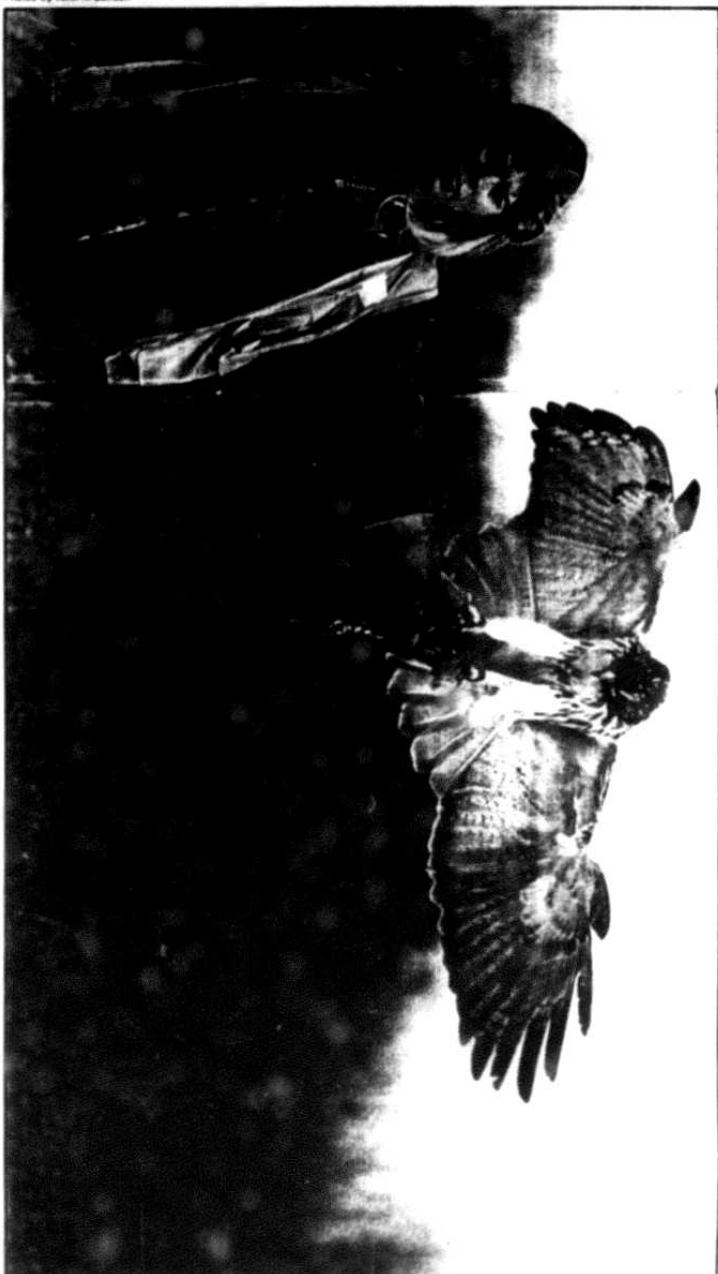
THE SPORT OF KING'S



Once restricted to the aristocrats of Europe and Asia, falconry is now the obsession and devotion of over two thousand Americans from all walks of life.

By Stephen Bodino

Photos By John R. Lamson



A f English pointer is trotting ahead of three hunters in the prairie, the Kern country of New Mexico. I direct the pointer, which is working a big grouse dropped into the cattow field like ducks to a pond. But now the birds are scattered and invisible in the vast, flat landscape.

The pointer wags her right and left legs, tail and head, nose pointed rigidly, able to

turning in for the flush, he steps and releases a feather cap from the head of a pine tree, bird perched on the left fist. The bird backs around, pulls up its feathers, shakes them down with a loud rattle, and looks at the head. It keeps into the air and circles at an angle to the dog, flying fast and low to the ground.

AMBER VON H. NITZ

In a moment it turns, and the hunter can see that it is catching, gaining a firm attitude with each sweep. This watch, the check, the pointer moves as instinctively as a stone dog, and just into the stubble, with the birds to remain in place.

The pointer takes a bird once, restricted to its mobility, levels out, bearing and gliding in small circles, perhaps a thousand feet above the dog.

And the hunter, who released the pointer, forward, getting one of the other, crane his neck, side on the falcon, as the bird backs ahead to see the stubble, come alive with forty-flashing birds. As they circle, into the air with a start of gosh, the falcon turns and falls like a deadly missile, head first wings tucked, at a speed so great that it seems to melt through the still

MARIE H. 1967

against the ground. Instead she looks out behind a prairie, the Kern and the river, so hard that it strikes. The force of the strike, up to the front and low a moment they look like one boss, four winged bird. Then the falcon turns, leaves and its ground, flutters down, dead in the air. The falcon, with its feet straight up, turns over and strikes, again, hitting the falcon bird, as the earth, the sky, the water, the river, and birds on her quarry.

Two of the hunter's hands, back, the bird moves slowly on the falcon's head, over her prey, he ad how athletic on the back, in the next, pressing against the outside. The falconer and his companion, through and the grass, but he had to follow the approach. The birds and falcon, but a bird in an open, wide grass.

17

tully, help to his fist and accept the offering. After a moment he replaces the bowl, puts the picnic chicken into a game bag hanging from his belt, and returns his companions.

What you have just seen is an example of modern falconry at its best. The so-called "Sport of Kings" is alive and well in twentieth century America. It has returned to the aristocrats of Europe and Asia, kept alive by a handful of English gentlemen on the grouse moors of Scotland. Falconry is now the obsession and devotion of over two thousand Americans from all walks of life. I know a millworker, several scientists, a veterinarian, two game wardens, a sales man, an oil geologist, and any number of schoolteachers to whom falconry is a way of life. They live from Idaho to Maine, Montana to Florida. Some go after snow-shoe hares with goshawks, and red-tailed hawks and sharpshins. There are quail hunters, who use Cooper's hawks, and dedicated duck hunters with peregrine falcons. A lucky few even chase sage grouse with the great arch, gyrfalcon, worth a king's ransom during the Crusades. All have one thing in common: They are among the most dedicated of hunters.

Their dedication has been especially evident in the long struggle to restore the depleted peregrine falcon. Falconers have donated time, money, their own prized birds, and expertise to this program—in fact, without their aid and dedication there might well be no peregrine falcons east of the Rocky Mountains. Now the return of the peregrine is one of the great "amend-



Goshawk

ered species." Success stories of the late twentieth century. All is not rosy yet, the pesticides which impact the peregrine breeding period in the countries south of the border and certain populations must still be monitored or supplemented with captive bred young. Still it is safe to say that the peregrine is in better shape now than in any other time in the past twenty-five years, largely because of falconers' efforts.

Although falconers have been active in America's conservation and hunting circles for years, pioneer wildlife biologists Frank and John Campbell were falconers, and Aldo Leopold wrote enthusiastically of the sport. Most hunters know little about it. An unusual alliance of anti-falconry protectionists and

ingering anti-hawk sentiments in some quarters of the hunting community have often forced falconers to keep a low profile. Recently this has been changing as falconers' efforts to conserve the birds have been more public, and as more sportswomen understand the role of predators as agents of balance rather than destroyers of game.

Modern American falconers use birds from three families of raptors of birds of prey: falcons, accipiters, and buzzards. All are considered "hawks." Falcons are simply hawks of the falcon family. They are winged and brown eyed, open country flyers that kill birds on the wing. I once wrote an article for the *Falconers magazine* making tongue-in-cheek comparisons between various guns and their corresponding birds. In this article the peregrine falcon, the preferred bird of Europe's gentry since the Middle Ages, became a White English double—(a Purdy, or Holland & Holland, what realm this places, the gyrfalcon in I can't even guess). All true falcons become fine doubles, beautiful



Sharp-shinned Hawk

and select, for use on upland game birds and waterfowl. The tiny merlin or pigeon hawk, weighing in the neighborhood of eight ounces, is simply a twenty-eight gauge, and the common kestrel, even smaller and used mainly by beginners, is a 410.

The accipiter group contains the goshawks, the Cooper's hawk, and the sharpshin. Although hunters once considered them "bad" hawks because of their predation on game, modern biologists believe that in most cases they have little effect on healthy populations. Only when the habitat is disturbed or, in the case of the goshawk, when the collapse of the northern snow-shoe hare populations sends an "eruption" of starving first-year birds south, do they occasionally do some damage. These hawks are short winged, able to fly under a canopy of trees, capable of turning on a dime. While the sharpshin is almost too small to be useful, the Cooper's is a deadly snail hawk, and the goshawk a sort of localized German drilling, able to take almost anything from woodcock to hares.

The final large group contains the buzzards of soaring eagles, and the unique Harris hawk of the south-western deserts. The redtail is the twelve gauge pump gun of falconry, common, hardy, and useful. I've probably taken more head of game with a redtail than with any other species. Although it is a little slow for pheasants, it is a world class performer for rabbits and hares. Eagles are rarely used anymore, although the Germans still prefer them for hunting their enormous hares. In the hands of real masters they can take coyotes. If they have any analogous gun, it must be the double

rifle—heavy, hard-kicking, rare, and indispensable for a few pursuits. The Harris, an odd bird in looks and habits, resembles the buzzard but has been changing as keepers' efforts to conserve the birds have been more public, and as more sportswomen understand the role of predators as agents of balance rather than destroyers of game.

Modern falconry, especially American falconry, differs from the last four thousand years of practice in that it has welcomed innovation. Although a German falconer bred the first hawks in captivity, a pair of peregrines, it was Americans who proved that the hawk was not a flake and have turned the breeding of birds of prey into a science. Now breeders can supply many of their own birds for sport, plus donate peregrines to the recovery program. What is more, some breeders are experimenting with hybrid falcon "breeds," so it could even be said that falcons are becoming domesticated like man's other hunting companions, the dog. American falconers have also invented sophisticated electronic shock-birds, no longer their leg tasks, flyers, which their birds can do, but their legs take. These make the recovery of lost birds something better than a chance for the first time in history.

Although these innovations might point to a golden age of falconry, not everything is rose. Like all field sports, falconry is often under attack from ill-informed or sentimental anti-hunters. It also suffers from an "image problem" with other hunters, who condemn predators because of long-held prejudices or who fear falconers will take "all the game." The first prejudice can be changed by education. For those that hold the second, consider a few realities.

First, falconers are the most regulated hunters in the country. A prospective falconer first must find a sponsor from within the ranks of licensed falconers,

Second, falconry is the hardest way of taking any game. The daily hours devoted to bird care and the inevitable difficulties of using a "weapon" with a mind of its own result in falconers taking much smaller bags than shooters do, even though some states allow them longer seasons. I have taken many ruffed grouse with a shogun, but, although wild goshawks are certainly capable of catching them, I have never caught one with a hawk. A hawk hunting all day might finally surprise a grouse, but one disadvantaged by having to ride on a man's hand rarely has a chance. The sport of falconry resides in the challenge of overcoming its inherent difficulties.

In these days of threats to hunting, falconers and gun hunters must make common cause. Falconers often fear that uninformed shooters may kill a bird



Merlin

that has cost them a lot of effort and at least a year's training time. Shooters unfamiliar with the sport may resent falconers' imagined air of arrogance—often the fear mentioned above—or blame them for taking too much game. Education can, and must, end these fears. In England field-sports groups have decided that an attack on even the smallest segment of the sporting community is an attack on all, so that any attack on falconry or coursing or fox hunting will bring a response from more than just the tiny minorities that follow these endangered sports.

These days the sportsman can be encouraged by the emergence of those who hunt both with falcon and with gun. Many members of the North American Falconer's Association (NAFA), including myself and the president of the organization, have been NIRA members for years. The editor of the *NAFA Journal* hunts elk and mule deer with a .338 and a .270, and birds with a Winchester Model 12. Prominent falconer Frank Bond managed the campaign for New Mexico's pro-gun, pro-hunting Senator Pete Domenici. This kind of mutual interest and knowledge can only be good for both shooters and falconers.

If you don't know a falconer, try to seek one out. Watching him work with his birds may give you a new insight into how things work "out there," one that can only help your hunting. It will certainly thrill you. And remember, speak up the next time anybody knocks at your kind of honest hunting, whether or not you practice it. As Benjamin Franklin said at the dawn of the American Revolution, "We must all hang together, or assuredly we shall all hang separately."



Red-tailed Hawk

Then he has to go through a two-year apprentice stage, pass a rigorous written test, and trap and train one of the commoner birds of prey. After this period, the falconer must undergo another test to graduate to his "general" license, at which point he is allowed to take young birds and fly any unendangered species. Finally, after five years of general experience, he may elect to take still another test and go on to "master" status, with its privilege of flying rarer species under certain conditions. In addition to these stringent rules, the falconer's hawk house or "mews" must conform to exact federal specifications and is open to on-the-spot inspection at any time. All this may not seem fair, but it is federal law and supported by falconers.