

2016

INTERNATIONAL WaSH CONFERENCE III  
WOMEN AND SUSTAINABLE HUNTING

July 2-3, 2016  
Wageningen-The Netherlands

A close-up portrait of an elderly woman, likely from a traditional community. She has a weathered face with deep wrinkles and is wearing a headband with colorful patterns. Her expression is thoughtful or somber. The background is blurred, suggesting an outdoor setting.

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Our thanks go to the Falconry Heritage Trust for their sponsorship for publication of the abstracts of the Women and Sustainable Hunting Conference on July second 2016 at the University of Wageningen, the Netherlands.

The historical introduction is meant to trigger scholars to explore this gender aspect which is very little explored and a research topic which could contribute our understanding of medieval and early modern life.



**The Falconry Heritage Trust**

## **Colophon**

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The matriarch of the Ju/'hoansi clan, her face testimony to a tough life, her head filled with survival skills.

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## THE CONFERENCE

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Female hunters and falconers have organized themselves on an international level to organize a conference 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 collaboration came forth out of friendship and the desire to strengthen the ties between female falconers and hunters. Our shared mission is to convey our hunting tradition for future generations, with an eye toward species protection, conservation and sustainability. The younger generation is becoming more and more alienated from its natural environment, and has little idea of even where their food comes from. By organizing a conference in the heart of the academic world, projects and ideas can be exchanged among professionals and across generations, in new and provocative ways. Our objective is to put nature education and academic research on the subject firmly on the world map.

A photograph of three people in winter outdoor gear in a snowy forest. One person is perched on a tree trunk, another stands behind them, and a third is sitting on the snow in the foreground, pointing towards the tree. They appear to be engaged in a discussion or educational activity. The scene is set in a dense forest with snow on the ground and tree branches.

## EDUCATION

Our shared mission is to convey our hunting tradition for future generations through education with an eye toward species protection, conservation and sustainability.

## PHILOSOPHY

Creating awareness and public support for the importance of nature education through falconers and hunters..

HELEN MC DONALD (UK)

## DEDICATED TO ALL HUNTING AMAZON

Soon after my book *H is for Hawk* was published, I began to tire of the way journalists kept asking me the same question. “You’re a woman,” they said, “Falconry is a man’s sport, isn’t it?” Each time they said it, I’d think back to what it was like to walk up a farm track with my goshawk Mabel on a frosty winter morning, her curved black talons gripping my glove, crest raised, tail fanned, pale eyes glaring and wings slightly open in anticipation of flight. And of how, half an hour later, I’d be shivering and full of adrenaline, crouching by her side as she plucked fur from the rabbit she’d caught, thinking how ridiculous it is to consider falconry a man’s sport—not only because hawks don’t care about gender, but because kneeling by her kill, sharing her life in all its feral, raw intensity, I hardly felt human at all. All responsible hunters, ones in tune with the natural world, have experienced powerful moments like these, ones which let you forget who you are and taste something older, wilder, something of the ancient machinery that makes the world work.

For many years I worked as a historian of science and studied the cultures of natural history, nature appreciation and hunting. I chose to do this because I wanted to understand more about the ways in which we relate to the natural world. Back then, few people researched the history of women and hunting. But in recent

years there has been an increase in academic interest in the area, as the work conducted by contributors to this conference volume makes gratifyingly clear. This kind of research holds more than academic interest. It helps break down many of the old, restricting stories about what we are supposed to do, and who we are supposed to be. For women have always hunted. Recent research is uncovering a lost history of hunters whose stories have been erased, forgotten or wilfully obscured.

The woman hunters and falconers I’ve known—and I have known many—still have to deal with comments that our place is in the kitchen, or raising children, that women are born to nurture rather than hunt; that our brains are different; that we can’t be ‘real’ hunters. These are not scientific facts, but assumptions built by accidents of history and culture. Take falconry for example. In medieval and early-modern Europe, women were renowned for their falconry skills. ‘The inferior sex excels at the hunting of birds’, wrote John of Salisbury in the twelfth century. Training and flying hawks was an essential part of a noblewoman’s education. Queen Eleanor of Provence flew goshawks, Queen Eleanor of Castile hunted with gyrfalcons. Catherine the Great was an exceptionally keen falconer; so were both Elizabeth I and her cousin, Mary Queen of Scots.

I wish I'd known of these forebears when I was a small girl. I was far from the aristocratic men populating the pages of my falconry books. But still, I had people I could model myself on. I felt able to become a falconer partly because of three women: Jemima Parry-Jones, Emma Ford, and Diana Durman Waters. All of them taught and wrote books on falconry, and made people like me feel it was plausible to follow in their footsteps. It's so important to foster links between women who are interested in hunting in both a practical and academic sense. For informal mentoring relationships are how we learn our fieldcraft, our hunting ethics, learn how to appreciate the exquisite complexity of the shifting landscapes around us.

I like to tell people that there are as many different kinds of hunting as there are kinds of marriages. As with marriages, some kinds of hunting I consider unhealthy. Some I feel should never have happened at all. But there is a kind of principled hunting which rests on deep ethical roots, which encourages a deeper understanding of landscape and local ecologies, and which rests on the sustainable take of game populations. This kind of hunting offers forms of attention and interaction with nature that I venture to say are almost impossible to achieve in any other practice. Responsible hunting can give us unique insight into the environment around us.

We're living in a time of terrifying loss of biodiversity. We're living, too, at a time where there's an increasing lack of interaction with the natural world. More and more we're encouraged to think of nature as something precious that

we shouldn't touch, that we must leave well alone. One of my heroes is Fran Hamerstrom, exceptional field biologist, falconer and field sportsperson, who wrote a book drily called *Is She Coming Too? Memoirs of a Lady Hunter*. Hamerstrom was a great defender of the benefits of hunting, and of close personal contact with wild animals. Like the organisers and supporters of this conference, she understood that without emotional connections to creatures and landscapes, we lose the drive to conserve them. This volume will play a part in helping a wider audience to understand that the fragility and complexity of ecological systems is intrinsic not only to conservation biology, but to enlightened hunting culture.



## FIONA CLAIRE CAPSTICK (SOUTH AFRICA)

# THE HUNTRESS IN AFRICA

Hunting is the most ancient human activity as one must first sustain life before all else. Modern scientific discoveries and DNA research indicate that Africa is the birthplace of our species, *Homo sapiens*, so the roots of the huntress, gatherer of food and nurturer of life are deep, far-reaching, multifarious and eons' old.

Woman's hunting and survival instincts predate her written history. The origins of hunting are embedded in these survival instincts of the prehistoric human family. The earliest hominids appeared between five and seven million years ago. Hunting and gathering of food dominated until a mere 10 000 years ago when the advent of cultivated crops and a more sedentary way of life resulted, ironically, in the increasing restriction of women's freedom in the natural world.

Killing signified sustenance of life and the hunt assumed a magical dimension in the rituals of prehistoric life. The first alphabet the early humans in Africa learned was the spoor of wild animals, the location and identity of edible plant foods and the myriad other natural signs on earth and in the heavens which aided them in their quest for survival and meaning. The female was fully literate in this alphabet of the wilds and an equal, innately respected partner in the group's daily struggle to survive. Egyptian hieroglyphics depict women in a royal hunting

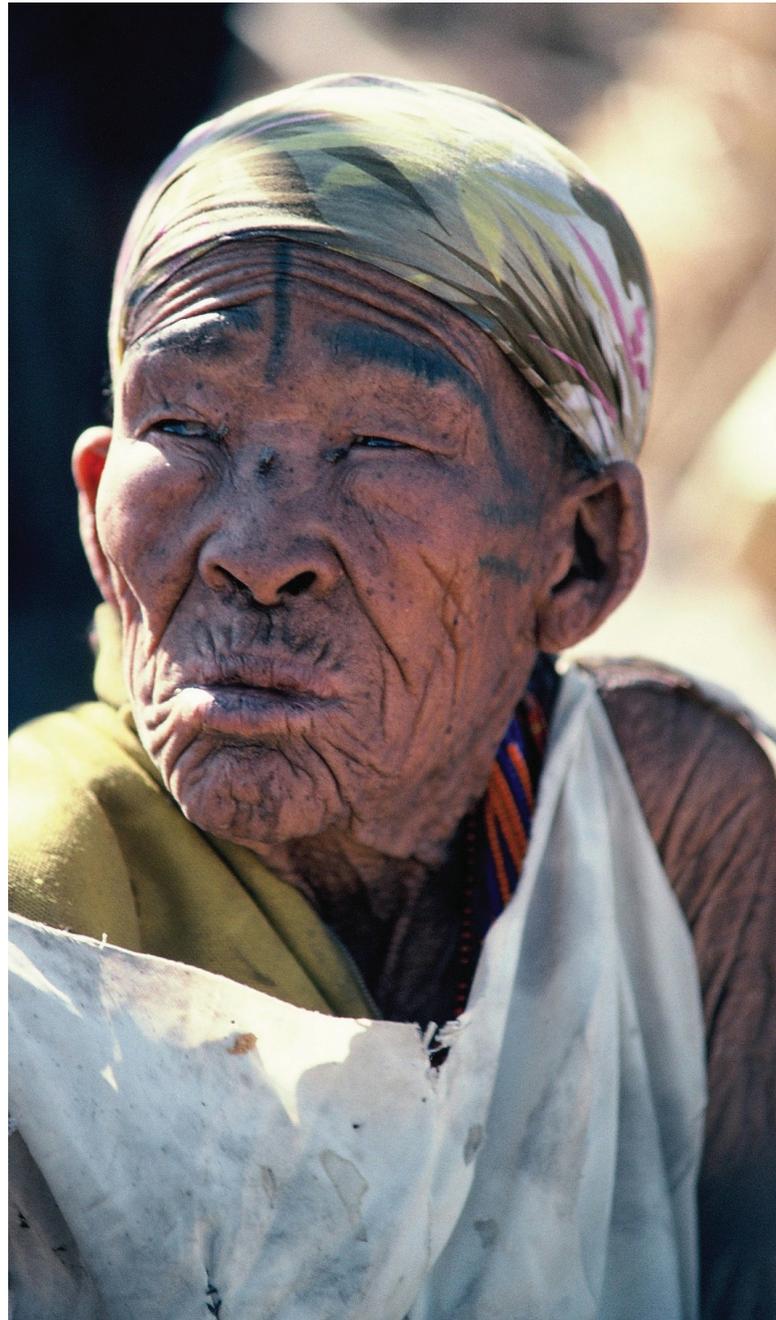
party on the marshes of the Nile Delta over 3 500 years ago. These sloe-eyed beauties are seen on the royal hunting barges, an integral part of a bird hunting and fishing expedition as they clutch downed birds and steady the legs of their male companions as they spear fish. There is even a famed hieroglyph of the queen-consort, Ankhesenamun, depicting her handing her boy-king husband, Tutankhamen, arrows for his bow as he wing shoots over the marshes. Yet other hieroglyphs depict beautiful, royal women seated in chariots with their menfolk as they race along the banks of the Nile in their gilded chariots after ibex and gazelle, their whippet-like hunting dogs coursing beside the chariots.

These ancient images show, for example, the Goddess Neith carrying her bow, the symbol of war and hunting, and the Goddess Anath brandishing a spear and battle-axe, further symbols of hunting and warfare. Egyptology is replete with a whole pantheon of goddesses sporting animal heads such as the lion-headed Sekhmet, the goddess of war and sickness, and lion-headed Astarte, the warrior goddess. Clearly, women were strongly enough associated with hunting and the natural world thousands of years ago in Egypt for them to have been depicted on these hieroglyphs and not kept apart and rendered invisible.

An astonishing discovery was made in the Libyan Desert when a 7<sup>th</sup> century BCE sculpture was found of a woman on horseback with her hunting hound and a falcon. The creator of this sculpture was obviously depicting a reality of the environment.

Falconry, now declared an *Intangible Cultural Heritage*, is well over four thousand years old and it has its origins, according to various theories, in Mesopotamia, Western Mongolia and China. Apparently only Morocco, far to the west of Libya, had a clear history of the practice of falconry, dating back to the 11<sup>th</sup> century CE and the arrival of the warlike Banu Hilal confederation of tribes from the Arabian Peninsula with their falconry skills. Yet here we see this dainty statue of a woman on horseback with her hunting hound and falcon, out hunting in the Libyan Desert. The role of women in gatherer-hunter cultures can be divided into several categories. Concerning Africa, the nomadic Hadza tribe of Tanzania has a clear division of duties. Only the men hunt but both sexes gather vegetable foods, indicating that the gathering of mostly plant foodstuffs provided the bulk of the daily diet.

Hence the word-order 'gatherer-hunter' preferred by scholars of the subject. In a celebrated study in 1949 of 175 gatherer-hunter cultures around the world, it was ascertained that four-fifths of the work to feed and ensure the survival of the clan was performed by the women. Men and women of the Mbuti Pygmies of the tropical rainforests in the far north-eastern Democratic Republic of Congo hunt and gather





collectively with their nets and their bows and arrows. Women act as beaters in these communal hunts. Any male in that society who does not have a mate is precluded from hunting. This is a powerful indication of the esteem with which women are viewed in the Mbuti Pygmy culture. A third category that sees men being responsible for most of the hunting and women for

most of the gathering but also taking small mammals, birds and insects and processing the kills of the bigger game is the San or Bushmen cultures of southern Africa.

There is perhaps no better place to begin this odyssey into the exceptional history of the huntress in Africa than to touch on the existence of that most ancient of human cultures in Africa

– the San or Bushman gatherer-hunter cultures of Southern Africa as typified by the !Kung San of the Kalahari in Botswana and Namibia and the Ju/'hoansi San of north-eastern Namibia. Hunting was the prime force that helped develop early human characteristics such as bipedalism, tool-making, language and sharing of resources. In order to live, one had to kill. Killing signified sustenance of life and the hunt assumed a magical dimension in the rituals of prehistoric life as seen in the often astounding rock paintings in the Republic of South Africa and to a lesser degree in Botswana of the San and their reverence for the natural world.

The San women were a pivotal part of this nomadic culture that predated by many centuries the arrival of the black peoples from central Africa and that of whites from Europe. The menfolk would dominate the hunting of larger game, which was time-consuming and a high-energy, low-reward pursuit in terms of quantity of food eventually brought home. The women supplied the bulk of the daily diet through their gathering skills of edible plants, roots, wild fruits, nuts, seeds, larvae, honey and berries and the taking of small mammals, rodents, fish, birds, insects, lizards and snakes. A cultural taboo forbade any woman from using bows and arrows. This meant greater stealth and endurance, stamina and an unfailing memory in order to identify foods safe for human consumption and to use with skill a variety of methods to bag small mammals.

The women, being the bearers of the next generation, had to develop advanced survival skills

in exceedingly arid conditions, living the ethos of sustainable utilization so as not to exhaust the source of their very survival. They passed on these skills to their children and learned to cope with sickness and injury through a vast knowledge of nature's pharmacopeia. Men and women were bound together in an inextricable, deeply respectful, co-operative partnership rooted in a oneness with the natural world. Life in the early gatherer-hunter societies was intensely co-operative, not competitive in the effort to survive. Those societies were egalitarian, complementary and non-hierarchical where nobody was redundant.

Today, in the new millennium, the remnants of these gather-hunter communities in Southern Africa and also those communities scattered around the world, are struggling to survive in an environment where all the cards are stacked against them. Life has become largely sedentary and all the poisons of modern civilisation such as alcohol, tobacco, poor diet, sexually transmitted diseases, destruction of habitat through, for example, rampant deforestation and mining, the inability to live freely and roam and being subjected to prejudice, extreme violence and dangerous levels of ignorance by outsiders, have devastated whole gatherer-hunter cultures and entire ways of life.

Redundancy and a plethora of social ills came with the industrial age as humans became increasingly alienated from, and more ignorant of the natural world and its wildlife. The more humans have moved away from the natural world, the greater the pull of the wilderness,

the stronger the urge to return and the more urgent the need for the healing powers of the wilderness experience in its many guises.

Of unique interest when studying the gatherer-huntress in Africa in centuries past are the special huntress-warrior regiments in the former Kingdom of Dahomey – straddling what is now southern Benin, part of Togo to the west and part of Nigeria to the east. These huntresses were first noted in 1724 by a British Royal African Company agent. A special group of women, the elite females of the Kingdom, hunted elephant for the kings. They supplied ivory and meat for royal celebrations and were allowed to keep some ivory to trade. These women were known as the Gbeto and they used spears, poisoned arrows, swords, knives, clubs and flintlock muskets. They also did duty as fearsome warriors, referred to by the unequalled explorer-linguist, Richard Burton, as “this small Black Sparta”.

Another mysterious reference to warrior huntresses in Africa was made in 1506 by a Portuguese missionary to Abyssinia, Father João dos Santos, who wrote of “a province in which the women are so much addicted to war and hunting that they constantly go armed.” Who knows what other examples of women as hunters and warriors are forever lost in the mists of Africa’s rich, ancient history.

The voyages of exploration by the Portuguese in the 15<sup>th</sup> century and the subsequent settling of Europeans at the foot of Africa from the 17<sup>th</sup> century onwards resulted in a new dimension in the relationship between women and wildlife in

Africa. The Dutch, French, British, Belgians and Germans followed, establishing trading posts and also more permanent presences along the coastal regions of west, southern and east Africa before moving inland.

As European explorers, traders and settlers spread through Africa’s vast hinterland, hypnotised by her pristine wilderness, unparalleled wildlife and limitless horizons, the continent was divided among major European powers into colonial possessions. The presence of European women increased, giving birth to new generations in Africa. Ties with Europe – a world away – loosened.

In South Africa, the Boer women of mostly Dutch and Flemish origin but also of French and German stock, settled at the tip of Africa with their men-folk from the latter part of the 17<sup>th</sup> century onwards. These women became part of the history of African exploration, colonisation and survival, albeit mostly unsung and largely anonymous.

Hunting and bush skills were the only way to survive. Boer women were able to shoulder the cumbersome muzzleloaders, hunt, fish, ride, drive teams of oxen and crack rawhide whips with the best of the men. They could butcher carcasses, make clothing and shoes out of skins, and soap and candles out of animal fat, survive off the veld through intimate knowledge of the flora and fauna, use nature as their pharmacy and raise generations under often extremely primitive and dangerous conditions. They drew on the ancient skills and knowledge of the San and other indigenous peoples in the process. These formidable Boer women, whether in de-

fending laagers and outposts against attack or in helping their men-folk set out on hunting expeditions for food, ivory and skins, stood their ground.

As Britain was the dominant European presence in Africa, the English language dominates the most important literature on exploration, hunting and wildlife issues. It is this library of human endeavour that has captured for all time the often astonishing accomplishments of women in Africa.

Even the most cursory overview of outdoors-women in Africa and the gradual emergence of the big game huntress in Africa in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century will mention the following vignettes of women in very early African travel and hunting expeditions:

- The author, *William Charles Baldwin*, tells in 1863 of meeting a Mr and Mrs Thompson, on a 'hunter's honeymoon' journey of some two thousand miles overland by ox wagon from Cape Town to Lake Ngami in today's north-western Botswana. The couple were on their way to 'Walvish Bay' on the coast of today's Namibia but which was then a limitless, arid, sparsely populated land fought over by rival tribes. The only way to sustain life was to hunt. Clearly, Mrs Thompson was in love.

- None other than the legendary *Frederick Courtney Selous* speaks in the early 1890s of meeting the Dorehill couple and their two small children in the wilds of today's eastern Zimbabwe who were on a 'shooting trip'. Before that, in 1888, Selous wrote of a 'plucky young Englishwoman,

a Mrs Thomas, who was on a hunting trip with her husband in what is today's south-western Zambia.

- *Count Joseph Potocki*, the renowned Polish nobleman hunter-author, met a Mr and Mrs Renton in 1895 who were both on a hunting expedition in northern Somaliland where Mrs Renton witnessed a lion maul to death one of their Somali guides.

History is replete with the formidable presence of women in early Africa. Take Florence Baker, the companion of the redoubtable African explorer Samuel Baker. She stood by Samuel's side, becoming a deadly shot, in her man's exceptional exploration journeys of the Nile tributaries in what is today's two-country Sudan region and to the borders of Abyssinia. Florence routinely hunted for the pot, surviving in desert, swamp and mountain conditions, riding camels and horses, witnessed the freeing of slaves, helped repel attacks and rewrite early African exploration history.

The modern reader has increasing digital access today to the truly exceptional lives of the huntress/explorer in Africa; women such as May French-Sheldon from Pennsylvania society who, in 1891, became the first white woman to single-handedly conduct a foot safari from Mombasa on the coast of British East Africa to the foothills of Mount Kilimanjaro and back again to the coast at Pangani in German East Africa. She shot to feed her retinue and she wrote a remarkable book of her exploration and travels at a time when women were not considered adequate enough to have the vote.

History owes a huge debt to a Victorian lady adventurer, Mary Kingsley. Although not a huntress per se, she was an adventurer extraordinary in the early 1890s when she ventured alone into the humid, dangerous heart of French Equatorial Africa. She left for posterity first-hand accounts of the hunting traditions of the Fan tribe of today's Gabon and much material on African wildlife, ethnology and the customs, beliefs and lifestyles of major equatorial African tribes. In fact, Mary Kingsley epitomised what became common in the writings of subsequent huntress/explorers in Africa – a holistic, multifaceted approach to the African wilderness in all its guises and the hunt and not merely a single-minded, ego-fuelled obsession with trophies alone.

The first female war correspondent in Africa was a woman – Lady Florence Dixie of the British aristocracy who was also a veteran huntress of South American fame. She was in South Africa during 1880-1881 when the Boer people rose up against the British colonizers. In between filing war reports, Lady Dixie hunted. This provocative woman warned that no nation could be truly free as long as unjust laws shackled its women! Something of the freedom she had known in wild places on three continents and her skill at arms had emboldened her to hunt for justice for women.

Africa, at the height of its colonial powers in the first half of other 20<sup>th</sup> century became an irresistible magnet for big game hunters and, increasingly, huntresses who also left often astounding written records of their 'vacation from the human condition', to echo Ortega y Gasset's words.

The five-month big game safari adventures of English cousins and Edwardian society ladies, Agnes and Cecily Herbert, in British Somaliland during 1905 is a case in point. They not only hunted with their rifles in that game-rich Eden; they hunted with their minds and sensitive powers of observation. Agnes Herbert's book, *Two Dianas in Somaliland*, published in 1908, brings alive an alien world in all its wild, exotic beauty as Muslim Somali tribesmen on their horses performed the electrifying *dibáltig* ritual to welcome these fair-skinned ladies from a far country who had come to hunt, entirely 'unescorted', in the Horn of Africa. Throughout, the innate Somali code of honour enveloped the Herberts until they sailed for home months later, having made history as the first huntresses to have written a book in English about big game hunting in Africa.

The East African territories of Kenya, Uganda, Sudan and German East Africa/Tanganyika evolved into the grandest of hunting destinations during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The game of imperial politics drew in the pioneers and early settler families and big game hunters. Eventually, the huntress came into her own.

Hunting literature in English is replete with a splendid array of huntresses and profoundly courageous settler women who often documented their adventures with panache and courage. Here, one thinks of women like Lady Florence Delamere of Kenyan fame who could handle firearms, ride like the wind, face down marauding lions, run a vast ranch and play gracious hostess to men like Theodore Roosevelt and Winston Churchill.

British East Africa and, indeed other destinations such as Portuguese West and East Africa as well as the then Belgian Congo played host increasingly to huntresses from European and Indian royalty and the aristocracy as well as from society in general. After the famed Roosevelt big game safari in 1909 in Kenya, the American love affair with the African safari experience was ignited, American hunters and huntresses dominating international hunting to this day.

A cursory overview of some huntresses who left written record of their hunting experiences in Africa during the last century would automatically include the following remarkable women:

- the legendary **Duchess of Aosta**, the French princess who married the Duke of Aosta of Italy;
- the unforgettable **Baroness von Blixen-Finecke of Denmark** who hunted in Kenya and who was the only woman the fastidious Denys Finch Hatton ever invited on safari. Her writings endure to this day;
- the beautiful **Vivienne de Wattville**, huntress/author of *Switzerland*, who completed her father's 1924 big game museum collection safari through Kenya, Uganda, Sudan and the Belgian Congo after he succumbed to a lion mauling;
- the inimitable **Delia Akeley of America** and her museum collecting expeditions in Kenya and the Belgian Congo;
- **Beryl Markham** femme fatale/aviatrix pioneer and huntress from childhood in Kenya;
- **Osa Johnson from Kansas** whose hunting and

exploration exploits in Africa with her husband Martin made cinema history;

- author **Mary Hastings Bradley of Chicago** and her unique writings on her work with Carl Akeley and research into the mountain gorillas of Ruanda-Urundi;
- **Marguerite Roby of England** and her solo, 'unescorted' safari into the Belgian Congo who lived the ethos of ethical hunting;
- fellow Englishwoman **Diana Strickland** and her hunting experiences in the Belgian Congo where she documented the often atrocious treatment of the tribes by Belgian officialdom;
- Frenchwoman and huntress, **Gabrielle Vassal**, and her life in French Equatorial Africa where she witnessed secret rites closed to all men;
- **Elizabeth Beebe of Washington State** and her sojourn with her oil geologist explorer husband in what is today's Angola;
- **Gretchen Cron of New York** and her multiple safaris to East Africa;
- **Ada Wincza**, the Polish-born legendary professional huntress and outfitter in Tanganyika and then Kenya after World War Two;
- **Gloria Tennison of Texas**, wife and lifelong hunting partner of the renowned Harry Tennison of Game Conservation International fame. It is perhaps fitting to conclude this glimpse into the history of the huntress in Africa with a special tribute to **Margarete Trappe of Ger-**



man East Africa/Tanganyika, who, in 1928, became the first full-time professional huntress in Africa. She spent 50 years under the Southern Cross in the magnificence of the Mount Meru/ Mount Kilimanjaro region before dying on 5 June 1957 at her home on the slopes of Mount Meru. Her unflinching skill as a big game huntress, her encyclopaedic knowledge of the bush and wildlife, her phenomenal tracking ability and exemplary ethical behaviour in the field, her empathy for the tribal peoples and her courage in the face of often unspeakable adversity have engraved her name for all time as the doyenne of the African huntress/pioneer settler.

Today, in the new millennium, women occupy every imaginable kind of work connected with the hunting industry, be it as professional huntresses and bush pilots, outfitters, booking agents, ranch owners and breeders of game animals, taxidermists, wildlife veterinarians, wildlife artists, owners of prestigious firearms manufacturing companies, specialists in gun engraving, stock-making, gun checkering and gun-smithing, firearms auctioneering, leaders in outdoor journalism and youth education, office bearers in international hunting organisations, film producers, pro-hunting advocates in the political arena, designers of safari clothing and authors of prize-winning books on hunting.

The following words, as we take leave of Africa, are from an unknown source and they encapsulate the soul of the African wilderness experience as it was lived by generations of huntresses in the past and as it is being discovered by a new generation of huntresses today:

**Africa smiled a little when you left.**

**“We know you,” Africa said. “We have seen and watched you. We can learn to live without you, but we know we needn’t yet.”**

**And Africa smiled a little when you left.**

**“You cannot leave Africa,” Africa said. “It is always with you, there inside your head. Our rivers run in currents, in the swirl of your thumbprints; our drumbeats counting out your pulse, our coastline the silhouette of your soul.”**

**So Africa smiled a little when you left.**

**“We are in you,” Africa said. “You have not left us, yet.”**

# SOŇA CHOVANOVÁ SUPEKOVÁ (SLOVAKIA)

## HUNTING AND FALCONRY IN THE SLAVIC COUNTRIES OF CENTRAL EUROPE

Hunting is an inseparable part of life and has been since the dawn of humankind; it has, for example, assisted human development and progress. Hunting and all activities associated with it are very important intercultural phenomena—not only in Europe but throughout the world.

How did hunting and its associated traditions develop in Slavic countries of Central Europe? The community of hunters in most European countries consider hunting to be not only a hobby, but also a lifestyle and a mission. For most of them, it is not just about the joy of the quarry, the kill, or the trophies; it is about the honour of being hunters. It is an honour to belong to a group of people associated with nature and its resources. Women play a very important role in European hunting nowadays. In the past, women mainly participated in the activities that followed the hunt. In the countries of former Austro-Hungarian Empire, women mostly participated in the social activities of hunting. In the 19th and early 20th centuries, hunting in Europe underwent a final development, and so-called “exclusive hunting” was transformed into a professional activity focused on breeding, quality, and the comprehensive care for game animals.

The earliest mention of hunting in the present territory of Slovakia and the Czech Republic comes from about 400 thousand years ago, the fraction of the spear from red jasper. The bearers of this culture were Neanderthals. In the 1st century, our two countries became the interface of two cultures under the influence of Roman Empire and the pressure of the barbarians. During the time of Celts, Germans, Slavs, and Avars, the weapons found in the tombs of Celtic men provide evidence of the hunting activity in our country. Hunting weapons and long spears had completely different properties than war swords or axes. Nevertheless, the sword was also used as a hunting weapon until the Middle Ages. Based on the weight of these weapons and their difficult handling which required strength it is unlikely that women were hunting in ancient times and the early Middle Ages in Slovakia and the Czech Republic. Hunting, in this period, was the domain of men. However, the hunting goddess of ancient Slavs, as in ancient Greece and Rome, was a female goddess, equivalent to Artemis and Diana. The Slavic hunting goddess was named Devana. Devana was the daughter of the god Perún and the beautiful goddess Vesna. Devana was also the goddess of the moon. At that time, the territory of Slovakia was mostly covered by the deep for-

ests. Tacitus, in his work "Germany", characterized the north area of the Danube as "bad" with inaccessible forests and swamps. Chronicler, Kosmas, describes crossing of Czechs through our territory as an "arduous march through impervious woods".

Game hunting during the Great Moravian Empire and the Kingdom of Hungary was one of the main sources of sustenance of the population. Until about 1000 AD, the Slavs lived in municipalities where the land belonged to all members and everybody who belonged to this municipality could hunt. The first historical data about Slavs hunting are dated from the 9th century as the oriental merchants were coming in large numbers to buy skin of hunted animals. At that time, Slavs were hunting with bows and arrows, spears, nets, and in pits and loops. Hunters paid tribute to the goddess Devana and the moon.

Initially, people hunted only for their needs and later to fulfil obligations to the feudal lords. People gave them a certain number of hunted hares, partridges, and the bear skin and meat. Falconry was discussed at the Church Council in the years 506 and 517. According to the traditional written records the higher church officials did not like the fact that the spirituals were passionately devoted to falconry. At the next council in Macon, hunting with birds was totally prohibited for spirituals. In the 6<sup>th</sup> century, chronicler Rehor from Tour, the first in Europe, further describes the falcons of Frankish King Merowig II, who issued the regulation of hunting thieves threatened birds of prey with strong



sanctions. In his annals, we learn: "Let us bring horses and falcons and hawks! We go for hunt!"

From the 6<sup>th</sup> century, falconry was widely practiced in European royal courts as a noble pastime, but was also spread between the other layers of the population as a secondary source of income. Normal squire (subordinate), however, could not afford the luxury of falconry clubs. He practiced, treated, and wore his predator by himself. During the Great Moravian Empire, women also actively participated in falconry. The unknown author of "Fulda annals" from 714 -882, in connection with the Great Moravia and its ruler Svätopluk (871-894), stated that in the year 869 Svätopluk hunted with falcons "Cum falconibus ludum Exercens." Mentions of falconry in historical documents appear frequently.

In the 11<sup>th</sup> century, hunting grounds were called "loci ferari", on giant royal properties. The ruler leased or rented land to feudal lords and the church, primarily for loyal service. In Slovakia, preserved documents show that being a ranger was a profession as early as 1075. By the year 1218, the land was distributed, on which there is written mention that the owner owns the land, forest, game, and fish. During the Middle Ages, on the current territory of Slovakia, there was a period of great expansion of falconry. The king was also the highest falconer and headed the Royal Falconry - Falconarii Regii. One can find the motif of the king on horseback with a falcon on medieval coins of King Bela IV. Between 1235 and 1270, women in Central Europe liked falconry because it was famil-

iar and could be easily tamed. Trained predators have a high price and have an appropriate gift, with diplomatic means to stop an armed conflict. Many communities in Slovakia got their names, which remain to this day, thanks to the hunters, handlers, dog drivers, bear hunters, and hawkers who lived there. Manufacturers of hunting weapons had an important position in the company. While in the 16<sup>th</sup> century hunting rifles changed hunting, falconry still has an important place in the hunt.

Until the 18<sup>th</sup> century, we can't find any written or visual reference to the active participation of women in hunting. The pictures present women mostly with falcons or accompanying the men to parforce hunting. However, one of the most enlightened monarchs in Europe, Maria Theresa, significantly affected the laws of the hunting system for the Slavic lands. An act from 1786 established the strict protection of hunting and ordered the auction or lease hunting grounds. Poaching was recognized as theft and was strictly punished. The law was tightened by Francis II; hunting seasons were enacted for some species of animals and a ban on hunting of females at the time of mating and rearing was set. During the 18<sup>th</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, falconry in Slovakia and the Czech Republic was being phased out because it gradually pushed more and more for the use of hunting firearms. Princess Sofia at the Royal Falcon Club supported traditional falconry in the years around 1850.

The term "hunting ground" was defined in the year 1892 on our territory. The 19<sup>th</sup> century was

characteristic of excessive hunting and poaching. Squires began to build pheasantries and game enclosures. The most famous pheasantry was situated in Palarikovo, where the idea of establishing the CIC (International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation) was born. We could find many written mentions and pictures of women attended hunting activities from this period, because of fashion and the social meaning it held. In the period of the first Czechoslovak Republic, in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, hunters recovered the tradition of falconry and recorded a boom of hunting in the form of wildlife management and the development of forest management. Women from the higher social stratus hunted in the company of their partners.

The history and hierarchy of hunting in the territory of the Slavic countries depended mainly on social conditions. During times of unrest, there is no time for wildlife upkeep; on the other hand, during times of peace the quantity of wildlife always increased. If people became poachers, it was due to the misery and poverty which one can see reflected in the aftermath of World War II. An example of this is in my home country, Slovakia, where, after two world wars, the state of wildlife was alarming. At that time, there were no conservationists and the credit for increasing game populations went to hunters, who were already a well-organized group. Thanks to their excellent monitoring and sustainable wildlife management, it was possible for hunters to stop the decrease in game populations and, in fact, increase their numbers. In the time of socialist Czechoslovakia, the management of wildlife became a part of planning



the economy in the field of agriculture and forestry. Women formed just one part of hunting as administrative resources, in education of hunting and cynology. After the Velvet Revolution in 1989, the situation changed very fast. Hunting became a fashionable part of social life, but was still regulated according to legislation in line with sustainable wildlife management.

Women play a very important role in Central European hunting nowadays. In the past, women mainly participated in the activities that followed the hunt. In the countries of former Austro-Hungarian Empire, women participated in the social activities of hunting. In the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, hunting in Europe underwent a final development, and so-called "exclusive hunting" was transformed into a professional activity focused on breeding, quality, and



the comprehensive care for game animals. Due to historical evolution, our countries adopted Austrian and German hunting traditions.

Today, more and more women work in positions and practice hobbies that were previously dominated by men, and the same goes for hunting—the number of active female hunters is constantly growing. In Slovakia, for example, there are more than 1,700 registered female hunters, in the Czech Republic there are 3,000 and in Poland there are 3,200. Traditionally, hunting is widespread in rural areas. Women in Austria increasingly hunt and participate in public hunting life. The number of registered

huntresses in Eastern European countries is also increasing annually, though their activities are connected to events organized mainly by men. The numbers of huntresses in Slavic counties, however, are nowhere near as high as those in the Nordic countries, which are well-known for their high numbers of hunters per capita. For example, there are more than 15,000 registered woman hunters in Sweden.

Women also occupy an important place in falconry and hunting cynology, faring well in competitions and serving as judges of various dog events and field shows.

In addition, women are active in many areas related to hunting: education, work with children and young adults, shooting, and fashion. In the countries in Central and Eastern Europe, women regularly organize workshops—to which both men and women are invited—focused on processing and cooking wild game. They exchange recipes and host culinary competitions. Women help convey the elegance of hunting and inspire men to take greater care of their garments and uniforms. Some young women become hunters even without any prior family tradition, often thanks to their partners. Education and the system of hunting courses and exams for getting the licenses give women a great opportunity to be better represented in the field of hunting and falconry.

One of the best examples are woman teachers in the falconry school in the Slovakian village of Štiavnické Bane, situated in the mountain region close to the city of Banská Štiavnica which is recognized by UNESCO. The school is the first in the world where the subject of falconry and horse breeding are taught as a part of the regular curriculum. Pupils of the school take part in school presentations not only in Slovakia, but also in Europe and the UAE, where they present falconry training to the general public. These subjects have been integrated into regular classes for grades 5 through 9 for one hour each week. For students from other classes and for highly motivated students the course can be taken twice a week. The children have the possibility to train with a wide variety of birds of prey, with about 40 individuals and 11 kinds of species (Golden eagle, steppe eagle, com-

mon buzzard, saker falcon, snowy owl, tawny owl, barn owl, bald eagle, griffon vulture, harris hawk, European eagle-owl). At the school, students perform aves-therapy (therapy with birds of prey). Students have demonstrated this therapy for many children with different disabilities (auditory, visual, physical, and mental). One of the students took part in aves-therapy in a biological competition as well. On the campus you can find many interactive teaching aids. This is one of the great examples of modern education connected to hunting and falconry practices in Central European countries.

The modern society of Slavic communities in Central Europe could not exist without the active participation of women in falconry and hunting. They became more active and educated not just for hunting as an activity, but as a way of life and a tool for the sustainable conservation of wildlife and nature.

*From the legend of St. Hubertus, patron saint of hunters: "wildlife must not be just hunted, but equally important is the conservation and understanding of the importance of wildlife in nature and based on this, the restraint of one's passion."*

The author is the President of Working Group Artemis of the CIC and President of the Slovak Lady Hunters Club.

DIANA DURMAN-WALTERS (UK)

## PASSION FOR FALCONRY AS A CATALYST FOR FUTURE GENERATION

Women have always had a fascination with falcons and falconry. The role of women in a predominantly male sphere of influence is not confined to the 21<sup>st</sup> C. In fact women have participated in falconry from early times and scholars of history have written about these women.

It is not until we reach a period in time known as the Middle Ages that women begin to have equality with men in the field of falconry. Not a great deal has been written about all these women participants, but those that were synonymous with those times; we begin to see emerging as dedicated and skilled falconers.

One of the very first books ever written by a woman describing falconry and hunting was that of **Dame Juliana Berners** who was Prioress to Sopwell Nunnery near St Albans, England. Printed in 1486 it contained three essays, hawking, hunting and heraldry. It became extremely popular, and many editions were quickly reprinted.

Dame Juliana was probably brought up at court. When she adopted the religious life she still retained her love of hawking and passion for all field sports and became author of *The Boke of Saint Albans*.

In her chapter on hawking she describes the use of trained hawks to bring down birds that flew beyond the range of arrows. Juliana gave a list of medieval persons and the type of hawks suitable for each. She said the lady should hunt with the Merlin, a small rapid flying falcon that was excellent for catching birds in size from a thrush up to a partridge. In the 15<sup>th</sup> C, ladies had seals engraved showing them with a falcon on their gauntlet. She was an ardent practitioner of falconry which was the sport of both sexes, but Merlin hawking was a feminine speciality because it used small graceful falcons which did not require the more demanding role of peregrines and gyrfalcons. The books attention to detail and hunting vocabulary prove that Dame Juliana was more than just a late 15th C sports writer but a devoted hawking enthusiast herself.

Medieval society was divided into two classes: the aristocracy and the commoners. Since the duties and responsibilities differed for these two classes it is evident that the pastimes and physical activities would differ for the women of the classes as well. Women of commoner class did not practice falconry but had to contend with a far more menial life that was sharply focused on the elements of day to day living

and far removed from the life of an aristocratic woman. Noble women's indulgences were reflections of the men who trained as knights and needed to show their skills with archery, swordsmanship, riding horses, hawking and hunting. Women also became very adept at archery, horse riding, and hunting and in particular falconry.

The Tudor and Stuart Monarchs were particularly devoted to falconry. **Henry VIII** flew every kind of hawk and from his passion for the sport his daughter **Elizabeth I** was also a keen falconer as indeed was her cousin, the ill fated **Mary Queen of Scots**. During Mary's long period of House arrest she was often to be found (under escort) flying her Merlins, at snipe and larks. Both she and **Lady Berkley** were devotees of the sport an aspect of life she took great comfort in.

Under the Tudors it was common to present hawks to the king or queen as gifts. A well trained falcon was a bird of great value and was the finest present that could be made to a lady by anyone who had received a favour from the court and needed to show their appreciation.

So important was falconry to English society that one could rarely walk down the streets of Medieval England without seeing someone with his or her falcons on the fist. People took their favourite hawk everywhere. They were particularly popular amongst the clergy and nuns were frequently seen with their falcon on their glove. Couples were even married with falcons on their fist and a lady was advised by her hus-





band to take her falcon everywhere with her so that it would become accustomed to people. Following a falcon in flight took stamina and agility and was considered healthy, mentally stimulating, and aesthetically satisfying. Proficiency in hawking was considered a necessary accomplishment for a gentleman and an acceptable goal for a lady.

Magnificent displays of high flying falcons enhanced aristocratic dignity both on the Continent and in England. Falconry served like jousting to distinguish the old wealth from the nouveau riche. **James Strutt of England** wrote, "The ladies not only accompanied the gentlemen in pursuit of the diversion [falconry], but

often practiced it by themselves; and even excelled the men in knowledge and exercise of the art."

By the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> C the sport was beginning to decline in importance and popularity. However the basic skills did not change and the old books could be reprinted which served as good teaching guides and manuals. The advent of the firearm was quickly taking over and the sport of falconry would fall into decline no longer with such mass appeal.

Greater prosperity meant that choices multiplied. By the 18<sup>th</sup> C those that could afford property could choose between many diverse options for leisure, including foreign travel, gambling and accumulation of wealth and possessions. This greater prosperity fundamentally altered the amount of time available for one specific pursuit. Field sports remained a primary form of recreation but falconry had to compete with more alternatives when innovation and environmental changes made it harder to pursue, whilst its previous noble status became less relevant to the ruling classes.

Falconry became a pastoral pursuit of the wealthy professional class and was practiced on a far smaller scale right across Europe. During that period there were far fewer women practitioners. After the Second World War it had slumped to an all time low.

A renewed interest in rural pursuits, coupled with greater freedom for the emerging middle class, was to spark a revival in Western falcon-



ry and that element was to see the emergence once more of women in falconry. A post-war enlightened lifestyle, meant that it was once more becoming easier to indulge in hawking and falconry, and this improvement was brought about by the impact of captive breeding which benefitted both women and men falconers worldwide.

Today women are to be seen in every aspect of traditional and commercial falconry.

As woman have become empowered with the time and means to train and maintain falcons for both game and rook hawking, or goshawks and Harris hawks for fur and feather, it is apparent that this passion for the sport has to be weighed against our very busy daily lives. It is also very interesting to note that falconry has contributed skills for many diverse aspects that owe their existence to being a falconer.

## **Education**

Women for centuries have had a sustained input into falconry that has by and large been recorded as an attachment to men's falconry. Not surprisingly, during the second half of the 20th C, the enlightened approach to recreational lifestyles, allowed far more women to resume their interest in all field sports. Falconry became so much more accessible and was eagerly taken up by an increasing number of women across the continent and UK.

The UK witnessed the emergence of many new falconry clubs with a flourish of women members. With the newly established captive breed-

ing programs, a growing number of women falconers found a new vocation, for whom the concept of being in a caring/ rearing environment held great appeal.

Practical falconry now frequently saw women falconers out in the field with their goshawks, or merlins or peregrines. Perhaps, in that aspect, little has changed over the centuries, just that today's modern woman has the freedom and time to pursue her love of hunting falcons and hawks without the social barriers that had previously been in place.

Education in field sports is often ignored by the vast expanding urban population. However, the concept of learning about falconry in Primary school has had a positive effect when falcons and hawks are brought into the classroom to talk about the natural world. In the UK we have an active full time team led by a woman falconer who have had great success in introducing children to wildlife and what better way than having falconry as the point of reference. With its well documented and detailed history, that has continued to span the centuries, the fascination of a trained hunting hawk or falcon and inquisitive young minds, is very much the catalyst for future falconry.

## **Personal review**

I emerged through the early 70's enthralled by the sight of a kestrel taking a sparrow in front of me. A compulsion to own him and see him fly for me was overwhelming. I had seen one other occasion of a hawk being flown and I guess that idea had really struck a chord with me. Falconry was then, a very male orientated field sport, and was practiced by a small number of falconers throughout the UK.

During my early career I flew a female Finnish goshawk that I had the pleasure of for the next 10 yrs. I was very fortunate to have very good hawking ground which was in fact near to the school I was teaching in. Such a distraction. I could see the hawking opportunities right outside my classroom window. The goshawk and I spent every available weekend out hawking and she became adept at all forms of quarry. I became totally gripped and fanatical.

The falconry manuals of the time talked about the great moments of flying falcons and I wanted to experience this too. I had become very involved with Gundogs and field trials and my dogs accompanied me in the field with the goshawk, providing us both with some dramatic and brilliant set-ups that only come with that good combination of dog and hawk. Falcons were extremely difficult to obtain and peregrines were a total rarity. The impact of DDT had made the wild take of these falcons out of reach.

I knew that captive breeding was being pioneered in the USA and in 1979 went across to France to learn with American specialist Steve Baptiste who had been sent there by Cornell University to assist the French Falconry club in specialist skills of artificial insemination. This at the time was by far the only route one could take if there was to be any hope of obtaining a peregrine falcon to fly and I was willing to gamble that I could master these techniques.

On my return I was given the opportunity to put these skills to good use in a breeding facility that had several peregrines, sakers and Prairie falcons none of which bred naturally. The first season produced 2 sakers. The second season saw the emergence of two young peregrines. I had also acquired an imprint Prairie female and by the time she was 3 yrs. old was to produce the first peregrine x prairie hybrids produced in the UK. These hybrids were liberating. Not only by the fact that they proved su-

perb game hawks but they gave many of my falconer friends a chance to have a high powered falcon which were still otherwise impossible to obtain. These falcons were very successful, to which other emerging breeders saw the potential and the per x prairie was the falcon of choice for so many falconers for the next decade.

My teaching career eventually came to a halt as I became very involved with producing different species of falcons and moved into the category of falcon breeder. The falcons that were selected to fly were almost exclusively flown at Red grouse. Whilst the per x prairie had been the hawk of choice, she did have a few shortcomings, one of them being that damp rainy weather hampered her flying, which peregrines coped with ease. There was a gradual return to a licensed take of 5 wild peregrines per. year and during this period I was the first woman to be granted a licence to take a wild peregrine. That in itself was an amazing experience and confirmed my obsessional pursuit of falconry.

As captive breeding began to take hold and falcons were becoming more readily available I initiated a falconry Academy. I felt the ease with which one could obtain a hawk or falcon did not coincide with the person's experience. It was necessary to show would be falconers what was involved and from there they could make informed choices.

I worked for many years as Senior Aviculturist at *International Wildlife Consultants Ltd*; my role involved captive breeding, education, and related research. In December 2012 I retired to live with my family in Cornwall, where I breed a small number of falcons. I have been flying a merlin on Bodmin moor for the past 3 seasons, but this year is a gap year as I want to devote time to training a young pointer.

MARY ZEISS STANGE (USA)

## NORTH AMERICAN DIANAS: HUNTING FOR TRADITION

**Expert member of the US Delegation to CIC  
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Back in the early 1970s, whenever we were confronted with yet another set of readings chronicling the deep thoughts and bracing adventures of (mostly dead) men, my university classmates and I would joke somewhat ruefully that “Anonymous” must have been a woman. It required the concerted efforts of a generation of scholars in the evolving field of women’s studies to correct the skewed picture of literature and history with which we, like previous generations, had grown up: the picture, as feminist historian Gerda Lerner remarked<sup>[1]</sup>, in which history is a drama written, directed by, and starring men.

One might expect this to have been nowhere truer than in the history and traditions of North American hunting. After all, it was common knowledge, by the time feminism’s “Second Wave” was beginning to lap our cultural shores, that hunting was an overwhelmingly masculine activity. Men hunted, women gathered; they quested, we nested. Anthropologists championed the image of prehistoric hunters bringing home the bacon—or, more accurately, a nice hunk of wooly mammoth—for the women to cook, complemented with greens and tubers

gathered close to the home site. The world of the Pleistocene, in their rendering, looked in its social organization little different from the modern asphalt jungle. It was such a familiar picture, from the point of view of conventional gender expectations, that outdoor writer George Reiger could muse, as late as 1991 in an article on “Instinct and Reality” for *Field & Stream*, that he could not imagine why any girl or woman would really want to venture out into the “cold, wet realm in which ducks, dogs and certain males seem to thrive—unless, by sharing a blind, a girl might make her father proud, or a young lady might find a husband like her own duck-hunting dad.”<sup>[2]</sup>

Yet by the time Reiger was writing, times had decisively changed. Sisters had long since commenced “doing it for themselves” in a variety of fields once assumed to be exclusively male territory. By century’s end, the number of women entering the ranks of American hunters had trended dramatically upward, from about three to roughly ten percent of the total. Many of these women were overcoming considerable odds. Not only were they violating what in the minds of many, hunters and non-hunters alike, was a sort of gender taboo, they were doing it—as social psychologist Robert Jackson observed in his 1987 study of female Wisconsin deer hunters—without the guidance of any immedi-

ate female role models. "Their development as hunters," Jackson remarked, was "almost revolutionary."<sup>[3]</sup>

But only "almost," because these outdoorswomen were hardly doing anything new. While the hunting community has always been predominantly male, the "No Girls Allowed" sign only went up outside the average American hunting camp in the latter half of the twentieth century.

### Women Hunters, Then ...

There are two distinct traditions of Euro-American hunting in North America. (Native American hunting of course constitutes a third tradition, but one that falls outside the purview of this essay.) The first tradition dates from the earliest Colonial times through the period of westward expansion and the so-called "closing of the frontier" in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.



Throughout this history, which was essentially lived out in rural contexts, hunting was an essential part of the pioneer way of life. It was a matter of survival. Women's hunting figured prominently from the beginning in this pioneer tradition: homesteading women had to be as adept as men with long guns, able when necessary to fend for and defend themselves and their children. Firearms and hunting were a routine part of frontier life—sometimes more a part of it than were the menfolk themselves. A homesteading woman clearly needed a gun and a horse. A man—well, he was optional. A significant number of women homesteaded alone, or partnered with other women.<sup>[4]</sup> Rural women continued to hunt, for survival and for sport, into the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

A second American hunting tradition, dating back to Colonial times, conformed with customs brought over from Europe, where the sporting life was identified with the aristocracy. Translated to these shores, hunting and shooting came also to be seen as leisure pursuits of the “landed gentry;” and by and large as forms of recreation indulged in primarily by men. In more affluent social circles, concentrated in the Northeast and the South, women were only admitted to the “hunting fraternity” in the late 19<sup>th</sup>/early 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries. Hunting and shooting became acceptable pastimes for respectable young ladies. Courses in riflery (as well as archery) were common elements of the curricula at girls' schools and summer camps.

Arguably, this acceptance of the appropriateness of female involvement with guns and

hunting was a result of the First Wave of American feminism. (Not a few advocates of women's hunting and shooting were also proponents of women's right to vote.) But it was also, and perhaps more especially, because hunting itself was under attack due to the rise of market hunting and the resulting extinction of species like the passenger pigeon, and near-extinction of the American bison. Male proponents of the emerging idea of “fair chase” saw it to be to their advantage to popularize the idea of shooting and hunting by the fairer sex. A similar strategy had been used in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century in Great Britain, to redeem fox hunting from widespread public disapprobation, by foregrounding the participation of women. Throughout the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, outdoorswomen were featured in North American hunting magazines, sometimes on the cover and sometimes as authors, as well as in advertisements for hunting gear and guns<sup>[5]</sup>. Across the country, and across social and economic lines, women were solidly there, in the American hunting picture, down through the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century.

And then, suddenly, they weren't. Women and girls disappeared from the hunting field around the same time Rosie the Riveter did from the factory, and for approximately the same reasons. The post-World War II period witnessed a very conservative restructuring of American middle-class society, with women's place being in the home, and men's in the outside world. Hunting was defined as both a male prerogative and a rite of male initiation. Manhood was passed down, along with cherished rifles and shotguns, from one male generation to the next.

Although some of their rural and working-class counterparts continued the hunting tradition of their pioneer forbears, most middle and upper class women and girls were at this point effectively banned from hunting camp. To complete the picture, hunting was portrayed both as man's "back-to-nature" escape from the work-a-day world and as an activity that women did not enjoy. By and large, American women, living in an increasingly urban and suburban culture, bought into the idea that hunting was not for them.

And then, roughly a quarter-century ago, things began to change. Owing to factors as various as the women's liberation movement and the increased entrance of women into previously male-dominated occupations, female hunter numbers began to rise. The trend continues today, as the number of American women and girls taking up the hunting and shooting sports is clearly, and consistently, growing. This growth in numbers has been verified over the past several years by various independent sources: the US Fish & Wildlife Service, the National Sporting Goods Association, Southwick Associates, and Responsive Management. The numbers are tweaked differently, but the trend is clear.

### Women's Hunting, Now ...

Women's increased enthusiasm for hunting became a subject of great interest in the North American outdoor community around the turn of the 21st century. As one hunting publication put it, "It's all about the Ladies" now. A generation of women had successfully fought for Equal

Opportunity, Title IX, and kindred legislation that aimed to level the playing field between women and men. And they had more disposable income to show for it. Their daughters have grown up with distinctly different expectations about what life has to offer. Hence the appeal of an activity like hunting: Why should men and boys have all the fun?

Simultaneously, and not unlike a hundred years earlier, the presence of women in the hunting community has made for good public relations for hunting in general: female hunters challenge the stereotype of the "macho" male in ways that are important at a time when surveys persistently show that while a majority of Americans approve of hunting, they disapprove of hunters. Much of this disapproval over the past couple of decades was fueled by the animal rights movement, with its Disney-like view of the natural world. The hunter became a villain in an idealized drama of life in the wild.

It must be admitted that there has been some validity to public disapproval of hunter behavior. Just as it has been established that proportionally more women than men seek firearms safety training, growing evidence also suggests that women, as a group, tend to approach hunting more ethically and with perhaps more environmental awareness and concern than do men, as a group. This—coupled with the obvious fact of an aging male hunting population—led by the mid-1990s to the idea that women might in fact be "the future of hunting." Publications like *Outdoor Life and Bugle* (the magazine of the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation)

established women's departments. Splashy stories about women's hunting—many of them authored by women—appeared in *Sports Afield*, *Field & Stream*, *Shooting Sportsman* and NSSF's trade publication *SHOT Business*. The mainstream media were picking up on the theme as well, with articles featuring female hunters appearing in venues like *The New York Times*, *USA Today*, and around the country in Associated Press reports<sup>[7]</sup>. The feminist press was not deaf to the clarion call of female hunting. In 1999, Ms. Magazine published a cover story, "She Got Game," focusing on women's hunting and gun use more generally<sup>[8]</sup>.

This trend has continued into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Women are now beginning to appear on the covers of sporting publications, like *Shooting Sportsman*, *Field & Stream*, *Hunting*, and *Sporting Classics*, covers that would have been unimaginable a few years earlier<sup>[9]</sup>. The mainstream media are following suit. Suggestive of the breadth of public interest, *National Geographic* ran a major cover story on women taking up hunting in November 2013, and *Aljazeera America* did likewise in February 2015<sup>[10]</sup>. The question posed on one of those *Shooting Sportsman* covers—"Are Women the Future of Hunting?"—is looking ever more reasonable to ask.

But before we go "back to the future," what more exactly do we know about the present? Reckoning the precise number of American women afield today is an inexact science at best, since several states do not specify gender on hunting licenses, and even states that do often neglect to track that information. But according to figures released by the National

Shooting Sports Foundation in 1995, between 1988 and 1993 the number of women hunting with firearms in the US increased by 23%, with women accounting for roughly 9 to 10% of hunters in the US, a percentage that appears to have remained fairly consistent since then. According to the US Fish and Wildlife Service, in 2006 there were approximately 1.2 million female hunters in the US. However, the National Sporting Goods Association puts the figure at 2.5 million women hunters over the age of 18, with another roughly half-million between the ages of 7 and 17, amounting to a 41% increase between 2001 and 2011. However you crunch the numbers, the female hunting population has essentially doubled in the last twenty years. And the pace of women's entering the hunting community—it is no longer a "fraternity"—is, in the past few years, actually accelerating. Some of these women are "newbies." Another, and apparently growing, group are women who hunted in the past, gave it up for a variety of reasons, and are now re-entering the hunting and shooting world.

Who are these women? The six US states with the highest percentages of women hunters are, not surprisingly, also states with predominantly rural populations: Wyoming and Montana (states where one in five hunters is female), Wisconsin, Arkansas, Minnesota and Texas. Conventionally, these female hunters are, as sociologist Thomas Heberlein puts it, "produced by male hunters." That is, women tend to be initiated into hunting by significant men in their lives. Heberlein sees this as a potential problem, because decreasing numbers of male

hunters will mean “fewer males to socialize [women] into hunting.” However other studies suggest that the socialization can just as readily be carried out by female-friendly hunting skills workshops, most notably the Becoming an Outdoors-Woman (BOW) Program, founded in 1991 and currently operating in 49 states, 5 Canadian provinces and New Zealand. Over 250,000 women have participated in one or more BOW workshops. They tend to be college-educated, more urban, of moderate to high household income, and in the 35-55 age range. One interesting gender difference between male and female hunters in the US is that while hunting seems to decline among men as their education level rises, among females college-educated women are just as likely to hunt as are women with less, or different, formal education.

Gun makers and manufacturers of hunting gear and clothing have taken note. A generation ago, a woman seeking hunting clothes had very few options, the most common of which was too often, “Try looking in the boys’ department.” Nowadays, she will be able to find a range of good quality hunting apparel in women’s sizes, and in a variety of price ranges. Similarly, twenty years ago a woman venturing into the gun department of a sporting goods store—a daunting experience at best back then, if she was unaccompanied by a man—would be directed to a dismal display of “ladies’ and youth’s guns,” most of which were at the lowest end of the scale in both price and quality. Today, women are far more likely to be well-treated by the (still mostly) men behind the gun counter, both salespersons and gun smiths, and to be

able to find the right hunting rifle or shotgun, at the right price. Additionally, a growing number of gun makers are bringing out rifles and shotguns designed especially for women, and customizing is increasingly available.

### Women’s Hunting, The Future ...

All the above said, are American women motivated to hunt in the same ways as are men? Conventionally, the answer to that question has been, “yes.” Up until fairly recently, women and men cited much the same reasons for their hunting: a break from routine, being with family and friends, getting in touch with nature, getting good exercise, and developing outdoor skills. The only areas where the genders diverged significantly were hunting for trophies, and for the competition—in both of which, not surprisingly given social conditioning, men outnumbered women.

However, the most recent data regarding gendered attitudes toward hunting motivation paint a decisively different picture. Surveys compiled by Mark Damian Duda’s Responsive Management in 2013 showed a major shift. Hunters, male and female, were questioned as to a number of standard motivations for their hunting: for the meat, for a trophy, to be with family and friends, for the sport and recreation, to be close to nature. Men’s primary hunting motivations were spread pretty evenly over three categories: for the sport and recreation (35%), to be with friends and family (27%), and for the meat (27%). By sharp contrast, women’s primary reason for hunting was for the meat—

over half, 55%, cited that as “the most important reason” they had hunted in the past year. “To be with friends and family” came in a distant second at 27%.

Now, “meat-hunting” used to be denigrated, in both the popular hunting press, which emphasized the sport of hunting, and in more academically oriented works on hunting, which in one way or another sought a philosophical underpinning to that sport<sup>[11]</sup>. Perhaps the phrase smacked too much of subsistence or a hunter/scavenger lifestyle; this certainly would explain the shunning of mere “meat-hunting” in classist terms. But the idea of hunting for meat has taken on a new relevance—both practical and philosophical—in 21<sup>st</sup> Century America. Those women, along with a certain segment of the male population, who say they hunt primarily for the meat are hunting for the most basic of reasons: to put good, high quality food on the table. Issues of food safety and food security figure in here, along with a growing concern for environmental sustainability, and the trend toward locavorism and growing your own food. The venison in one’s freezer is directly linked to the heirloom tomato in the garden.

That women are more likely than men to draw the connection between sustenance and sustainability is hardly surprising. American women, despite the feminist movement, continue to do the bulk of household work and to be primarily responsible for cleaning up after other people, as nurses, home health aides, nannies, housekeepers, chambermaids, and so on. They are also more at risk of birth defects and a va-

riety of cancers, owing to toxins in the environment. For them, the question of working for a cleaner, more livable environment is a matter of solving concrete problems, not framing theoretical arguments. And one of those problems is how to put good quality food on the table. A 12-gauge or a .30/06 is, really, a very practical, non-theoretical answer to that question.

In this regard, promoting women as the face of American hunting is good for hunting in general. Female hunters are “in” right now, and this is very good advertising for hunting among the non-hunting population. Women can do an excellent job of modeling hunting for a general public that tends to be squeamish about where meat actually comes from. Female hunters tend to find it pretty easy to be green, in both theory and practice. At the same time, they are not hesitant to talk about the thornier side of the life/death cycle in which we all participate. It is, after all, female hunters who have had to reckon with the fact that the same hand that rocks the cradle may well have blood under its fingernails, and be adept at firing a kill-shot with a .270 Winchester.

Thus, when a woman hunter patiently explains that, as much as it can hurt to see an animal die and to know you are the cause, a well-placed bullet is infinitely more humane and ethically defensible than what happens to animals, as well as to (the mostly female) human workers in meat-processing facilities, then persons concerned about the abuses of the meat industry must see our human stake in hunting differently. When she further explains that she

hunts because that way she is confident about the additive-free meat she is feeding her family, nonhunting environmentalists concerned about factory farms and feedlots are forced to see hunting differently. And when she talks about taking her children hunting because they learn more about nature that way than by watching television, and because it provides better exercise than playing computer games, other mothers—and fathers, too—are bound to see her hunting in a different light. All of which adds up to a powerful platform for nature education in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

## Notes

Portions of this essay appeared in a different form in “A Big Bang for ‘the Little Woman’: *Firearms and Feminism in Contemporary America*,” in *Guns and Contemporary Society: The Past, Present, and Future of Firearms and Firearm Policy*, Volume 2, *Cultural Issues Related to Firearms in the United States*. Edited by Glenn H. Utter, (Praeger imprint of ABC-CLIO, 2015).

[1] See Gerda Lerner, *The Creation of Patriarchy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 12-13.

[2] George Reiger, “Instinct and Reality,” *Field and Stream* (September 1991), 12-15.

[3] Robert M. Jackson, “The Characteristic and Formative Experiences of Female Deer Hunters,” *Women in Natural Resources* 9:3 (1987), 17-21.

[4] On homesteading in general, see Walter Nugent, *Into the West: The Story of Its People* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1999) and Robert V. Hine and John Mack Faragher’s *Frontiers: A Short History of the American West* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2007). On women homesteaders more particularly, see H. Elaine Lindgren, *Land In Her Own Name: Women as Homesteaders in North Dakota* (Norman and London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1996); Susan Armitage and Elizabeth

Jameson, *The Women’s West* (Norman and London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987); Sandra L. Myres, *Western Women* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1982); and Barbara Handy-Marchello, *Women of the Northern Plains: Gender & Settlement on the Homestead Frontier 1870-1930* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2005).

[5] Nancy Floyd has some excellent examples of graphics from the period in *She’s Got a Gun*.

[6] See John G. Mitchell, *The Hunt* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1980, a more or less definitive work on this theme.

[7] “A-Hunting She Will Go,” feature by James Barron, *The New York Times* (November 27, 1997), Metro Section B1, B7; also appeared in the National Edition; “Fostering Sport’s Popularity,” Sports People feature, *USA Today* (November 29, 1997), 3C; Associated Press feature about increased numbers of women hunters, by Dianne Henk, carried on the national AP wire and run by numerous papers nationally, the last week of November, 1997. See, e.g. “Women Now Make Up 12 Percent of Nation’s Hunters,” *The Sunday Gazette* [Schenectady, NY] (November 30, 1997), B4; “Women Are Taking a Shot at Hunting,” *New York Post* (December 3, 1997), 31.

[8] “She Got Game,” interview of Mary Zeiss Stange by Barbara Ehrenreich, *Ms.* (June/July 1999), 64-71.

[9] Indeed, a forward-thinking friend and colleague who was then editing a hunting newsletter, in the late 1970s wrote to *Field & Stream* suggesting they should put a woman on the cover. Their Gun Editor at the time responded that a woman on the cover of an outdoors magazine would be “the kiss of death.”

[10] Kristen Schmitt, “More Women Give hunting a Shot,” *National Geographic*, November 2013; Richard Grant, *Hunting is for Girls*,” *Alkazeera America*, February 2015.

[11] See, for example in this regard, the work of Stephen Kellert.

DIANNE MOLLER (USA)

## WOMEN & NORTH AMERICAN FALCONRY

Falconry is the sport of taking wild game in partnership with a wild bird of prey. It is a time-honored traditional hunting method that dates back to the very beginning of recorded human history. Falconry is the most highly regulated hunting activity in the United States, requiring a State and in some cases an additional Federal permit (in addition to local hunting licenses). All new (apprentice) falconers must serve a minimum two-year apprenticeship period under the supervision and guidance of a licensed and experienced falconer.

Falconry is non-competitive and has been scientifically proven to have no biological impact on the wild population. Some of the most common birds used in falconry include the red-tailed hawk, Harris' hawk, goshawk, peregrine falcon and gyrfalcon. However, some falconers hunt with birds such as the American Kestrel, the smallest North American falcon; or the golden eagle, our largest falconry bird.

Founded in 1961, the **North American Falconers Association** (NAFA) was established to encourage the proper practice of the sport of falconry and the wise use and conservation of birds of prey. From a handful of members in its early years, NAFA has grown to a membership of about 2,000 members and is now one of the largest falconry organizations in the world. Though founded principally to represent the interests of North American falconers, NAFA

gladly accepts members from all countries who share in our passion of birds of prey and falconry. Today, falconry is practiced by an estimated 5,000 men and women throughout the United States. It is estimated the number of women practicing today is about 15% of that population, and this number continues to increase.

Society and culture have often catered to the successes of male role models in sports; however women have been participating in sports since the first Olympics in 776 B.C. Initially they were not allowed to engage with the men so they organized their own games. It wasn't until the latter half of the 20th century that women's participation in sports became more recognized and accepted in modern society. In recent decades, society has become less defining of roles for men and women in sports, careers and raising children. The advent of social media now allows beginning falconers to network easily with experienced falconers. There are hundreds of females who are dedicated, passionate individuals making positive contributions to the sport and helping make falconry what it is today.

The first female falconers came from a generation in which women, for the most part, did not hunt. Falconry books were sparse and there was no video or internet from which to obtain information about the sport.

The following are a few of the first women to open doors to falconry for women today:

### **Frances Hamerstrom (1908-1998)**

Frances Hamerstrom was the first known and one of the most influential female falconers in her day. She left the life of a wealthy debutant to follow her insatiable curiosity and intense wonder about the natural world. When Frances was 12 years old she flew her first bird, an American kestrel. Ultimately she hawked with, and was visited by, falconers from around the world. Her name appears on the first lists of North American falconers in 1942 and was the first woman to serve on the NAFA board in 1962. Frances served as Chairman of NAFA's Legal Committee in the 1960s and was instrumental in the efforts to get falconry recognized as a legal hunting sport on the federal level. She set aside her personal falconry practice for five years during this period to devote her energy to the effort to legalize falconry. Fortunately, Frances lived to see the culmination of those efforts with the legalization of falconry in all 49 of the continental states.



### **Linda Lee (1947-1991)**

An internationally known expert on birds of prey and a passionate artist from Pennsylvania, Linda Lee became the first female NAFA meet artist in 1981, when she created the third field meet print. Linda's art can be found in public and private collections as diverse as the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colorado and the government of the United Arab Emirates.

### **Lynn R. Straight, PhD. (1938-2004)**

Dr. Lynn Straight was raised in Washington and earned a master's degree in English Literature and her doctorate in Education Administration. She began her falconry career with red-tailed hawks and later followed her passion flying hacked peregrines with her German short-haired pointers.

She eventually settled in California and was a major contributor to the California Hawking Club, the largest state falconry club in the U.S.



Lynn served as CHC president, possibly the first female to serve in this capacity in any state club, and produced the video *The Lure of Falconry*, which NAFA rated as the best beginner video available. Lynn also served as editor for the CHC Apprentice Study Guide, one of the first and most utilized study guides today.

### **Teddy Moritz**

Teddy Moritz became interested in falconry as a young woman in 1963. She became the first woman accepted in the School of Forestry at WVU majoring in Wildlife Management. Together with her husband Carl, they founded the New Jersey Raptor Association in order to bring together other people interested in birds of prey. Teddy initially struggled to find a sponsor, but through her persistence was able to find someone willing to help. She is an accomplished falconer and dachshund breeder and contributed to the success in getting falconry legalized in her state.



Many present day women go to great lengths to fly their birds balancing between family and careers. Some women have entered the sport by working in rehabilitation or being exposed to wildlife, while men often enter falconry through exposure to other types of hunting. Some enter the sport as teenagers, while others do so later in life. Some are influenced by parents or books, while others follow in the footsteps of female falconers of the past.

Some people believe women have an advantage because female falconers are able to embrace both their 'feminine' and 'masculine' sides and apply them to this sport. Women today are holding more positions in state, federal and international falconry organizations. They are joining the clubs in increasing numbers and sponsoring other women in falconry.

In the words of eagle falconer **Lauren McGough**, PhD.; "Falconry is a wonderful example of something that transcends age and gender, as Mongolia showed me. I can't help but think of the universality of the sport when someone like me, and a nomadic, elder Kazakh eagle hunter, with little else in common save a love of eagles, are able to have a common understanding, and a great time in the field flying together".

**Jennifer Coulson**, a notable falconer and breeder of Harris' hawks, said "Falconry is a challenging sport, one that requires a level of dedication few possess. Giving flight demonstrations is not falconry. Nor is a raptor striking down a pen-raised pheasant. Falconry is much harder and more complicated than that: it is hunting



and taking wild game with a trained raptor. In my mind, you aren't truly a falconer until your raptor is taking game on a regular basis".

Falconry for women can often be a different experience than it is for men. For most women, it's a special time with your bird, a family member or just your thoughts. A final thought from **Teddy Moritz**, "Falconry is not a sport of muscle and strength, the bird doesn't care if the handler is male or female. This is a sport open to anyone who has the ability to work with a falcon or hawk, that's the beauty part". Most people would agree there is a bright future for women in the sport of falconry.

*Dianne Moller, the author with her merlin*





# PROF. DR. RON YDENBERG SUMMARY OF OPENING ADDRESS

Adjunct Professor of Wildlife Management,  
Wageningen University  
and Director Centre for Wildlife Ecology,  
Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, Canada

The question addressed in this WaSH conference is whether and how the long-standing traditions of hunting and falconry can be combined with contemporary concerns of species protection, conservation and sustainability. Is this a matter of new wine in old skins? Or, is it more like architecture, in which fundamental structural considerations are able to find new and better expression with modern materials and methods?

There is a variety of opinion on this matter, but even if we accept that the latter is the majority view, there are a large number of subsidiary issues and questions to be resolved. The manner whereby these will eventually be resolved – if not necessarily the answers themselves – is given by the conference theme: education. Of course we refer to the training of children and youth, but there is more required.

There must also be ongoing education of ourselves as hunters, as participants in today's workshops, and as citizens, as well as an ongoing process of discussion of the social issues, and research on the biological questions. My work concerns the latter and I will briefly give a few examples. However, I will stress the point that the contemporary concerns of species protection, conservation and sustainability requires much more than research.

The symbols of the respective workgroups involved today, Diana and Artemis, are very apt. They were of course the Roman and Greek goddesses of the hunt, and also of wild animals, wilderness, child-birth, and virginity. The metaphor of a powerful female archer was undoubtedly very meaningful in its time. And it has endured. This heroine has found new and modern resonance in the form of Katniss Everdeen of The Hunger Games, who - not incidentally – is expert with a bow. In a similar way, the values and aspirations of Workgroup Artemis and Workgroup Diana will, in part by arranging events such as this conference, be able to develop new and better expression.



ANNELIES HENSTRA (THE NETHERLANDS)

## EVERY CHILD HAS THE RIGHT TO NATURE

IUCN is concerned about the increasing disconnection of children from nature. There is a significant decline in the quality and quantity of children's direct experience of the natural world.

This is the result of global developments such as urbanization, biodiversity loss and deforestation. Already fifty percent of the world population lives in cities. By 2050 this will be seventy percent according to predictions of the United Nations.

Research shows that the disconnection from nature has adverse consequences for both healthy child development ("nature deficit disorder") as well as for responsible stewardship for nature and the environment in the future.

Therefore, IUCN is of the opinion that connecting children with nature should be recognized and codified internationally as a human right for children. One of the ways to realize this right can be to convey the hunting tradition to children, provided this is done in the context of respect for nature and preservation of natural values.

### **IUCN's resolution *Child's Right to Connect with Nature***

Nature organizations and national governments united in the global organization International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) endorsed the right of every to connect with nature. IUCN is the world's oldest and largest union of nature organizations and forms a platform of more than 1200 nature organizations (for example WWF is a member organization) and 200 governments and governmental organizations. The World Conservation Congress of IUCN adopted the resolution "Child's Right to Connect with Nature and to a Healthy Environment" on 11 September 2012. As a result of the adopted resolution, there is now a broad international support for the right of the child to connect with nature and to a healthy environment. The resolution calls on IUCN's governmental and non-governmental organizations to promote and actively contribute to the international acknowledgement and codification of this right within the framework of the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (CRC), preferably in an additional protocol to the CRC.



*The resolution was submitted by Annelies Henstra, initiator and leader of the project Child's Right to Connect with Nature on behalf of the Nature College foundation.*

## LAURENS HOEDEMAKER (THE NETHERLANDS)

# THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST

Recent developments in the Netherlands have proved the importance of education for the future of hunting. In this case I refer to the simplest means of education: telling people why we hunt, what we do exactly, and how we do it.

The communication policies of the Royal Dutch Hunters Association in the past two decades focused on avoiding confrontation and reacting swiftly and soothingly if targeted. For example, when addressed in the field by people passing by hunters were advised to walk away in order to avoid conflict. The rationale for this approach lies in the 80's and early 90's, when anti-hunting activists were fiercely targeting hunters, often posing serious threats and sometimes using physical force.

However, as the time passed, hunting and hunters got themselves detached from public and political debate. We were unknown and - therefore - unloved. The absence of a hunter's perspective in the public debate left room for anti hunting campaigns, framing hunting as 'killing for pleasure'. Also, politicians were led to believe that a majority of the Dutch people were opposed to hunting.

In 2014 the Royal Dutch Hunters Association decided on a dramatic change in its approach. The hunters' story was recapitulated, and it was actively brought to the public, politicians and media. Not only by the Hunting Association and its award winning communication officers, but also by all individual hunters. In our philosophy, the best ambassador on hunting is the hunter him - (or her) self. The Association furthermore linked its story to trends in Dutch society like popularity of local and pure food.

The authentic, straightforward story of hunting and the hunter has found broad support in today's Dutch society. A large majority of Dutch people and politicians now support hunting. In fact, the new legislation on nature protection and hunting which passed in 2015 was amended in parliament, in support of hunting.

We as Dutch hunters, will keep on telling our stories. And in doing so we will increase support for hunting. We will engage in public debate on hunting morale and on the positive effects hunting has on biodiversity, animal welfare and nature in general.



**LAURENS HOEDEMAKER**  
*Director of the Royal Dutch Hunting Association and Vice President FACE for the Atlantic Region.*

*In 2014 the Royal Dutch Hunters Association decided on a dramatic change in its approach. The hunters' story was recapitulated, and it was actively brought to the public, politicians and media ...*

*In our philosophy, the best ambassador on hunting is the hunter himself ...*

MARINA LAMPRECHT (NAMIBIA)

## HUNTING FOR CONSERVATION & EDUCATION

Namibia is emphatically a pro-wildlife and wildlife-utilization country, and our Constitution is the first in the world to enshrine the sustainable use of living natural resources. We know that it is essential to utilize this land effectively for our people and our wildlife, and our hands-on experience has shown that the most beneficial form of rural land utilization is, indeed, trophy hunting.

In 1974, the Namibian Professional Hunting Association was established. NAPHA has become one of the most active and respected organizations of its kind in the world. Although it is a private organization, NAPHA works closely with the Ministry of Environment and Tourism. NAPHA members are expected to adhere to strict codes of ethics and guidelines that address hunting and habitat.

While many skimmers and trackers have superb hunting skills as well as a deep knowledge of fauna and flora, they are often unable to qualify as Hunting Professionals because they are illiterate or semi-literate. One of NAPHA's proudest achievements was our negotiation with MET to

allow verbal examinations. The high standard of the examination is not affected in any way, and the practical test remains the same. NAPHA created a preparatory course run by a veteran PH, and since its inception in 2001, more than 300 disadvantaged Namibians have qualified as Guides or PHs.

A NAPHA committee provides books, computers and even mattresses, etc., to rural schools. Since 2004, 22 schools received donations worth more than a million Namibia dollars. This does not include donations made to schools by hunting operations. Also, schools receiving support from NAPHA report an increase in pass rates resulting from greater motivation among both students and teachers.

Funding for these programs comes from donations from hunters as well as international hunting organizations such as Dallas Safari Club and SCI. NAPHA members believe that education is the most effective way to end the cycle of poverty. Many outfitters regularly donate meat from the hunt to augment the maize porridge supplied by the government and hunters are regarded

as generous. It is heart-warming to see the enthusiastic waves and bright smiles when driving past a rural school in a hunting truck.

Trophy hunting is one of the most sustainable and lucrative means of using rural land.

The biological, ecological and physiological advantages of supporting wild animals, and the value beyond meat and hide, makes trophy hunting a beneficial tool for conservation. Hunting employs more people at better salaries, with more training, skill recognition and promotion opportunities, than any other form of agricultural land utilization in our country.



*We know that it is essential to utilize this land effectively for our people and our wildlife, and our hands-on experience has shown that the most beneficial form of rural land utilization is, indeed, trophy hunting...*

*... Hunting employs more people at better salaries, with more training, skill recognition and promotion opportunities, than any other form of agricultural land utilization in our country.*

ELISABETH LEIX (GERMANY)

## FALCONRY, PARENTING AND CAREER

Falconry is the art of hunting and still practiced in the same style as when it began over 4,000 years ago. In 2010, it became recognized as an *Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity* by UNESCO resulting in a more appreciated perception by the public.

Falconry is very complex especially when at least three to four individuals have to cooperate, without verbal communication. This requires a high degree of discipline, empathy and a vast knowledge of every single detailed component in its entirety. Anyone who is involved with falconry will inevitably have to deal with the mental and physical side of both humans and animals. The knowledge learned is not only theoretical but must be consistently practiced daily.

Successfully hunting with a bird of prey requires initial training and following certain guidelines. To condition a raptor requires motivation and the falconer must always take into account the individual needs of each bird of prey. The same conditions are true when making a commitment in parenting or having a career. In falconry, we know what motivates a bird of prey, always keeping in mind

these birds are individuals. Just as it is the vast art of raising children we recognize this in the same degree to achieve a social well-educated person. To implement a task correctly and to receive an adequate reward, praise and recognition, increases the incentive and progress can be seen. Those who learn through positive motivation will succeed, whether this is a bird of prey, a child or an employee. They will quickly recognize that the success lies in their own hands and can inspire to excel in performance.

Therefore, it is not surprising that we have allowed our daughter to train a kestrel under our guidance, at the age of nine! The curiosity, the joy of victory and sense of responsibility, which is connected to this adventure, to deal daily with a bird of prey has left its mark on her life. She has learned to take responsibility and to act accordingly. Because she had an early influence and many experiences in nature, hunting and falconry, our daughter has been able to develop into a great person and not least because falconry had a positive influence thus on the grades in school. It was not only falconry but it was a huge significant contributing factor.

### **Elisabeth Leix, Deutscher Falkenorden**

I was born in 1963 in Germany / Bavaria / Franconia. I am married and we have one daughter. I grew up with two brothers on my Grandmother's farm in a small village near Nuremberg. My passion for hunting and falconry started at the young age of 12 years. At 18, I passed the hunter and falconer examination and in 1982 I became a member of the Deutscher Falkenorden (DFO). From 1989 until 1996 I lived in Poland. Today we are living in Bavaria near Austria and Switzerland. I am working in

an engineering office as a design engineer to develop device fixture constructions for testing parts for the automotive industry.

From 1985 till today I am involved with the peregrine release programs in Germany and Poland. Since 2002 I am elected as vice president to the Federal executive board of Deutscher Falkenorden. I am appointed 2000 as an examiner for falconry and 2008 for hunting examination. In 2012 I was appointed into the Womens Working Group of the International Falconry Association (IAF).



DR. HELI SIITARI (FINLAND)

## LOCAL EFFORT FOR CONSERVATION

### **Even abundant game species benefit from local effort for conservation – case Black Grouse in Finland.**

Black grouse (*Tetrao tetrix*) is still one of the numerous forest grouse species in taiga forest zone, and grouse hunting is one of the traditional and still very popular form of hunting in Finland. Black grouse gather on open arenas during the spring to fight for their position on the mating display places called leks. If the male age structure is not violated e.g. by hunting, normally only some old males are able to mate and young ones have to wait until they get older.

Moreover, it has been shown that the larger the lek the more attractive it will be for the females, which will disperse during their first year and settle for the breeding in one area for the rest of their life. Black grouse are lekking also during the autumn. The purpose of the autumn lek is to check the survived territory owners after the summer –the mortality of the males is the highest during the summer, and most of the territory turnovers may happen in the autumns. However, hunting season overlaps exactly with the autumn lek.

We have spread the information of black grouse ecology and behaviour and the importance of lek size (large enough) for several years now among hunters and decision makers.

Many hunting clubs have started to ban the hunting on autumn leks, and have achieved great results in increasing number of males on the lekking sites. Larger leks attract more females to the area for breeding, and young cohort is suitable for hunting. Although the species is highly abundant in Finland, still it pays to make local conservation actions to get better balance on the local population age structure and to improve hunting possibilities.

This is a great example of win-win situation for the local hunters and the species conservation.



INEKE SMETS (NEW ZEALAND)

## A BRIEF OUTLINE OF AN ANCIENT CULTURE IN A NEW COUNTRY

For many different countries falconry is very much a part of everyday life and has been practised for generations, making it an important part of that particular culture. However, for most New Zealanders falconry is a foreign and largely unknown practice that they may have heard about or seen briefly watching some terrible medieval film. As a country known worldwide for its excellent hunting and fishing it seems unusual that falconry isn't a bigger part of its history.

Being a young country, with a very recent history, means that falconry is a relatively new concept for New Zealand. The earliest record of raptors being used to hunt only dates back to the 1920's. It wasn't until the 1970's that the Raptor Association of New Zealand was formed and a small group of enthusiast practiced the sport of falconry. This soon changed when the legal status of the only available raptor, the Australasian harrier, went from unprotected to partially protected in the mid 1980's - suddenly it was no longer possible to practice falconry. It wasn't until 2010, with the help of key individuals and the formation of the New

Zealand Falconers Association, that falconry was officially legalized for the first time and could be practised once more.

Like many parts of the world however, New Zealanders are losing touch with nature, its processes and its importance. It is now these small groups, of dedicated and passionate individuals, including organisations such as the Wingspan National Bird of Prey Trust, that help educate and promote the importance of falconry.

They portray the importance of understanding wildlife, conservation and sustainability but most importantly link people back to nature. By targeting keen hunters, passionate naturalist and by captivating children there may be hope that people are reminded of what keeps them all alive – Mother Nature.

Falconry is an ancient and rewarding sport, and when we look back far enough it is a part of everyone's heritage. With it playing such an important part in sustainability, conservation and education, it is great to see that New Zealand is now also part of the world's falconry community.



## JANNEKE EIGEMAN (THE NETHERLANDS)

# IT START WITH WHY

Started working at the Royal Dutch Hunters Association at the end of 2013 I was surprised by the defensive attitude of both colleagues as well as our members. I couldn't understand why they chose to spend their time on complaining about their opponents, rather than explaining to their friends and neighbours why they choose to be a hunter. More about the history of this in Laurens Hoedemaker's summary.

I was convinced that part of the opposition in society was built on ignorance. People didn't know about all the different duties hunters have to fulfil. Neither did they know about all the different activities hunters carry out. How will you be able to build a positive attitude towards hunters when you are not informed? I considered our members to be the main ambassadors, they should tell about that! But I considered it our responsibility to provide them with the sincere, authentic and time-independent story.

In my role as Manager Communications I started working on this story. The theory of the golden circles, made by management guru Simon Sinek,

was leading. He states that successful brands tell people why they do things, unsuccessful brands tell people what they do!

By interviewing all kind of different hunters as well as stakeholders we gathered the pieces of our story. Once realised we started to carry this out in many different ways. With success. In my workshop I'll tell you about the challenges and successes we've encountered in this process.

**Janneke Eigeman of the Royal Dutch Association Hunter's Association was elected for the Dutch national Communication award of 2015.**

**Eigeman wins the prestigious communication price for her inspiring and thorough approach to improve the image of the hunters' association.**

**The jury praised Eigeman because of her credibility while she inspires and involves people. She has achieved big results with limited resources**



CATHERINE E. SEMCER (USA)

## THE POWER OF THE FEMININE: AMPLIFYING WOMEN'S VOICES IN THE DEBATE ON HUNTING.

Research shows that women are more likely than men to be persuaded into anti-hunting positions and to participate in anti-hunting activism. For this reason it is critical that women who hunt lead and expand outreach efforts to non-hunting women and convince them of hunting's utility to the conservation of wildlife.

Achieving this requires pursuing a coordinated strategy that takes into account existing public attitudes towards hunting and wildlife conservation and the motives and methodologies of animal rights extremists.

This presentation and workshop will review what is known about all of these elements within the *post-Cecil* environment, how they are impacting sustainable hunting programs and begin the process of developing a women-led campaign to persuade women to reject calls to end or create unwarranted restrictions on hunting worldwide.





NICOLA DIXON (UK)

## SCHOOL LINKS PROGRAMME

### **Using falcon conservation and falconry to establish international links between schools.**

International school links can have a positive effect on students and schools generating enthusiasm for learning and inspiring a desire for a positive change locally and globally. Students learn to appreciate diversity and respect for others and the way they live. Embedding international learning into a classroom is key to deepening a student's understanding and respect for the world around them.

Falcon conservation is a global issue that provides a good foundation for curriculum development in science and humanities. Falconry is a widespread and culturally important practice incorporating aspects of heritage, history, literature and science. This makes falconry an ideal subject for an education programme and school link, as it represents a common theme that cuts across a diverse range of cultures.

The School Links Programme (SLP) is an initiative of the Environment Agency-Abu Dhabi, inspired

by the cultural importance of falconry in the UAE and established in 2011 as part of a conservation and wildlife management project targeted at Saker Falcons in Mongolia. In 2010, 5000 artificial nests were erected on the Mongolian steppe to increase the numbers of this endangered falcon species and create a breeding population that could be easily monitored.

The primary aim of the SLP was to increase local understanding of the Saker Falcon conservation project in the 20 districts where it was being implemented. We linked local Mongolian schools with international schools and a unit of work was written to introduce students to falconry and the sustainable use of falcons for falconry. Presently there are 43 schools actively involved from the Middle East, Europe, North America, Africa and Asia.

The SLP provides educational resources, in multiple languages, using falcon conservation and falconry topics in units of work related to biology, ecology, conservation, history, literature and cultural heritage that can be easily slotted into

the curriculum. Each unit of work is designed to encourage students to seek further information on a specific topic and contains a PowerPoint, student worksheet and activity to aid understanding. Students can access the resources independently from the project website or units of work can be delivered to a class or small group by a teacher, falconer or raptor biologist. Many schools run the SLP as a lunchtime club, with students deciding which unit of work they access. The ancient art of falconry and local falconry heritage is covered along with resources on electrocution of birds of prey, migration of Peregrines, raptors and ecosystems and falcon reintroduction.

Student communication is important for a successful school link. Partnered schools are encouraged to deliver the same unit of work at the same time where possible as this can provide a common theme for interaction between link schools. All schools select students to exchange pen-pal letters, photographs, artwork and written presentations. The programme also provides a closed, multi-lingual chat room, available through the website and accessible only during school time. This is password protected and provides students with a safe way to communicate with their link school daily if they choose. Participation in the SLP is free to all schools

and coordinated in the UK and Mongolia. The SLP is supported by a dedicated website [www.schoollinksprogramme.org](http://www.schoollinksprogramme.org) and open and closed Facebook pages where children and teachers can communicate, share good practice and culture using falconry and raptor conservation as a shared theme.



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The Falconry Heritage Trust