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Dr Zubair Medammal with a falcon during his visit to Kuwait

Indian falconologist finds recognition in Kuwait

By [Kuwait Times](#) • May 21, 2016 | 07:40 A.M EDT



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Dr Zubair Medammal with a falcon during his visit to Kuwait

KUWAIT: An Indian academic passionate about falconry has carved a niche for himself in Kuwait where falcons enjoy a proud place in Arab national heritage. Zubair Medammal, an enthusiastic falconologist from Kerala, has not only established himself in the vocation and done research on the subject but has also shot a documentary on the rare species of bird in the Gulf. Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Faisal Al- Hamoud Al- Malek Al-Sabah released the falcon documentary in Kuwait.

The documentary covers all relevant information about various species of this prized bird and their characteristic features as well as about falconry, with subtitles such as food and feeding habits, breeding, molting, health and healthcare of falcons, management of falcons in captivity, vocalization, falconry in traditional ways as well as modern falconry, training and taming methods, special features of falcons etc. The 30-minute documentary is in Arabic and English languages. “I was fully aware of the difficulties involved in the mission that I had undertaken. Since falcons fly and live at great heights, it is very difficult to watch their movements and observe their behavior,” said Dr Medammal. Medammal made a sonogram of 15 different vocalizations of various species of the raptor.

The falconologist is also looking for a publisher for his book titled “Biology and Behavior of Falcons” which portrays his painstaking and tedious six years of research work on falcons. “The book covers everything on falcons with an emphasis on the breeding and healthcare of the Peregrine/Shaaheen. The book, in English and Arabic, is an important study material and could be introduced in the syllabus of schools, colleges and universities in the Middle East region,” he suggested. Medammal’s doctoral research topic was “Biology and behavior of falcons with emphasis on breeding and healthcare in captivity.” He obtained a doctorate degree from the University of Calicut in the southern Indian state of Kerala in 2004, where he is currently working as assistant professor of zoology.

He is also the only one who has recorded and made sonogram of 15 different vocalizations of various species of falcons. After having seen different species of falcons and the method of maintaining them at the

Sheikh Zayed Falcon Research Center, in the UAE, he opted to be an independent falconologist. Perceiving it as a challenge, he studied and trained in falconry (including artificial breeding) in Germany. Medammal had visited Kuwait Falcon Hospital. Zubair said the shooting of his documentary film on falcons in the Gulf region was completed.

The shooting covered all the GCC countries like Kuwait, the UAE, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Oman. “I want to raise awareness about falconry among people in the Gulf countries in addition to India where 100,000 DVDs of the documentary will be distributed to students at free of charge,” Zubair told. Falconry is considered a rich heritage and the bird is a status symbol among in Arab tribes in Kuwait and other Gulf countries.

It is the only bird that has a passport with a microchip embedded that enables it to travel across the region except Oman. Medammal is the first non-Arab to be granted membership in the Emirates Falconers Club. He was also honored with the Pravasi Award for outstanding research in foreign countries presented by the government of Kerala, and India’s National Award ‘JC International’ as an outstanding young personality. Apart from the Gulf countries, Medammal also visited Germany, China, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Iran, besides spending months in the Silent Valley hills along the Western Ghats in Kerala as part of his research work.

By Sajeev K Peter

May 21, 2016 07:40 AM



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