

The Natal Falconry Club
Rules, Regulations

DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of these Rules and Regulations:-

MEMBER – Shall mean any member of the Natal Falconry Club whether he be an Ordinary, Honorary, Associate or Junior member

CLUB – Shall mean the Natal Falconry Club

COMMITTEE – Shall mean the Committee of the Club

ORDINANCE – Shall mean the Natal Ordinance No. 15 of 1974, as amended from time to time, including the regulations framed there under as also any other law lawfully promulgated in substitution thereof. (Shortly Amended)

BOARD – Refers to Kwazulu-Natal Nature Conservation Board (trading as eKZNW)

HAWK – Shall mean any diurnal Raptor

CLUB HAWK – Any hawk acquired through the Board annual permit or a non permit hawk held under permit and then allocated to a member for falconry or breeding purposes.

BREEDING HAWK – A hawk acquired on club permit which, after due committee discussion, consultation and approval by the Board, is used to breed hawks.

SPECIAL PERMIT HAWK – A hawk not included on the Board's Annual Permit but for which special application is made to the Board to acquire for falconry and or breeding purposes by the Club.

PRIVATE HAWK – A non-club hawk (privately owned) which has been acquired legally as a gift, exchanged, purchased or privately bred. The acquisition of such a hawk by a member shall conform to the Club grading requirements and the Committee must be informed by the member wishing to acquire such a hawk.

PASSAGE HAWK – Means a wild free-flying hawk still in juvenile plumage

HAGGARD HAWK – Means a wild, free-flying hawk in adult plumage

HACKING BACK – Means to return to the wild state by allowing the hawk to fly free, for an indefinite period, in order that it can develop power of wing and the ability to kill for itself. During this period of free flight, food should be left out at a

place where the hawk had previously been conditioned to feed before it is set free. Throughout the hacking period, the food should be provided each day, at the same time, in the same place, until the hawk no longer returns, thereupon it can be presumed to be killing for itself

EYAS – Means a young hawk in the nest, one taken from the nest for training purposes, or an adult bird which was originally taken from the nest and has advanced into adulthood under the care of a falconer. Young birds which have left the nest but are still jumping about the branches near the nest immediately prior to flying free, and commonly known as branchers are also considered to be eyasses in terms of this code

MEWS – Means a place where a hawk is put down to moult. A hawk house where a hawk is kept

F1, F2 ETC – Generations of captive bred hawks

Introduction

Individuals wishing to legally pursue falconry in KwaZulu Natal must do so under the auspices of the Natal Falconry Club.

- 1) Members have both a moral and legal obligation to observe the Ordinances of the Province and to comply with the NFC Code of Conduct laid down by the Committee
- 2) All members must have a genuine interest in Raptors and their conservation. The club further supports the whole principle of conservation in Nature and individual members or the club as a whole will assist the authorities or other interested parties whenever possible
- 3) Breaches of discipline could result in the confiscation of hawks, suspension of membership or even expulsion from the club
- 4) All members are expected to have access to and make use of an Avian vet

Hawk Acquisition and Status

- 5) Hawks will fall into the category of Private or Club hawks as defined.
- 6) The secretary must be advised within 48 hours regarding the acquisition (be it on club, private ownership, rehab or temporary holding permit) of any hawk for club record purposes. In the case of an individual requesting to take a hawk on the annual permit, a written request to the incumbent

committee together with a copy of the current mews licence must be submitted.

General

7) Grading of falconers

The committee will appoint a grading coordinator. This coordinator will assume responsibility for all grading matters including the nomination of examiners who will form a sub-committee for grading. These members need to be approved by the committee and all recommendations and decisions of the grading sub-committee will need ratification by a quorum of committee members.

The following rules apply:

7.1 NOVICE FALCONER

A beginner, with no previous experience, who, before being allowed to have a bird will have to conform to the following:

Equipment:

The following will have to be produced to the satisfaction of the grader:

- 7.1.1 Registration and licence documents in respect of his mews.
- 7.1.2 Bow or Block perch, according to the species he is acquire. A screen perch for the long wings only, subject to approval by the grader
- 7.1.3 Leashes X 2 (maximum of 1 metre in length)
- 7.1.4 Scale
- 7.1.5 Leather for aylmeri, jesses and hoods. Synthetic cord for jesses and leashes
- 7.1.6 Leather punch, rivets and eyelets
- 7.1.7 Glove
- 7.1.8 Swivels (2)
- 7.1.9 Hoods (2) for the species he/she is to fly
- 7.1.10 Bells
- 7.1.11 Lure

Knowledge

He will be required to know:

7.1.12 How to tie a falconers knot

7.1.13 How to tie up and untie a hawk i.e. hawk on fist – jesses in safety position
- Untie and immediately tie the hawk to the glove (to tassel or eyelet). No other method accepted

7.1.14 How to feed and maintain a hawk in good condition

7.1.15 The habitat, nesting habits and nesting times of raptors used for falconry

7.1.16 The terminology used in falconry

7.1.17 The provisions of the ordinance with regard to hunting quarry, seasons etc and his responsibility with regard to obtaining a hunting licence. Full details are attached at Appendix A

7.1.18 A novice must have accompanied a graded falconer on at least 3 hunts

7.1.19 A Novice must demonstrate an understanding of trapping methods and the construction of traps (1 Trap must be produced – dependent on the species required)

Having satisfied himself that the novice has the necessary equipment and knowledge, a graded falconer will make recommendation that the Novice be given a *tentative* C grade. The grading committee will be responsible for the ratification thereof

7.2 'C' GRADE FALCONER

7.2.1 Must have attained the age of fourteen years

7.2.2 Will have to apply to the committee in writing for a hawk. The following hawks may be held by a 'C' grade falconer:

African Goshawk (*Accipiter tachiro*)

Rock Kestrel (*Falco tinniculus*)

Black Shouldered Kite (*Elanus caeruleus*)

Jackal Buzzard (*Buteo rufofiscus*)

Other raptors accepted by the Grading Committee

7.2.3 Will be required to fly and successfully hunt a shortwing or successfully fly a longwing (Kestrel or Black Shouldered Kite) so as to acquire basic

longwing technique i.e. waiting on, response to the lure etc. One of these hawks must be a wild caught, untrained hawk

- 7.2.4 Will need to keep hunting and weight records which will be examined at the end of each season
- 7.2.5 It is recommended that a gundog be acquired during this period, if the individual wishes to progress to 'B' grade
- 7.2.6 It is recommended that all hawks are "made to the hood"
- 7.2.7 Will have to satisfy 2 graders separately or collectively in order to have his / her tentative "C Grade" ratified and to then advance to a *tentative* "B" grade. The grading committee will be responsible for the ratification thereof

7.3 'B' GRADE FALCONER

- 7.3.1 On application will also be allowed to hold 'B' grade hawks which are:

- Black Sparrowhawk (*Accipiter melanoleucus*)
- Red Breasted Sparrowhawk (*Accipiter rufiventris*)
- Special permit hawks
- Lanner Falcon (*Falco biarmicus*)
- Other raptors accepted by the grading committee

- 7.3.2 Before being allowed to take any of the 'B' grade birds, the falconer must satisfy the grading committee that he has sufficient quarry, time and transport available to do the hawk justice. Application for a Sparrowhawk and/or Lanner falcon will only be considered if the falconer has an adequately trained gundog. Dispensation of the dog issue will be considered by the grading committee on application
- 7.3.3 The correct perches for each species will need to be produced
- 7.3.4 Hunting and weight records will need to be kept and presented to the grading committee at the end of each hunting season
- 7.3.5 The 'B' Grade falconer will have to satisfy 2 graders individually or collectively as to his proficiency in hunting both shortwing and longwing (for a tentative complete A Grade) or only shortwings (for a tentative incomplete A Grade).
- 7.3.6 The shortwing may be flown one season and a longwing the next, or both over the season

7.3.7 The onus will be on the falconer to make himself available to the graders during the hunting season

7.3.8 Having satisfied the graders, the committee will ratify the tentative "B Grade" status and on application issue a *tentative* complete or incomplete 'A' Grade status to the falconer

7.4 A GRADE FALCONER

7.4.1 A *tentative* "A" grade falconer may fly any raptor deemed acceptable by the incumbent committee and (where necessary) approved by KZN WILDLIFE (for e.g. Special permit hawks). The species permitted to be flown are:

- African Hawk Eagle
- Peregrine Falcon
- Exotic / hybrid longwings & shortwings

7.4.2 Must be in possession of a telemetry set when flying an 'A' Grade hawk

7.4.3 Once the falconer has successfully flown any of the hawks from the above list, his / her "A Grade" status is ratified. Note: Incomplete A Grade status is approved for the falconer who wishes to fly only shortwings and thus has not flown any longwings – in this case only the African Hawk Eagle and/or exotic shortwings may be flown for incomplete "A Grade" ratification purposes.

7.5 EXTERNALLY GRADED FALCONER

Any graded falconer moving into KwaZulu Natal from another province or country will be required to produce written proof of his or her grading and will need to discuss his / her status with the Grading Committee

THE GRADING COMMITTEE RESERVES THE RIGHT TO UPGRADE ANY MEMBER WHO IS PROGRESSING AT SUCH A RATE THAT THE ABOVE SYSTEM IS RETARDING HIS / HER PROGRESS.

PRIVATE OWNERSHIP OF HAWKS DOES NOT EXEMPT THE FALCONER FROM BEING BOUND BY THE CODE OF CONDUCT OF THE CLUB

8 **Hawk Care**

8.1 It is expected that every falconer has access to and will use the services of a Avian Vet

8.2 Members must uphold the high standards of health, housing and feeding of hawks. The welfare of a hawk must override any other consideration

9 Register of Breeding Sites

There is no obligation at present for the club to register breeding sites with the Board. This is undertaken on a voluntary basis. For both scientific and falconry reasons, it is incumbent on all members to keep personal records of breeding sites.

The committee will call from time to time for these details which must be accurate. No member may refuse to produce this information if called upon to do so by the committee. This project will be coordinated by a committee member. In the interests of Conservation in KZN and partnerships with KZN Wildlife, the details of nesting sites will be registered with KZN Wildlife in the future.

10 Capture

Only graded falconers may trap. There are two types of trapping permits. The "once off" issued to members by the Board for the capture of a single rogue hawk or the annual Board permit. Any person trapping must be in possession of the relevant permits and must have written landowners permission. Accepted methods of capture are:

10.1 A Balchatri trap, or device using the basic balchatri technique (i.e. use of nooses)

10.2 Use of up to a maximum of four nets, each not larger than 3m X 2m, provided they are not used for the capture of birds other than hawks required for the purposes of falconry

10.3 A conventional falconers bownet

10.4 A pigeon harness

10.5 Any trap of such design as may be approved by the committee

10.6 Under no circumstances must a trap be left unattended.

10.7 Haggard hawks may be captured only during the non-breeding season. Capture may only take place in the periods specified below:

Lanner falcon – 01 Jan to 30 April

African Hawk Eagle – 01 Dec – 01 March

Black Sparrowhawk – 01 Dec – 30 March

African Goshawk – 01 Jan – 01 May

Red Breasted Sparrowhawk – 01 Mar – 01 August

Rock Kestrel – 01 Sept – 01 August

Black Shouldered Kite – 01 Sept – 01 April
Jackal Buzzard – 01 Nov – 01 April

10.8 Those members interested in ringing and release must have relevant qualifications and permits.

10.9 Passage / eyass hawks may be taken throughout the year with the exception of the African Hawk Eagle where priority must be given to the removal of the 2nd egg / chick and nest sites must be rotated i.e. an accurate history of the nest sites must be kept and the removal of the egg / chick must not occur at the same nest site for successive years.

11 Controls

In the interests of conservation, the committee may introduce controls from time to time on certain eyries or restrict trapping in certain areas.

12 Furniture

The following should be noted:

12.1 JESSES

Falconers must use Aylemeri jesses with fee running thongs or cords without slits when flying their hawks free. The use of softer cords such as parachute cord is not recommended for short wings in thornveld

12.2 SCALES

All falconers must have an accurate scale

12.3 RINGING

This is not necessary but the use of an identification tag is useful

12.4 MEWS

The minimum requirement for a hawk is a 2.5 metre cube but size parameters may need adjusting depending on the species of hawk to be acquired. Recommendations for the design of a mews will be circulated by the Secretary to all prospective members

13 Records / Permits

- 13.1 Hawks may only be obtained in compliance with the grading system
- 13.2 No member may keep a hawk unless his mews has been registered. Inspection of the mews is undertaken by the DCO of the Board who, if satisfied, will in due course issue a licence. In certain circumstances the DCO may request the committee to arrange for the inspection of a mews. A copy must be forwarded to the secretary immediately. The licence is renewable annually
- 13.3 No member may pass on a club hawk to another member or hack one back without application to the secretary.
- 13.4 It is incumbent on the member to inform the secretary in writing as to any changes in the status (acquisition / loss / death / injury) of any hawks in his possession within 48 hours.
- 13.5 A record of all hawks in the possession of members will be kept by the secretary and an annual return made to the Board each December in the appropriate format.
- 13.6 Any club Hawk that dies must be offered to the committee for validation. Validation will take place though post mortem or confirmation by the committee of the cause of death.
- 13.7 Clearance of land for hunting and the acquisition of the various permits / licences is the responsibility of individual members. These include written permission from land owners and licences for hunting in and out of season. Licenses are normally obtainable from either the Board or Sports shops. Full details of quarry and licence / permits are shown in Appendix A. A copy of the Ordinary Game Licence must be forwarded to the secretary each year by members intending to hunt ordinary game. Members hunting out of season must be prepared to produce their appropriate Game Licence if required to do so by the Committee

14 Club Hawks

The following hawk species are currently on the Board Annual Permit:

Peregrine Falcon (*Falco pergrinus calidus* and *minor*) – Graded
Lanner Falcon (*Falco biarmicus*) – Graded
African Goshawk (*Accipiter tachiro*) – Novice
Black Sparrowhawk (*Accipiter melanoleucus*) – Graded
Red Breasted Sparrowhawk (*Accipiter rufiventris*) – Graded
African Hawk Eagle (*Hieraaetus spilogaster*) – Graded

Rock Kestrel (*Falco tinniculus*) – Novice
Black Shouldered Kite (*Elanus caerulus*) – Novice
Jackal Buzzard (*Buteo rufofuscus*) – Novice

Non target hawks that are trapped in error must be immediately released.

15 Breeding

15.1 Any bone fide person or group as defined by the KZN Wildlife's Policy (Birds of Prey in Captivity) involved in Captive breeding is / are entitled to apply for membership with NFC. Members who have obtained a licence to breed hawks in captivity are entitled to breed hawks for commercial gain

15.2 Members of NFC involved in captive breeding for and on behalf of the club are subjected to the conditions of the abovementioned document in addition to any conditions stipulated in the Rules, Regulations and Code of Conduct of the Club. Wild take hawks allocated to selected captive breeders (breeding for and on behalf of the NFC) remain the property of the club and ultimately the Province (as outlined in the Birds of Prey In Captivity policy document) but all progeny are the private property of the Club unless otherwise stipulated in the agreement between the captive breeder and the club.

16 Rehabilitation

Any bone fide person or group as defined by KZN Wildlifes policy (Birds of Prey in Captivity) engaging in rehabilitation of raptors is / are entitled to apply for membership of the Club.

Members involved in the rehabilitation of raptors are subject to the conditions of the abovementioned document in addition to any conditions stipulated in the Rules, Regulations and Code of Conduct of the NFC.

17 Use of Club hawks for purposes other than falconry

The Club Committee will review applications for use of Club Hawks for purposes other than falconry and will consider such use provided that such activity does not bring the club into disrepute

18 Publicity

Whilst the club enjoys a healthy relationship with the Board, members are to avoid untoward publicity.

Educational talks etc, however, are to be encouraged. If in doubt, check with the secretary. See also section 17

19 Export / Import of Hawks

The principle of taking a club hawk out of KZN for longer than 30 days must be cleared with the Committee first. The procedure is to request an export permit from the Board. Only on the production of the Board Export Permit will other Provinces or Countries issue the necessary documents. Within South Africa, it is best to work through falconry circles before applying to the authorities for the permit. The same applies to Zimbabwe but little is known of other countries.

Importation of hawks follows a similar principle. In the case of imports from overseas, it should be remembered that a one month period of quarantine is obligatory. This can only be done through the State Veterinarian. Members wishing to import hawks for falconry purposes need the approval of the Committee first. The movement of any Club Hawk into or out of KZN will only be cleared by the Board on the authorization of the committee.

The movement of any private hawk into or out of KZN still requires a Permit from the Board.

20. Discipline

Disciplinary action will be taken against any member who fails to comply with the Constitution or Code of Conduct of the Club

21 Let Lay Rule

It is inevitable that specially protected quarry / non designated quarry may be accidentally caught. If a trained hawk ever catches quarry listed on a protected game list the following applies:

- First attempt to save and release the quarry
- If it is too late, take up your hawk and do not feed it on the kill
- If the bird is a protected or rare species, freeze it and make contact with any museums or the Board.