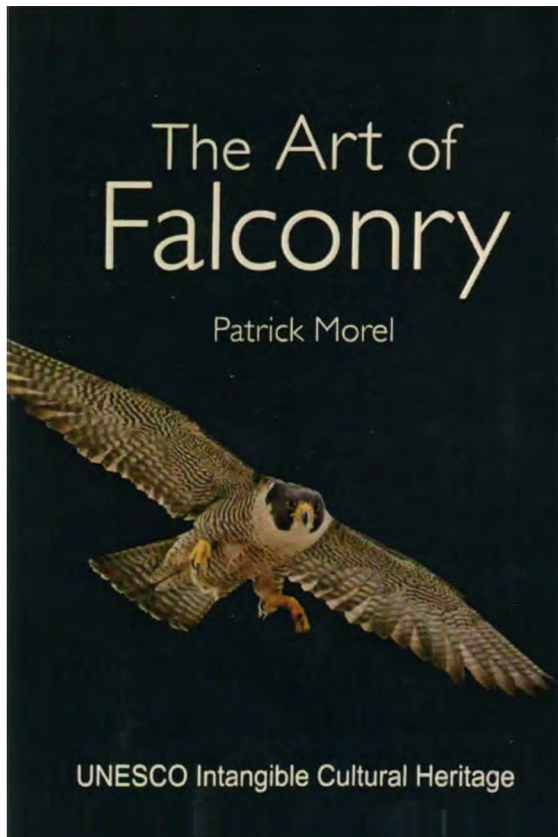


Book Review: *The Art of Falconry*

by Patrick Morel reviewed by Mick Cordell

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How often do we pick up a book about Falconry, or any other subject for that matter, take a glance through it and then either decide not to buy or if we do we then take it home, read through and then put it on the shelf to collect dust alongside all the others?

I am prepared to wager that if you were to purchase this book it will be a long time before it will collect any cobwebs through lack of use.

Let me start at the beginning. Back in late January I had a phone call from Jessica at Medina Publishing. She asked if I would be interested in reviewing a new Falconry book for our club magazine. I was told that the title was 'The Art of Falconry' by Patrick Morel. The book was due for release in February. The title seemed to ring a bell somewhere in the rearmost of

my memory but agreed to review the book with pleasure. As you are aware we are always struggling for different items for the *Austringer*. Jessica said she would send me an office copy by next day delivery.

I looked on my vast bookshelf and found the book that I thought had a similar title. Indeed it was entitled 'The Art of Falconry' but this was a copy of The Hon Gerald Lascelles which was first published in 1892. It was a small book (A5 size) of about 160 odd pages. 'That's fine' I thought to myself I will be able to read a similar sized book in plenty of time before the *Austringer* deadline date. It would also be interesting to see where this new book would stand amongst others.

The next morning the book arrived with the post lady.... What a shock! I eagerly opened the package. The book is around A4 size but it is over 460 pages weighing in at a hefty 5lbs. The cover (see left) is very pleasant to look at being mainly black with white typeface and a picture of a peregrine with wings outstretched and feet poised as if in attack mode.

As we all do, I flicked through the first 20-30 pages to give me an idea of the layout. My initial reaction was that this was going to be a very good book with quality pictures, both paintings and photographs in abundance. Would this book be able to compete or even compare to books we all know from authors as Phillip Glasier, Dr Nick Fox, Jemima Parry-Jones and others. Later that day I made time to sit down and really start to look through the book.



The author, Patrick Morel, pictured here, is a very well-known and well regarded Master Falconer who was once the President of the Belgian Falconers Association and a former President of the IAF (International Association of Falconry). This book was published in French in 2013. Patrick gives an interesting introduction into the English version at the beginning of the book. There are also introductions from the current President of the IAF and the current President of the BFC.

The book is divided into several sections with main headings including;

- The Hunting Hawk
- Longwings; the High Flight
- Different Types of High Flight
- Hunting Stories
- Shortwings; the Low Flight
- Falconry Around the World
- Ultimate Quarry
- Reflections on the Philosophy and Ethics of Falconry

Each section is then subdivided into more bite sized articles.

The author has been very clever in the way the book is arranged as it is not a step by step guide to falconry but a true and personal insight into the art. Admittedly he goes through the usual types of birds and equipment used in Falconry throughout the world but there seems to be a little bit more information that other books don't give. To some British Falconers it may seem pointless to give details of Capturing wild hawks and Hacking but I found it very interesting. After all Falconers in the US have had to trap the hawk of their choice for many years before being able to proceed further.

All aspects of Falconry are dealt with in this book including up to date details on Telemetry, Drones (to get falcons to climb, NOT for eagles to catch), dogs in Falconry, Hoods and much more. The detail in which each part of the book is put over in such a way as to make you want to read on and learn more. After all we never stop learning in our sport.



Red-naped Shaheen:
An illustration from the book