

## Information and Resources for the Prospective Falconer

*Falconry – the pursuit of wild quarry by means of a trained raptor.*

Falconry is a way to go hunting – it requires many of the same skills any small game hunter needs and also obliges you to obey all relevant game laws. It is not a sport that rewards cutting corners or rushing through things; attention to detail in all things is a characteristic of a good falconer.

To become a falconer, you must do three things:

- Find a sponsor. You will serve a two year apprenticeship with a General or Master falconer as your sponsor/mentor.
- Take a test. NH Fish and Game administers a 100 question test – you must answer 80 of the questions correctly to pass.
- Assemble your equipment, including a place to house your bird (a mews).

You should also arrange for a reliable food source. Food items falconers commonly use include whole quail, mice and day old chicks (all frozen for storage). Once these hurdles have been cleared, paperwork goes off to the US Fish and Wildlife Service and an Apprentice falconry license comes back.

The decision to pursue falconry is a serious commitment. Your raptor will need your attention every day and should get as much hunting time as possible during the appropriate season(s). A sponsor will want to see evidence of your commitment before taking you on as an apprentice. Some things you may want to do? Go hunting! If you don't hunt, take a hunter safety course, get your license (you'll need it for your apprentice application) and get out there. Read – there is a huge body of falconry literature. You will get a lot of information from your sponsor, but knowing the right questions to ask will help you progress. Get out in the woods – falconry is not an indoor sport.

As an apprentice you will fly a Red Tailed Hawk or an American Kestrel. You'll need to demonstrate to your sponsor that you are capable of hunting with the bird and able to take proper care of your hawk during the off-season. It is an exhilarating sport – one like no other – but cannot be approached casually.

NH Falconry regulations: [http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/rules/state\\_agencies/fis800.html](http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/rules/state_agencies/fis800.html) – look for Fis 813

Suggested introductory reading:

Beebe, F. L. and Webster, H. M. North American Falconry and Hunting Hawks. var. ed. North American Falconry and Hunting Hawks, Denver. - the essential how-to

Glasier, Phillip. Falconry and Hawking. 1978. Charles T. Branford Co., Newton Centre, MA. - good how-to from a British perspective

Bodio, Stephen. A Rage for Falcons. 1984. Nick Lyons Books, New York, NY. - great overview of the sport – a survey of how and where falconry is practiced in the US