

The Falconer

January 2018



Message from the chairman:

HAPPY NEW YEARS!!

I hope that everyone has had a good festive season and managed to balance very important hawking with family time. It looks like Joel and Danny had an awesome time at the 4th international festival of falconry if the photos on Facebook are anything to go by. I am looking forward to hearing all about it, as I am sure everyone in the club is also. We will have to get Joel and Danny to come give us an account of their experiences at one of the next few club meetings.

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Wing tip Oedema

At this time of year we all need to be aware of the numerous potential hazards to our hawks. Not only do we have to be vigilant of what is going on out in the field but we also need to think about what we are doing at home. Wing tip oedema (WTO) is not fully understood and the cause is still unknown but cold weather does appear to play a role. If WTO is caught early the prognosis is good with proper treatment, including antibiotics, medications to promote blood supply to the area (Preparation-H cream can be used on the affected area) and slight increase in activity to promote circulation. But if not noticed in the early stages it can progress to dry necrosis of the tip of the wing.

So what can we be doing to prevent this potentially lethal condition? As cold weather appears to be an important factor in the disease, during winter birds should not be tethered too close to the ground (less than 1m) without supplying supplemental heating and wet birds should not be left out overnight (tethered or free lofted).

Oedema—a condition characterized by an excess of watery fluid causing swelling

Necrosis—the death of most or all of the cells in an organ or tissue due to disease, injury, or failure of the blood supply.



A Telemetry Tale.

On the afternoon of Saturday 30th July 2017 I was made aware by Facebook of a Peri/lanner falcon that had been lost whilst exercising near Bolton. The owner, who I didn't know, had tracked to Bolton town centre. The bird had been attacked and chased by a wild peregrine.

Due to being reasonably close I contacted the owner, got the telemetry frequency and scanned without any result. I spoke to the owner at about 9pm who had had no luck in finding the bird despite having strong but very confusing signals and was going home.

I arranged to meet with him to help him search early on the Sunday morning taking with me two 173 receivers. We met in the town centre and three of us each using receivers picked up strong signals. We split up and followed our own equipment and knowledge of the area. There was no disturbance to the local crows, magpies and seagulls but we continued.

We all arrived at points where we were getting bouncing signals but had all been led to different sides of a large mill building surrounded by locked security fencing. The signal at this point became very unusual. This was in the direction that the owner had arrived at the previous day.

The whole of the light industrial area contained large metal structures, cranes, tanks and scaffolds which appeared to be interfering with the signals. Looking at the rooftops I noticed an amazing number of aerials which I guessed were mobile phone and television related.

Being unable to gain access to the building or any high ground we stopped searching believing that there may be a dead falcon or dropped tag on top of the building. As we left I made my way to higher ground and picked up a strong signal towards the mill building although being about three miles from it.

Less than an hour later I answered a telephone call from the falcon owner. He had received a call from Barbara at IBR telling him about a falcon sat on a house roof some eight miles away from where we had been searching. Sure enough it was his hungry imprint falcon which came straight in to the lure.

This was the first time that I had tried to track a bird in a built up area and highlights the difficulties faced with signals bouncing off buildings and other structures. It was very different to going across fields, streams and barbed wire or through woodland looking into treetops.

I hope that I never have to go into town centres searching using telemetry again and then the frightened security man doesn't have



to call the police about 'men acting suspiciously' again. But that's another story.

There will be a raffle for a bottle of famous grouse at the February club meeting. All you need to do to enter is write your name on a piece of paper and give it to Kyle at the meeting.