

GLOSSARY OF FALCONRY TERMS

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[Editors' Note: Since a number of falconry terms have appeared on the pages of *Raptor Research News*, the editors felt a need to clarify their meanings for our non-falconer readers. The list is not intended to be exhaustive or as an endorsement for their use; some obviously are more descriptive than would otherwise be possible, while others serve no useful purpose. We therefore asked Lee Eberly to go through several standard falconry sources and assemble a list for the *News*. Your editors have eliminated some archaic terms and edited some definitions. The main sources used were:

ap Evans, H. 1960. *Falconry for you*. London: John Gifford, Ltd.

Beebe, F. L., and Webster, H. M. 1964. *North American Falconry and Hunting Hawks*. Denver: privately printed.

Mavrogordato, J. G. 1960. *A Hawk for the Bush*. London: Witherby.

Woodford, M. H. 1960. *A Manual of Falconry*. London: Adam and Charles Black.]

accipiter, a member of the genus *Accipiter*; the "short-winged hawks."

erie, *aiery*, see *eyrie*.

arm, the leg of a hawk from the thigh to the foot; the portion of the leg occupied by the tarso-metatarsus bone.

austringer, (or *astringer*, *ostringer*, *autoursier*), one who keeps and hunts short-winged hawks, particularly Goshawks.

bagged quarry, captive prey which is released under a hawk during training or when game is scarce to insure a flight for the hawk.

bare, (or *bare-faced*), unhooded or not wearing a hood.

bate, *to*, (and *bating*), to beat the wings impatiently, to flutter; an abortive attempt to leave the fist or perch by jumping or flapping the wings but being restrained by the leash or jesses.

- beam feathers*, the long feathers of a hawk's wing; flight feathers or primaries.
- bechins*, a tidbit or morsel of food.
- bell*, a special bell fastened to a hawk, useful for locating when bird is flying free.
- bell, to*, to fasten a bell to hawk's legs or sometimes tail (Goshawk).
- bewit*, (or *bewet*), leather strap by which a bell is attached to a hawk's leg.
- bind*, (and *bind to*), to seize quarry with the feet and hold on, either in the air or on the ground.
- blain*, an inflammatory swelling or pustule on the surface of the body; on hawks a pustule on the second joint of the wing.
- block*, a perch used for falcons which usually assumes a cylindrical or inverted cone shape and may or may not be padded.
- bow-net*, a bow shaped net used for catching hawks.
- bow perch*, a semicircular perch with ends in the ground, used for short-winged hawks.
- bowse, to*, (or *bouse, boose, bouze, booze*), to drink; excessive drinking.
- box-cadge*, a lidless box with padded upper edges to which a hawk is tied during transportation.
- braces*, leather straps which are an integral part of a hood and used to loosen (strike the hood) or tighten (brace the hood).
- brail*, a soft leather strap formerly used to secure one wing of a restless hawk to prevent bating; not presently in vogue.
- brancher*, (or *bowet, bowiser*), a young hawk not able as yet to fly well but which has left the nest.
- break into*, initial act of eating prey; may or may not be preceded by plucking.
- buteo*, members of the genus *Buteo*, the soaring hawks or buzzards.
- cadge*, a wooden, rectangular frame upon which hawks are carried in the field.
- cadger*, a person who carries a hawk.

calling off, (or to *call off*), a process in exercising or training a hawk when it is encouraged to come or is lured to the fist or lure from a post, perch or assistant.

carry, to, 1) to keep or carry a hawk on the fist to tame or man; 2) to fly with quarry just killed either from the ground at the approach of the falconer or at the outrun of a successful stoop.

cast, two hawks flown together, not necessarily a pair or even of the same species.

cast, to, 1) to hold or wrap a hawk to prevent movement for the purpose of an operation; 2) to eject or disgorge a pellet of undigested feathers, fur, and/or bone, etc., through the mouth.

casting, undigestible portion of a meal which is formed into a pellet and disgorged through the mouth.

cast gorge, to, to vomit or disgorge the contents of the crop or stomach.

cast off, to, to launch a hawk from the fist.

cere, (or *seare, sere*), the waxy yellow skin at the base of the beak in which the nostrils are located.

check, to, to change from pursuing one quarry to another.

clap, the lower part of the beak.

claws, the toes of a "short-wing"; a long-wing has talons.

clean-moulted, end of molt when all of the old feathers are gone and the new set is completely grown.

come to, to begin obeying the falconer.

cope, to, to trim or pare beak, claws, or talons.

cowering, quivering or shaking of the wings in young hawks not in fear but in an attitude of begging for food usually associated with screaming.

corn, a hard lump appearing on the bottom of a hawk's feet causing heat and swelling.

crab, an attack on one hawk by another when flown in a cast.

cramp, a malady most common in eyass short-winged hawks which involves an involuntary contraction of muscles which in severe cases will break bones.

- craye*, a stoppage of the lower intestine.
- creance*, a long line or cord attached to the swivel during the first training of a hawk.
- crines*, (or *crivets*), bristle like hairs around a hawk's eyes or ceres.
- croaks*, (or *kecks*, *pantas*), archaic names for symptoms of respiratory disorders in hawks and falcons.
- crop*, a dilation of the esophagus just above the sternum which serves as the immediate receptacle of food before being passed on to the stomach.
- crop, put over*, process of forcing food from the crop into the stomach accompanied by movement of the neck and shoulders (a hawk *puts over* her *crop*).
- crop, put away*, conclusion of transferring crop contents to the stomach (a hawk has *put away* her *crop*).
- crossing flight*, the flight of another bird between a hawk and its quarry possibly causing it to check.
- cubital feathers*, (or *flags*), the secondary flight feathers next to the primaries of the wing.
- deck feathers*, the two central feathers of the tail; generally the first to be molted.
- droppings*, (see *mutes*).
- duck hawk*, American equivalent of the Peregrine Falcon.
- enseame, to*, (or *ensayme*), a medieval term meaning to cleanse or purge a bird to rid it of excess fat thus making it more eager to fly.
- enter*, 1) to fly a hawk at quarry for the first time; 2) to arrange a situation such that a hawk has an easy opportunity to catch a type of quarry new to it.
- eyass*, (or *eyas*, *eyess*), any raptor taken into captivity as a nestling; bird is always referred to thereafter as an eyass. See also *passager* and *haggard*.
- eyrie*, (or *aerie*, *aiery*), raptorial nesting place.
- falcon*, formerly, a female "long-winged" hawk' now generally applies to a member of any species and either sex of the "long-wings" (genus *Falco*) as opposed to the hawks or "short-wings."

falconer, one who trains and flies "long-winged" hawks. The austringer or flier of "short-winged" hawks may also be included in this term.

fault bars, (see *hunger traces*).

feak, to, to wipe the beak briskly back and forth on the perch or glove after feeding to remove food particles.

flags, (see *cubital feathers*).

flight feathers, the primary and secondary feathers of the wing.

foot, to, to seize quarry with the feet.

frounce, a disease of the mouth and throat caused by a protozoan parasite, *Trichomonas galena*.

full-summed, (or *hard-penned*), refers to the completion of moult when all old feathers destined to be replaced are replaced and the new feathers have reached their full length and are no longer soft.

get in, (or *go in*), (see *make in to*).

hack, a process of allowing newly fledged eyass to fly at liberty with purpose of reaching its full power of flight under a simulated natural wild situation (the bird is said to be flown at *hack*).

hack-board, a structure to which food is tied while a bird is being kept at *hack*.

haggard, a raptor which has been trapped as an adult, i.e., one that is in its adult plumage when caught (see also *eyass*, *passage hawk*).

halsband, (or *halstan*), a cord or strap held in the hand and hung around the neck and ahead of the wings of an accipiter which is used to steady the bird for launching the bird rapidly.

hard-penned, (see *full-summed*).

hawk, generally, a diurnal bird of prey: specifically it may refer to the "short-winged" hawks or buteos as contrasted with falcons or "long-winged" hawks.

hawk of the fist, a "short-winged" hawk trained to come directly to the fist.

hawk of the lure, a "long-winged" hawk which has been trained to come to the lure.

high, in good condition or fat.

hood, a leather cap which covers the head and blindfolds the bird thus keeping it calm and quiet.

hood-shy, a trained hawk that avoids and resents being hooded.

hunger traces, (or *hunger streaks*, *fault bars*), weak imperfections appearing as light narrow bands across the webs of growing feathers. May be caused by temporary starvation, incorrect feeding, or nervous stress, or also due to the effects of changes such as light and temperature.

imp, to, to mend a broken feather by adding a new piece. The base portion of the old feather and the new feather portion being held together by a needle.

intermewed, a hawk that has molted in captivity.

jack, a male Merlin.

jerkin, a male Gyrfalcon.

jesses, short leather straps attached permanently to the legs of a raptor.

kechs, (see *croaks*).

leash, a long, narrow, leather strip one end of which is attached to a hawk's jesses via swivels and the other end secured to a block or perch.

long-winged hawks, members of the genus *Falco* having relatively long pointed wings, dark eyes and toothed beaks.

lure, an object which is made of feathers, leather or plastic, etc., and garnished with meat to which the raptor is trained to come for food; means of recall.

made to, indicates that a hawk is thoroughly trained in some aspect, e.g., made to the hood, made to the fist.

mail, the breast feathers of a hawk.

mail, to, to immobilize a hawk by wrapping it up in a sock or piece of cloth in order to perform an operation such as coping or imping.

make in to, slowly and carefully to approach a hawk when she is on her quarry on the ground to take her up.

make hawk, an older more experienced hawk which is flown with an eyass to serve as an example or for encouragement.

- man, to*, (manning), to accustom a hawk to men, to handling, and to strange sights and sounds.
- mantle, to*, to spread wings and tail in order to cover food.
- mews*, place where hawks are kept, originally a place where hawk was kept for molting.
- mutés*, (or *droppings, slices, slicings*), excrement of a hawk; sometimes restricted to that of the "long-wings" in which case *slicings* or *slices* is used for excrement of the "short-wings"; sometimes restricted to forcibly ejected excreta, *droppings* being used if merely dropped.
- nares*, nostrils of a hawk.
- nestling*, a young bird still in the nest; if removed from a nest it is called an eyass.
- ostringer*, (see *austringer*).
- pannel*, (or *panel*), the stomach or lower bowel of a hawk, or the part of the alimentary canal of a hawk below the crop.
- pantas*, (see *croaks*).
- passage*, the migration of hawks.
- passage hawk*, (or *passager*), a hawk which has been captured when less than a year old and when migrating or following the passage of migratory prey; always in immature plumage (see also *eyass, haggard*).
- pelt*, the dead body of a bird caught by a hawk.
- pendant feathers*, those feathers behind the thighs of a hawk.
- penned, hard*, (see *full-summed*)
- perch*, a structure upon which a hawk is placed (except a block) when not being flown or carried.
- pin and web*, an eye disease characterized by a film over the eye.
- pitch*, the height a falcon attains by first "ringing up" and then maintains by "waiting on."
- plume*, tuft on top of a hawk's hood.
- plume, to*, to pluck the feathers from a quarry.
- preen*, a maintenance activity whereby the feathers are kept in good condition by arranging and oiling by the beak with oil from the oil gland at the top base of the tail.

principals, the two largest feathers of a hawk's wing.

quarry, live prey at which a hawk is flown.

rake, to, to strike quarry without binding to it (see also *ruff, to*).

rake away, act of a hawk's going off on her own (often downwind) instead of doing what the falconer wishes her to do.

rangle, small smooth pebbles given to a hawk; related to the medieval process of enseaming.

reclaim, to, entire process of taming and training of a hawk, more extensive than term *to man*).

refuse, to, to fly at other than the quarry the falconer wishes.

ring up, to, to rise in a spiral.

rouse, simultaneous erection of all the feathers, especially the contour feathers, shaking and then slowly lowering them.

ruff, to, to strike quarry making feathers fly without binding to it (see also *rake, to*).

sails, a hawk's wings.

screamer, an eyass (usually) which calls incessantly, as when begging for food; the calling is a juvenile characteristic carried on into adulthood.

screen perch, a perch with material hanging from it such as canvas or burlap which permits a hawk to climb back up onto the perch after bating off.

seare or *sere*, see *cere*.

seel, to, to close the eyes by sewing the eyelid shut, a medieval and eastern method.

serve, to, to flush or put up quarry under a hawk.

sharp-set, hungry and ready for food and thus ready to fly and hunt.

short-winged hawk, those hawks (*Buteo*, *Aquila*, *Accipiter*, etc.) with short wings, long tails, yellow eyes, and toothless beaks.

set down, to put a hawk down to moult.

slices, slicings, (see *mutes*).

slip, to, to release a hawk from the fist at quarry.

soar, riding of thermals or updrafts with wings and tail spread and a minimum of wing action.

stoop, (or *swoop*), an attack from above at quarry by folding the wings and dropping at a steep angle.

strike the hood, to, to loosen the braces of a hood thus making it ready to be removed rapidly.

summed, see *full summed*.

swivel, a freely rotating metal device which attaches the leash to the jesses which prevents twisting of the latter.

take up, to, to recover a lost hawk.

talons, claws of a bird of prey, sometimes only those of a "long-winged" hawk, in which case the "short-wings" have claws.

tiercel, (or *tercel*), the male of any of the raptors.

tewel, the lower intestine or bowel of a hawk.

tiring, a tough sinewy portion of a quarry given to a hawk to give it exercise yet little nourishment.

train, 1) the tail of a hawk; 2) a live bird on a line at which a hawk is entered.

truss, to, see *to bind*.

unreclaimed, a wild hawk.

unsummed, the condition of new feathers of a molting hawk which have not hardened.

wait on, to, to circle overhead of the falconer waiting for quarry to be flushed.

wake, to, to keep a new hawk awake thus making it tired and more easily manned.

washed meat, meat which has been deprived of nutritional value by soaking in water and wrung dry.

weather, to, to place a hawk on a perch or block in the open air.

wind up, to, to capture a semi-tamed hawk by entangling her legs in a line as she feeds on food placed out for her; the falconer, with the line, walks in circles around the bird.

yarak, to be in, to be in the state of keenness of a short-winged hawk eager to fly quarry; an expression of oriental origin.