


From:	Oral interview transcript emailed from team member's teacher's email
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1. What is your name? Marcus
2. If you have a job title, what is it? Do you want the honest answer or the glorified answer? Basically, we all clean poo. On top of that we are primarily bird trainers. We are not falconers as such, because we don't hunt with birds of prey, which is basically what a falconer does, taking wild birds of prey and hunting with them. So we really are no different from sea lion trainers and the rest of them. Yep, bird trainer would be quite an accurate way to put it – bird trainer, carpenter, mechanic and all the other various job titles that come with it.
3. What is the name of your organization and country? It's the National Bird of Prey Centre, Gloucestershire, UK.
4. Based on numbers, what would you say are the top five raptors in your area? The most common bird we see is probably peregrines, Goshawks and Sparrow Hawks and I suppose right at the top of the list would be tawny owls and Buzzards. They are the most frequently seen. We have got 16 pairs of Goshawks nesting within two miles of us here but you will be lucky if you see maybe one or two of them per day.
5. Are there any endangered raptors in your area? If so, which ones are they and why are they endangered? Well, probably the two main rarest in this area are the hobby, the hobby is actually quite a rare species now and another species would be, one that is in decline, the European kestrel which a lot of people think is actually the commonest bird of prey. Those are the two birds that get ignored and taken for granted, if you like.
6. Are there any programs in your area that help to protect raptors? If yes, briefly tell us what they are. Nothing at all really. Conservation in this country is pretty appalling really. We tend to focus on animals which aren't really as rare as they make out to be really. A classic one would be the peregrine falcon. The peregrine falcon is actually the third or fourth most common bird of prey in this country and we are often told is actually the rarest bird of prey which is using household names, names which people are most aware of to get the conservation message across. Nothing going on project wise locally at all really. They sort of keep an eye on birds of prey breeding and do a lot of ringing schemes but generally they leave them alone to get on with what they want apart from the rehabilitation stuff which we look after in this sort of place.

7. Is your organization funded by the government or private donations? If neither, from what source is funding received? It's funded by that gentleman over there who was silly enough to sell his business and go into animals! Basically it is purely a private venture, This sort of thing should be government run because it can't actually function as a private investment business, especially with the number of falcon centres in this country. There's about one falconry centre every thirty five miles at the moment , I think the furthest falconry centres apart are about two hundred miles. When I started fifteen years ago there were six centres in the country. Now there are six hundred and seventy. (That's falconry centres rather than rehabilitation centres.) Generally speaking, the rehabilitation side is what's often been done by falconry centres. A lot of falconry centres don't quite do as much as they make out to do. Certainly every one I have ever worked in has been guilty of that to some extent. They do what they can.

8. Does your government recognize the importance of maintaining/improving the status of birds of prey? If so, in what ways do they support it? I think there's too many things that they could do that they haven't done so it will be very difficult for me to answer. There's nothing obvious that jumps out to mind. There's obviously some precautions taken to protect wild animals in general, for instance the wildlife and countryside act, but as for actual moves made by the government rather than any independent body, I find nothing jumps to mind. There might be something but I can't think of it right now.

9. Do you have programs to educate the public? If yes, what kinds or please give examples. Various conservation projects going, we tell people what birds of prey they are likely to see on a daily basis, and how potentially rare they are and what sorts of things can be done to help them, as regards to nest boxes, and the sorts of sites where you will find nest sites. One of the main things we do is in Fenland, up in Norfolk which is one of the main areas suitable for birds to be nesting but no actual trees there for them to nest in. A case of giving them additional habitat and breeding territory where otherwise they would be vulnerable to carnivores and foxes that would see them on the ground.

10. Is there anything else that you would like to share or comment on about raptors in your area? Not really. At the moment birds of prey are doing the best they have ever done in Europe and here. There's a couple of ongoing projects that maybe need to change course, the main one being the red kites. We've released red kites here over the last ten years and we are still feeding them. We should let them get on with their own jobs, become more independent. We're still feeding them at feed stations. A lot of nomadic birds obviously have gone off, moving around the country and are feeding themselves but we've still got an awful lot of feed stations around the country, providing artificial sustenance to them when they should be allowed to go their own way by now. No, it's getting a bit of a tourist attraction, throwing out bits of offal and stuff for them. It's always nice to see these birds of prey but it's becoming a bit of a fast food joint for them!

11. May we have your permission to print this email interview on our website? Yes, certainly.