



INFORMATION LEAFLET CONCERNING CONSERVATION OF WILD BIRDS (FALCONRY) REGULATION 2016

A. GENERAL INFORMATION

This information leaflet gives a brief overview of the Conservation of Wild Birds (Falconry) Regulations (S.L. 549.106) and should serve as the basis for the preparation of the written examination, which is a prerequisite to obtain a licence to practice falconry. Please also note that the examination will also contain a practical bird handling component which will be administered by your falconry organisation. One should always refer to these regulations (<http://justiceservices.gov.mt/DownloadDocument.aspx?app=lom&itemid=12529&l=1>) as well as the Conservation of Wild Birds Regulations for further detail. We also encourage you to seek further advice and guidance from your falconry organisation. It is important that you are familiar with all the information contained in this leaflet as well the specific information found in the concerned regulation (S.L. 549.106).

B. INTRODUCTION

Falconry is the sport of hunting or taking of quarry species (listed in Schedule IIA) with a falcon and includes the keeping, flying, training and the display of such trained falcons. All licensed falconers should form part of a falconry organisation which has in its statute, the main objective of promoting the activity of falconry and its traditions. For an organisation to be recognised it should be enrolled with the Commission of Voluntary Organisations. Specimens that form part of *Falconiformes*, *Strigiformes* or *Accipitriformes*, including hybrids species can all be used to practice falconry.

It is important that falcons used are ‘captive bred’ and ‘closed-ring’ specimens. ‘Captive-bred’ means a bird that has been hatched and bred from legally acquired parental stock in a human controlled environment and has been marked by a seamless closed ring or in the case of a specimen that does not naturally occur in the wild state within the European Union, it has to be accompanied by the necessary documentation. ‘Closed ring’ means a ring or band in a continuous circle without any break or join, of a size which cannot be removed from a bird specimen hatched and bred from legally acquired parental stock in a human controlled environment when its leg is fully grown after having been applied in the first days of the specimen’s life.

Hunting by means of a falcon can only be practiced on quarry species which are species listed in Schedule IIA of the Conservation of Wild Birds Regulation and wild rabbit as per Protection of Wild Rabbit Regulations. Captive-bred specimens which should also be quarry species listed in Schedule IIA of S.L. 549.42 may be released by the falconer for the purpose of training.

C. DOCUMENTS AND NECESSARY PERMITS

The licence to keep and fly specimens from the falconry species for the purpose of training, display of flight or for the taking of quarry species may be granted by the Wild Birds Regulation Unit. Falconry shall only be practised using captive-bred falcons, which are covered by all the necessary permits and authorisations in terms of the Trade in Species of Fauna and Flora Regulations and also any other applicable regulations.

While practicing falconry a person should always have at hand the following documents:

- (a) documents that show that the person is a member of a recognised falconry organisation;
- (b) documents that show that the person is covered with a third party liability insurance covering the activity of falconry;
- (c) receipt showing that the person has paid the applicable fees as prescribed in Schedule I of S.L. 549.106;
- (d) a valid falconry licence issued by the Wild Birds Regulation Unit.

No person practicing falconry shall enter on agricultural land, or areas pertinent to third parties without their permission.

D. HUNTING OF GAME BY MEANS OF FALCONRY

The flying of falcons exclusively for the purpose of training and display of flight only (not for the purpose of taking of quarry species), may be practised at any time all year round.

During the open season, or during special falconry activity licence period, the quarry species listed in Schedule II (a) of the Conservation of Wild Birds Regulations as well as wild rabbit as per the Protection of Wild Rabbit Regulations S.L. 549.90 may be taken by means of a falcon. A falconer may also use captive-bred specimens of quarry species listed in Schedule II (a) and wild rabbit which may be released by the falconer for the purpose of training. In such cases, the dates and areas where hunting may take place (as per next section) still apply.

During any open season, or during special falconry activity licence period, the falconer is legally bound to report any hunted species caught through the telephone reporting system by calling on **77070009** before leaving the hunting site. By following the instructions, the falconer will report the species caught, the quantity and the area from where the specimens were hunted by means of falconry.

Anyone who fails to report species caught during the hunting season will be breaching the law. More information on the telephone reporting system and the combined number related to each species and map of Malta and Gozo is found in the information booklet distributed to all licensed falconers.

E. OPEN SEASON AND AREAS WHERE FALCONRY MAY BE PRACTICED

The flying of falcons exclusively for the purpose of training and display of flight, but not for the purpose of pursuit and taking of any quarry species may be practised at any time all year round.

Practicing Falconry to hunt quarry species

During Autumn hunting season, only birds listed under Annex A of this information leaflet (all species listed in Schedule IIA of the Conservation of Wild Birds Regulation S.L. 549.42) can be pursued and caught by means of falconry.

Open season for hunting of birds with a falcon

Hunting of birds with the use of a falcon is permitted:

From 1st September till the 31st January

- From two hours before sunrise until two hours after sunset from Monday to Saturday.
- From two hours before sunrise until one o'clock in the afternoon on Sundays and Public Holidays

From 15th September till 7th October

- From two hours before sunrise until 7pm from Monday to Saturday
- From two hours before sunrise until one o'clock in the afternoon on Sundays and Public Holidays

Open season for hunting of wild rabbit with a falcon

Hunting of wild rabbit is permitted:

From 1st June till 31st December

- From two hours before sunrise until two hours after sunset from Monday to Saturday.
- From two hours before sunrise until one o'clock in the afternoon on Sundays and Public Holidays

From 15th September till 7th October

- From two hours before sunrise until 7pm from Monday to Saturday
- From two hours before sunrise until one o'clock in the afternoon on Sundays and Public Holidays

Areas where falconry may be practiced

The areas where falconry may be practised shall comprise the entire land territory of the Maltese Islands, excluding bird sanctuaries listed in Schedule V and protected beaches listed in Schedule VII of the Conservation of Wild Birds Regulations as listed below:

Bird Sanctuaries

1. The surroundings of the Addolorata Cemetery as and within 50 metres of any other cemetery in Malta and Gozo.
2. The surroundings of Kennedy Grove and Salina area.
3. Marsa Sports Ground.
4. San Anton Gardens and all other public Gardens in Malta and Gozo.
5. Portes-des-Bombes area including surrounding bastions.
6. Manoel Island.
7. The surroundings of Ghadira, at Mellieha Bay.
8. The Heliport at Ta' Lambert, limits of Ghajnsielem and Xewkija, Gozo, and the surrounding areas up to 200 metres.

9. Within 200 metres from Luqa Airport and within 50 metres of the approach lights indicating the runways.

10. The island of Comino.

11. The islet of Filfla.

12. The surroundings of Buskett gardens and Verdala Palace.

13. The area on the heights of Ta' Ċenċ Cliffs, Gozo.

14. Ta' Qali complex, including the area formerly used as aerodrome and its adjacent land.

15. Within 50 metres of the Radio stations operated by the Department of Civil

Aviation at:

(a) Benghajsa, limits of Birzebbugia;

(b) Dingli Heights, limits of Dingli;

(c) Wied Rini, limits of Rabat;

(d) Non-directional Beacon, Fort St. Rocco, limits of Rinella;

(e) VOR Station, it-Tafal, limits of Kerċem, Gozo.

16. The surroundings of Simar, at Pwales Bay, St. Paul's Bay.

17. The surroundings of the Salt Marsh at il-Ballut, Marsaxlokk.

18. St. Paul's Islands.

19. Girgenti.

20. Wied Ghollieqa.

21. Il-Qawra, Gozo.

22. Għammar Hill, Gozo.

The delineation of the following beaches

Malta:

a. Armier bay;

b. Anchor bay;

c. Għajn Tuffieħa bay;

d. Paradise bay;

e. Gnejna bay;

f. Golden bay;

Gozo:

a. Mgarr ix-Xini bay;

b. Ramla l-Ħamra beach;

c. San Blas bay;

d. Xatt l-aħmar beach;

e. Xlendi bay;

During the practice of falconry for the purpose of training, display of flight or for taking of quarry species, it shall be the falconer's responsibility to take requisite measures in accordance with applicable best practices to ensure that the falconry species does not trespass beyond the limits of the areas where falconry may be practised.

F. LAWFUL AND UNLAWFUL FALCONRY PRACTICES

During falconry no person shall:

- a) fly any untethered falcon that is not wearing a transmitter of a real-time tracking device that is able to be tracked;
- b) allow the falcon to stray outside the area where falconry may be practised;
- c) allow the falcon to escape from the control of the licensee;
- d) allow the falcon to pursue, take or injure any species other than quarry species;
- e) allow the falcon to pursue, take or injure any species outside the open season for falconry; unless the licensee has a special falconry activity licence;
- f) hunt or attempt to hunt with a gun or any other weapon, or take or attempt to take any bird using any means, as specified by the Conservation of Wild Birds Regulations or any rabbit as specified by the Protection of Wild Rabbit Regulations;
- g) fly any falcon or attempt to fly any falcon or exercise the activity of falconry at sea.

In the event of accidental capture of a species which is not a quarry species or any species caught outside the falconry season, the licensee shall allow the falcon to feed on the catch and shall immediately inform the Wild Birds Regulation Unit. The licensee shall not take possession of the specimen or any of its remains and the specimen shall be left on the site where it was hunted until an official from the Wild Birds Regulation Unit provides further instructions to the falconer.

Any person from whom a falconry bird escapes and who fails to retrieve it shall immediately inform the Wild Birds Regulation Unit of such incident.

Whilst practising the activity of falconry, the licensee may make use of suitably trained dogs and, or, ferrets for the purpose of flushing and, or, retrieving quarry species.

Any person who fails to comply with any provision of these regulations or with any order lawfully given in terms of any provision of these regulations; or contravenes any restriction, prohibition or requirement imposed by or under these regulations is subject to penalties as stipulated under the Conservation of Wild Birds (Falconry) Regulation (S.L. 549.106).

G. WELFARE AND GOOD PRACTICE

When not practising falconry no person shall:

- a) house any falcon within an enclosure that does not provide protection from the natural elements and does not ensure the physiological needs of the specie.
- b) transport on any motor vehicle any falcon unless it is either in a travel box or is tethered to a perch and wearing a hood (this does not apply when the falcon is transported on foot).

No person shall kill or injure, or cause any harm, or attempt to kill or injure or cause any harm, to any falcon either voluntarily, whether directly or indirectly, or through negligence, or want of care.

The falconer shall ensure that any quarry species caught by the falcon are killed humanely and in accordance with the best applicable practice in the field of falconry.

It is important that:

- the falconer knows how to do the falconer's knot correctly without causing any discomfort to the falcon.
- the hood is placed correctly on the falcon's head and that it is not touching the falcon's eyes.
- the appropriate diet is provided and that stamina level is not weakened.
- the falcon is provided with shelter from direct sun, wind, rain and hail. Dryness, fresh air and an absence of draft are also important.
- to avoid stressing the falcon by entering the chamber, a flap type system to accommodate removal of bath to change the water is recommended. A food chute for the same reasons, are also advisable.
- every solid wall should have a smooth surface and if used, mesh wire shall be covered with plastic.

One should always keep in mind the **Five Freedoms** which should apply to all the birds that are under the falconer's care:

1. Freedom from hunger and thirst: by ready access to fresh water and a diet to maintain full health.
2. Freedom from discomfort: by providing an appropriate environment including shelter and a comfortable resting area.
3. Freedom from pain, injury or disease: by prevention through rapid diagnosis and treatment.
4. Freedom to express normal behaviour: by providing sufficient space, proper facilities and company of the animal's own kind.
5. Freedom from fear and distress: by ensuring conditions and treatment that avoid mental suffering.

H. EXAMINATION PROCEDURE AND FURTHER INFORMATION

To obtain a falconry licence the following procedure applies:

1. A person must be at least sixteen years
2. The person must have completed the relevant application form
3. A person must be a member of a recognized falconry association
4. The applicant should be covered with a third party liability insurance covering the activity of falconry
5. The applicant should pay the applicable fees (as per Schedule I of S.L. 549.106)
6. The applicant should conduct the practical exam, which will be administered by the respective falconry organisation supervised by the Wild Birds Regulation Unit, the falconry organisation will confirm that the applicant is eligible to apply for the written exam organised

by the Wild Birds Regulation Unit. The applicant should fill the application form which should be duly signed and stamped by the falconry organisation

7. When one passes the exam, the Wild Birds Regulation Unit issues a falconry licence valid for 5 years

We recommend that you familiarise yourself with the list of huntable and protected birds from various sources such as field guides and websites.

More information can be obtained from-

Wild Birds Regulation Unit,
122, Triq Misrah il-Barrieri
SANTA VENERA

☎ (+356) 22926412





🌐 <http://environment.gov.mt/en/Pages/WBRU/Wild-Birds-Regulation-Unit.aspx>






✉ wildbirds@gov.mt






ANNEX A






Huntable birds as per Schedule IIA of the Conservation of Wild Birds Regulation (S.L. 549.42) (these birds can be hunted by means of falconry during open seasons).






Apart from these bird species, wild rabbit can also be hunted during the open season.






	ISEM BL- INGLIŻ	ISEM XJENTIFIKU	
1	Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	
2	Golden Plover	<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>	
3	Grey Plover	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>	
4	Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>	






5	Quail	<i>Coturnix coturnix</i>	
6	Turtle Dove	<i>Streptopelia turtur</i>	
7	Wood Pigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	
8	Redwing	<i>Turdus iliacus</i>	
9	Song Thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>	





10	Fieldfare	<i>Turdus pilaris</i>	
11	Mistle Thrush	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>	
12	Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>	
13	Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	
14	Snipe	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>	

15	Jack Snipe	<i>Limnocryptes minimus</i>	 <p>A photograph of a Jack Snipe standing in shallow water. The bird has a long, straight bill and mottled brown and black plumage. A small copyright notice is visible at the bottom left of the image: © Atto://andevard.aurelien.free.fr/</p>
16	Woodcock	<i>Scolopax rusticola</i>	 <p>A photograph of a Woodcock in flight against a clear blue sky. The bird's wings are spread, showing a pattern of brown and white feathers. Its long, straight bill is prominent.</p>
17	Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	 <p>A photograph of a Moorhen swimming in a pond. The bird has dark plumage and a distinctive red and yellow bill. It is surrounded by green reeds and water lilies.</p>
18	Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>	 <p>A photograph of a Coot swimming in a pond. The bird has dark plumage and a white patch on its forehead. It is surrounded by water and reeds.</p>
19	Ruff	<i>Philomachus pugnax</i>	 <p>A photograph of a Ruff standing on a sandy beach. The bird has mottled brown and white plumage and a long, straight bill. A small copyright notice is visible at the bottom left of the image: © Free Bohdal NATUREFOTO.cz</p>

20	Water Rail	<i>Rallus aquaticus</i>	 A photograph of a Water Rail standing on a muddy bank. The bird has a greyish-brown body with dark vertical stripes on its wings and a long, bright orange-red bill.
21	Red Grouse	<i>Lagopus lagopus hibernicus / scoticus</i>	 A photograph of a Red Grouse in its autumn plumage, showing rich reddish-brown feathers. It is standing on a small patch of ground with some moss.
22	Rock Ptarmigan	<i>Lagopus mutus</i>	 A photograph of a Rock Ptarmigan in its summer plumage, featuring mottled grey and white feathers. It is standing in a rocky, grassy area.
23	Rock Partridge	<i>Alectoris graeca</i>	 A photograph of a Rock Partridge standing in a grassy field. It has a greyish-brown body with a prominent black and white striped pattern on its wings and a red bill.
24	Red-legged Partridge	<i>Alectoris rufa</i>	 A photograph of two Red-legged Partridges in a grassy field. They have brownish-grey bodies with dark wings and a red bill.

25	Grey Partridge	<i>Perdix perdix</i>	
26	Common Pheasant	<i>Phasianus colchicus</i>	
27	Rock Dove	<i>Columba livia</i>	
28	Bean Goose	<i>Anser fabalis</i>	
29	Greylag Goose	<i>Anser anser</i>	

30	Pintail	<i>Anas acuta</i>	
31	Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	
32	Wigeon	<i>Anas penelope</i>	
33	Shoveler	<i>Anas clypeata</i>	
34	Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>	

35	Garganey	<i>Anas querquedula</i>	
36	Pochard	<i>Aythya ferina</i>	
37	Gadwall	<i>Anas strepera</i>	
38	Tufted Duck	<i>Aythya fuligula</i>	
39	Canada Goose	<i>Branta Canadensis</i>	