



*During the week of the meet, Kearney had some of the balmiest temperatures on record for the area in late November. Although the Aplomado falcon (at right) may have enjoyed the warm weather, it was tough getting gyrfalcons to perform at their best. Still, many falcons flew exceptionally well, and the spectators were not disappointed. Several foreign guests said the longwing flights they witnessed were some of the best they had ever seen.*

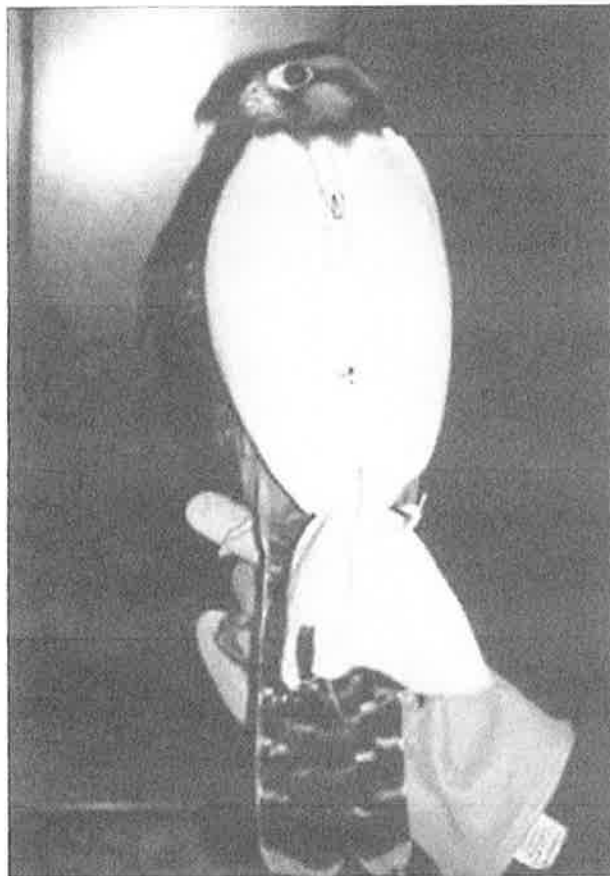


# USING THE ABA AS A BRAIL

JIM NELSON, KENNIWICK, WASHINGTON

Aba (pronounced ah'-buh, or alternatively, uh-bah') is an Arabic word given to a loose-fitting cloak-like garment worn by people in the Middle East. It is also the term used for a fabric falcon-training device of eastern origin used to pinion a bird's body and/or wings.

While the aba can be wrapped around the bird's entire body (including the legs) and used in the manner of a casting sock — useful for operations such as changing jesses, where one wishes to completely immobilize the bird for a short duration (*Kellogg, Hawk Chalk, 2001*) — it can also be used to pinion the wings, alone, above the level of the body. This ensures long-term restraint from bating during the initial phases of manning and hood training parent-reared raptors or wild-caught passagers (*Stoddart, pers. com., 2000*). It may also have uses in reclaiming a hood-shy bird which would rather bate herself to exhaustion rather than sit still for a single hooding.



■ Above: Jim Nelson's male, captive-bred Aplomado Falcon, Inca, wearing an aba-as-a-brail. Unfortunately this beautiful little bird was eventually killed by electrocution after attempting to land on a pole during a hunt. Photo by Jim Nelson.

A modified rectangle of fabric, the aba-as-a-brail becomes a sort of straight-jacket for birds. Its manufacture is easier to illustrate than to describe, so the reader is encouraged to study the accompanying illustrations and photos to learn its construction and visualize its fit. The rest of this discussion will assume familiarity with these, freeing us to focus on the aspects of use.

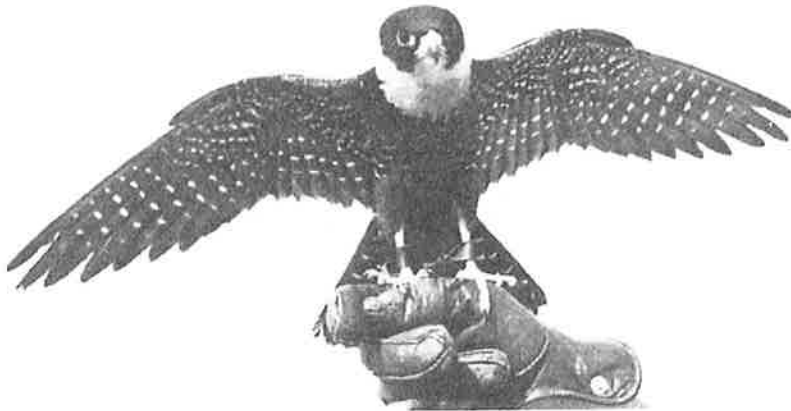
The principle underlying the use of the aba-as-a-brail is the same as clipping a parrot's wing. It removes the bird's ability to fly without overly-restricting the rest of her bodily functions. Thus, the bird can be forced to stay in place, unhooded, and deal with the new circumstances of captivity while still being able to feed, cast, defecate, do a limited amount of rousing and preening, and perch in an upright position. The bird is, unfortunately, denied the pleasures of "mantling" (single-wing stretching, down and to the side), "warbling" (dual-wing stretching, above the back), and wing pumping. Despite any temporary losses in movement, using the aba as a long-term brail ultimately offers the advantage that, after the objectives of manning and hood training are realized, it can be removed and all movement and flight immediately restored. Because of this, the aba provides the same benefits of "seeling" a falcon's eyes into a shut position (i.e., complete elimination of bating) combined with the benefits of "waking" with eyes wide open (i.e., forced acceptance of captivity through intense habituation).

Once a hawk or falcon is outfitted with an aba she must be given a chance to orient herself and gain her "land legs." This is best accomplished on a flat surface such as a turf mat, large enough in area that the bird, tied with appropriate equipment to the center, can move in any direction but be brought up short by her leash before leaving the confines of the mat (*Craighead, John J. and Frank C. Jr., Life with an Indian Prince, pgs 68 and 75. 2001*).

At first, the bird may react by attempting to scamper off the mat or flopping over to one side, or, by laying still and staring forward vacantly as though hypnotized. Try as you might, you may be unable to coax her to stand on her feet. As soon as you prop her up, she may sag or flop down into a prone position. The best course of action will be to leave her alone on her mat to work this problem out for

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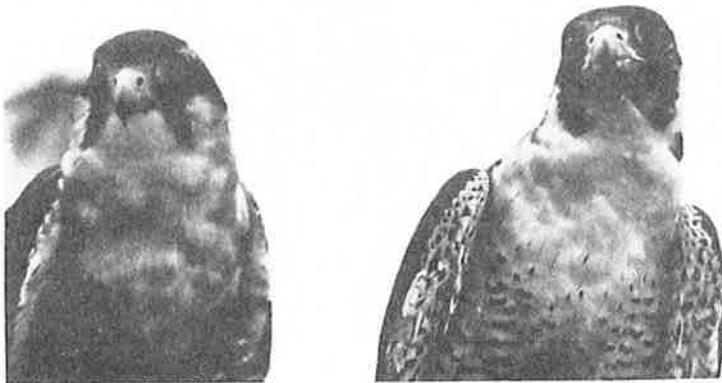




Tiercel Bat Falcon Sunbathing



Pepe with Tiercel Peregrine



Female Aplomado and Tiercel Peregrine



Tiercel and Female Bicolor with Oscar

areas the tiercel peregrine is out-done by small birds that tend to get to cover too quickly. An environment where the aplomado would excel. We have no rabbits.

The following have been included in our hunts:

- o Gallinula chloropus, moorhens. Also Porphyryula martinica, with peregrines and Harris'.
- o Anas cyanoptera and Anas bahamensis. With peregrines and Harris'.
- o Mumus longicaudatus, long-tailed mockingbird. With peregrine and aplomado.
- o Zenaida asiatica meloda and Zenaidura auriculata, doves. With Harris' and peregrines.
- o Pezites militaris, red-breasted meadowlark. With Harris'.
- o Crotophaga sulcirostris, ani. With Harris' and aplomado.
- o Rallus limicola, rail, and Laterallus jamaicensis. With Harris', peregrine, aplomado and bicolored hawk.



# THREE ARTISTS, THREE VIEWS OF THE NATURAL WORLD

by James K. Cleaver

F. P. (Tony) Bennett, Jr.

Tony Bennett approaches nature art with a singlemindedness and dedication not very different from the serious gamehawker. His ability and exactness come through each one of his paintings be they birds of prey, his first love, or birds known only to the tropical forested areas of the Rio Grande of Texas, Mexico, Central America or South America. At 27, he is slowly becoming known for his sensitive approach to, and masterful use of transparent watercolor and gouache in giving his paintings a subtle opaque quality.

Schooled in commercial art at Southwest Texas State University, San Marcus, Texas, his education was geared to becoming first of all knowledgeable in the fields of commercial, graphic and fine arts. His interest in birds began at an early age with bicycling trips to nearby refuges around his home of Marfa, Texas, sometimes thirty miles one way. This early interest slowly molded Tony to recreate the birds he had seen in the field. Rough at first, but over the past twenty years this early and continuing interest created artistic statements in each and every painting he has done.

Tony feels that an intimate first-hand knowledge of a particular species of bird is essential. Notes on color and behavior, sketches of posture and form made from life in the natural realm is the real key to portraying any bird in a finished painting. Other aids such as photographs, and museum specimens are just that — aids, not essential, but helpful. First hand knowledge, if only an impression from a brief glimpse, is more useful and meaningful than a dead carcass. Painting is an act of visual communication, or as Tony puts it, "The eye is the window to the soul." The uniqueness, the differences, the subtle colors, whether there are little white edgings to the feathers only on the last six of the ten primaries instead of the last five or seven, are important to him.

When Tony was a sophomore in college, an opportunity came about which really set him into directing all of his energies to wildlife art. He spent almost two years painting 48 color plates, depicting 1,000 species of birds for L. Irby Davis's *A Field Guide to the Birds of Mexico and Central America*, published in 1972 by the University of Texas Press. As Tony said about this experience, "I spent many a Saturday night with the Troglodytidae and the Trogonidae, and nobody else."



Peregrine head study. By Mary Dove

A number of nationally known wildlife artists, Roger Tory Peterson included, known for his Field Guides and limited edition prints, have said that Tony Bennett is on his way to becoming a refreshing new face in the tradition of Audubon and other great American wildlife artists.

Currently, Tony is working on putting enough of his work together for several one man shows, including a tentative show this coming year at the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, Ithaca, New York.

Douglas H. Pratt

Doug Pratt brings a gifted talent, painstakingly researched, carefully executed transparent watercolor-gouache style to each painting he does. In his early thirties, and only painting for several years, the sensitivity and portrayal he has been able to accomplish with his paintings is remarkable.

He is currently doing graduate work at Louisiana State University, while at the same time working on paintings for a forthcoming book on the birds of Hawaii and Micronesian Islands. He has completed fifteen paintings to date on this project. He also has to his credit fourteen color plates and over two hundred and fifty black and white illustrations for George H. Lowery, Jr.'s book *Mammals of Louisiana*. He also did the illustrations for Lowery's *Louisiana Birds*, and *The Field Guide to Birds of Mexico* by Ernest P. Edwards.

Born in North Carolina, Doug Pratt grew up inspecting and wondering about the natural world around him. This interest soon led to more serious study and beginning drawings. Being completely self taught, with no formal art education, experiments in form, shape, and detail came through an innate ability to depict what he saw, the texture of a wing, the roundness of a bill, the subtleness of color.

The Aplomado Falcon, reproduced in black and white for *The Journal* (p. 47), is a little known raptor, nor have many falconer's flown this secretive bird. Only through depicting a carefully observed bird, could he have come through on this portrait as he did. Being a concerned conservationist as well as an artist will bring the name of Douglas Pratt as one of America's new emerging wildlife artists.



Saker Falcon (*Falco cherrug*) head study. By Mary Dove

near Newmarket. The club display included: —

Jack Mavrogordato's gyr tiercel and saker, P. Glasier's casts of peregrines and merlins and M. Woodford's goshawk and merlin.

In 1960 Phillip Glasier resigned as he was out of sympathy with club policy.

There was at this time considerable anxiety concerning the toxic effects of Dieldrin and similar seed-dressings.

In 1961 the annual subscription was £1 1s. 0d.

Club Expenses were £145 19s. 3d.

Subscriptions were £200

*The Falconer and Falconry for Beginners* £88 10s. 0d.

Excess income over expenditure £135 16s. 10d., and the club recommended that no more Scottish peregrines should be applied for.

Goses cost £9 13s. 0d. and Spanish peregrines £12 0s. 0d.

Ten years ago the Game Fair was held in Scotland at Blair Drummond, and the Birds of Prey Conference at Caen.

In 1967 Jack Mavrogordato succeeded Major-General O'Carroll-Scott as President and at the end of the summer Michael Woodford retired from the post he had so ably filled for eleven years, to take up a conservation post in Uganda.

Cyril Morley assumed the Honorary Secretaryship and in 1969 I took over from him.

I do not propose to bore you with these last five

years—I am only too conscious of what I have failed to achieve, the battles lost, the wrong turnings and the retreat from one's objectives.

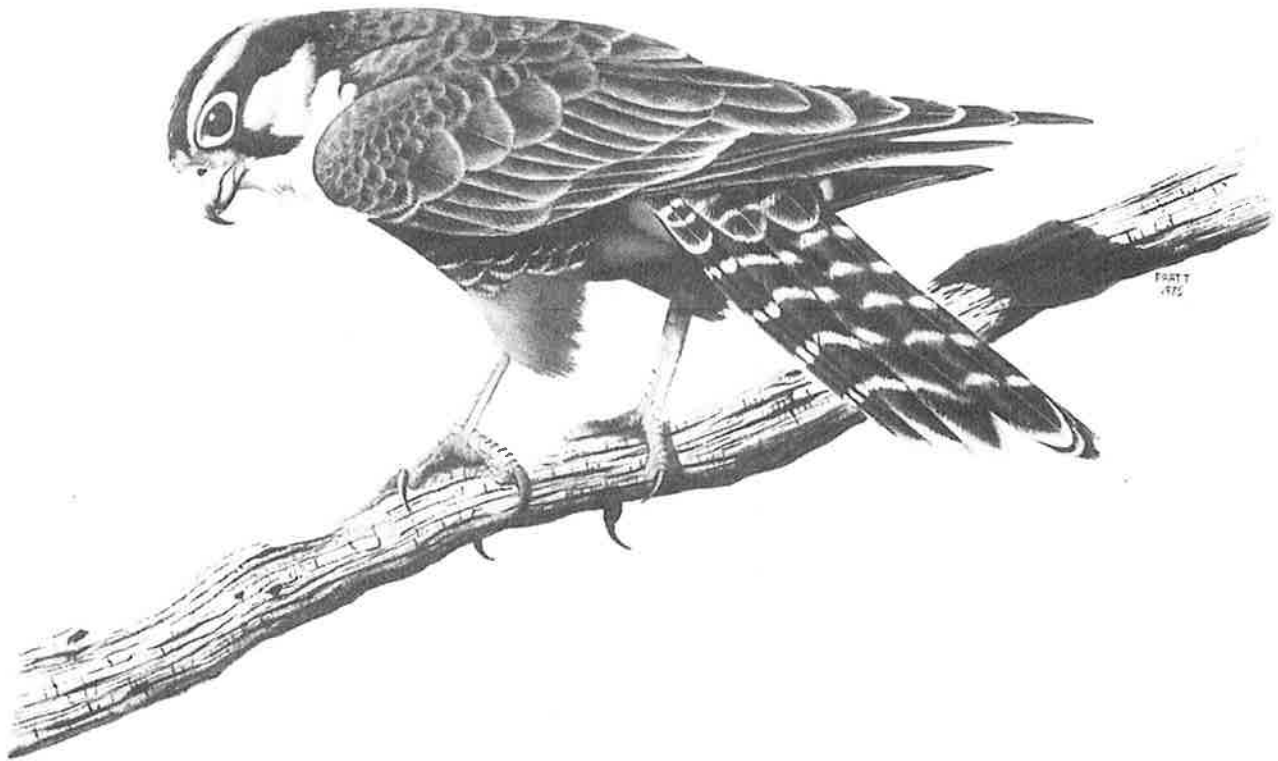
It has been enjoyable.

There have been times in the past when the club management has been very much decided by one or two persons alone. This has not been so recently.

I have had the advantage of guidance from J. G. Mavrogordato and Anthony Jack as Presidents, ably supported by the club officials, the Hon. Ass. Secretaries, Cyril Morley and Ted Davis, the Club Treasurers, Alwyn Griffiths and Robbie Wilson, that perennial figure, our Editor, Ridley MacPhail. It has been an excellent committee, and I would like to give my personal thanks to those who have served on the committee during my Hon. Secretaryship, and to those two retiring committee members Dennis Tennant-Flowers, who has performed a tremendous service in duplicating and getting out club circulars, and our lady committee member Betty Ashby, who has been a first-class attender and not hesitated to criticise but also offered unstinting assistance, so finding out that theory and practice do not always agree.

If I am to make any claims for the future it is that I was largely instrumental in limiting the time any club official could remain without seeking a new mandate.

My retirement will allow a new Hon. Secretary to revalue the policies and I hope guide us wisely in these very difficult times.



*Aplomado Falcon (Falco femoralis). Painting by Douglass H. Pratt.*