

# To Return Falcons to Their Original Habitat..Hadad Program Applauded by Falconry Experts

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A top official at the International Association for Falconry and Conservation of Birds of Prey (IAF) applauded the Hadad Program founded by the Saudi Falcons Club (SFC) and described it as "a fantastic project". In an interview Mark Upton, the executive secretary of the IAF said "We would like to support this project in any way we can, through our world-wide knowledge base of raptor conservation projects." He added that the program "fulfills the conservation and heritage aspirations of falconers around the world."

This environmental initiative he elaborated aims at the "reintroduction of local falcons within the Kingdom and migratory falcons in Central Asia and releasing them back into their original natural habitats."

Upton elaborated that volunteers, veterinary experts, international scientists, and Saudi falconers will work together to meet the objectives of the program. He added, "We can only



Mark Upton, the executive secretary of the IAF



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Hadad program to return  
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emphasize how important it is that this project is supported by those who wish to maintain the heritage and continuation of traditional falconry in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Middle East and beyond.”

Having a falconer father who once visited the region, Upton is personally excited about Hadad program, wishing his father is “looking down on it with great enthusiasm.”

According to him falconers were the first to notice the declining number of Peregrine Falcons in the sixties due to the misuse of agricultural chemicals. Hence, they were the first to successfully boost the falcon population and introduce falcons in Europe and North America where they have been extinct.

Now, the numbers of Peregrine Falcons are increasing more than ever before. Falconers have been in the forefront of conversational projects to protecting raptors and their prey that lost their natural habitats.

Upton stressed the IAF is dedicated to the preservation of the ancient art of falconry, and that the association has been involved in the acceptance of falconry as a UNESCO’s intangible cultural heritage of mankind. Founded in 1968 by a small group of falconry clubs from Europe, Japan, and US the IAF now represents thousands of falconers from over 80 countries around the world, including Saudi Arabia.

Hadad program was founded in 2020 by the SFC. The program is the first of its kind in Saudi Arabia that aims to reintroduce local and migratory falcons to their original habitats, increase the falcon population, and strengthen the Kingdom’s pioneering role in protecting the wildlife and natural environment as part of the transformative Vision 2030.

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SFC

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