

## Fact Sheet



# Falconry in UAE



### Falconry

Falconry is a major passion for the contemporary Emirati. Historically falconry was practised by the Bedouin to supplement the hunter's diet. Falconry has always been part of traditional Bedouin culture, using falcons to hunt for food in the winter months. Few birds of prey are able to breed in the desert where it is too hot and arid for them. The Bedouin would trap falcons as they passed through the Arab states on their migration routes to Africa; they also obtained falcons that had been trapped in Asia from passing traders. The Bedouin hunted Gazelles, Arabian hare, stone curlews and houbara bustard using falcons. The saker falcon and peregrine falcon were most commonly used by Bedouin falconers. The trapping and training of falcons requires skill and patience.

Today falconry is considered a national pastime if not a high-profile sport or art. In most ancient cultures falconry skills were a status indicator, where certain species of birds such as hawks and falcons are associated with one's position or wealth. Hunting with raptors is an important part of UAE culture and training the birds is an ancient art. Falcons are held in high regard in the UAE and are an important part of the culture and history of the region. Falconry is known as Al Saqarah in Arabic, while a falcon is called Al Saqr.

Prior to the discovery of oil, falconry was commonly used for hunting for food. In the past whenever people expected important guests, they would go hunting with falcons to gather enough food to welcome their guests. Today, falconry is only a sport.

### Coat of Arms

The coat of arms of the United Arab Emirates, officially adopted in 1973, consists of a golden falcon with the national flag on its chest. The seven stars around the flag, represents the seven self-governing sheikh-ruled Emirates. In its talons, the falcon holds a red parchment bearing the name of the federation. Throughout history the falcon has been the symbol of high birth and luxury. The falcon is also a commanding symbol of boldness.

