

MPRP Head Grills MNE Over Falcon Debate

As the falcon controversy breaks open again, after lying dormant for two years, a surprise new player has entered the soap opera-like drama. MPRP head N. Enkhbayar last week pitched questions to the Minister of Nature and Environment (MNE) S. Mendsaikhan. The following is a reprint of their Q & A.

Enkhbayar: Is falcon a rare bird in Mongolia?

Mendsaikhan: The fauna of Mongolia, according to the Mongolian Hunting Law, is divided into three categories, very rare, rare and normal. White falcons and falcons of the Amur River are rare. The saker falcons, which the Arabians buy from Mongolia, are normal.

E: What is the ceiling limit for falcon exports in 1999?

M: According to a April 21 government decision, the Ministry of Environment will export up to 40 falcons each to Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates. The Ministry has signed contracts with representatives of these countries, and the exports will soon commence.

E: What companies, agencies, and individuals, foreign and Mongolian, have been provided with licences to export falcons in 1999?

M: Permission has been given this year to export falcons to the Shah of



MPRP Chair, N. Enkhbayar

Kuwait Mitab Jaber Al Ahmed Al Sabah and the Sheik Grand Prince of Abu Dahbi Halifa bin Zaed al Nahiya.

E: Can you provide some information about the buyers?



M: Permission was given to these people only. They have never been in Mongolia and they have never taken Mongolian falcons before.

E: How much is the cost of one falcon?

M: A tax fee for each bird is \$2760. \$2550 is for the state budget and \$210 is for rural funds where the birds are captured.

E: Why are falcons being exported in 1999?

M: Negotiating licences were given in 1997 to five business companies to export falcons, three were engaged in export activities. According to contracts made by these businesses, one bird was sold for \$4000 (including tax and payment).

E: Where are the falcons exported to and when will they be shipped?

M: The falcons will be shipped to Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates by the end of October.

E: Has there been any control during the falcon export?

M: Licence certificates will be given when falcons are exported by the CIT-IES National Coordination council and the Nature Protection Service. The falcon trade will also be supervised by customs and veterinary officials.

Negotiations will be overseen by the Academy of Biology Research Institute and ornithologists of the Mongolian State University.