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Soaring Success

Falconry as a natural
bird control solution



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Soaring Success

Falconry as a natural bird control solution

An innovative company has found a modern use for the ancient art of falconry.

The creation of a use for these magnificent birds as working animals provides them with the protection of being a necessity and not simply an entertainment or hobby. The development of a true use for these falcons and the skills held by their handlers in a modern day world ensures the survival of thousands of years of knowledge and tradition. The adaptation of this sport into a form of pest control has created a real sustainable, commercial use for falconry in today's society.

Company founder and director, Layla Bennett, originally set up Hawksdrift in 2006 and has continued to drive the company forward with passion and determination. Layla is a self-made entrepreneur and wildlife management expert. She found further success for her business idea through the BBC's 'Dragons Den' programme where her plucky pitch in 2010 secured financial backing from Dragon Duncan Bannatyne. Layla found the main advantage was the publicity boost which put her idea and business into the right market place.

Now Hawksdrift is a growing and nationally successful business, specialising in commercial bird control solutions. The mainstay of the businesses income and the cause of exceptional growth for Hawksdrift is the provision of environmentally friendly natural bird control – the adaptation of the traditional sport of falconry to provide a modern method for the control of pest bird species. These business to business sales have increased by 400% over

the past 3 years, an exceptional performance despite the global recession.

Her customer base is wide, still mostly in England and Wales, and is proving to be a popular option for food manufacturing sites, large scale industrial sites, schools as well as other commercial buildings including landfill sites all of which have found this method to be hugely successful.

The technique is most useful where there are large flat roofs or corrugated materials which form cliff-like ledges. These areas are at risk from colonies of gulls who are nowadays commonly finding inland areas as attractive as the traditional coastal habitats. A regular fly past of a confident hawk or raptor acting like he owns the territory is enough to make the gulls think again about their choice of neighbourhood to nest in.

An added bonus to these businesses that use falconry in this way is the interest and curiosity of their employees. Often they gather to watch and admire and Layla has encouraged her clients to get close up to the tame birds for photo opportunities once their work has been done. This is clearly a popular way to get everyone on board when it comes to pest control and much less controversial than shooting or trapping.

In the continuous search for opportunities and to meet the needs of their growing customer base, Layla and her team now take on a whole range of other services surrounding Bird Control including the specialized markets of cleaning hazardous pigeon fouling and the installation of bird proofing including bird

point, avishock, large scale bird netting and bird scaring devices.

Hawksdrift is Safecontractor accredited and all staff have IPAF, UKATA and LANTRA qualifications. Hawksdrift works with a team of IRATA rope access specialists where bird control proofing or devices require specialized access.

Layla has worked hard to continue the successful development of her business model and to protect the birds she works with. She has built up a 'fleet' of 38 different hawks and raptors, including Monty pictured. Monty is a Gyr and Saker hybrid and a favourite with Layla as she has owned him since he was a very young bird. Monty is now 7 years old. Layla has personally trained each of her bird controllers and is proud to see Hawksdrift as a national leader in the provision of bird control services.



The International Powered Access Federation (IPAF) promotes the safe and effective use of powered access equipment.

UKATA is the United Kingdom Asbestos Training Association.

LANTRA help land-based and environmental businesses access the training, qualifications, skills and knowledge they need.