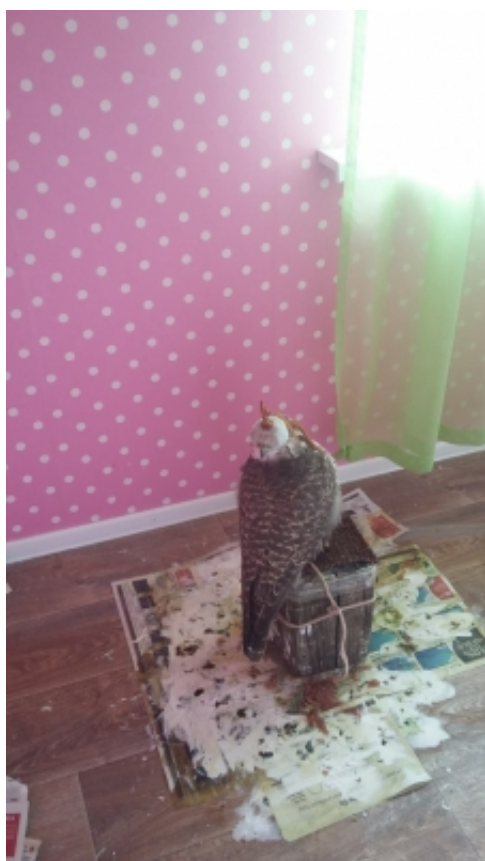


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## **In Buryatia, group of people from different regions and countries detained on suspicion of illegal capturing and circulation of high-value wild birds of falcon family listed in the RF Red Book**



The Buryatia Office of the Investigative Committee has initiated criminal proceedings against four members of an organized group, three of whom are Russian citizens from different regions and another one is from the Middle East. They are suspected of a crime under part 3 of Article 258.1 of the RF Penal Code (illegal capturing, keeping, storage, transportation, sending or selling of high-value wild animals of kinds listed in the RF Red Book committed by an organized group).

According to investigators, the suspects organized the capture of high-value birds of falcon family, such as peregrine falcon, saker falcon, gyrfalcon and others mostly in northern districts of Buryatia (Kurumkan, Barguzin, Yeravninsky). To hunt the birds they used special snares with live pigeons as a bait. The captured birds were then transported to the city of Irkutsk where the perpetrators rented a

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house to use it as a standing point for training and sending the birds to the markets in the Middle East. 11 falcons were found in the house during a search. The value of each of them on markets in Arabic countries can reach up to 100,000 US dollars. The birds were kept in poor conditions, they did not get food for several days and some of them were tied by their legs to stools or wooden chocks. The members of the group were detained after another illegal hunt when they were trying to get into the city of Ulan-Ude. When their vehicle was being searched, the Interior Ministry and Federal Security Service officers found a Red-Book falcon there which the perpetrators were intended to smuggle to Irkutsk.

At present all the suspects have already been put in custody pending trial. Necessary investigative operations are underway to find out all the detail of the group's criminal activity, including identifying and detaining other accomplices, finding and cutting the channels via which they have been conveying rare birds to foreign countries. The investigators are also going to find out the conditions that made it possible for the group to have committed their crimes for such a long time. After that offers will be submitted to respective ministries and agencies to tighten protection of rare and endangered species of animals and birds from poachers. The investigation is ongoing.

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