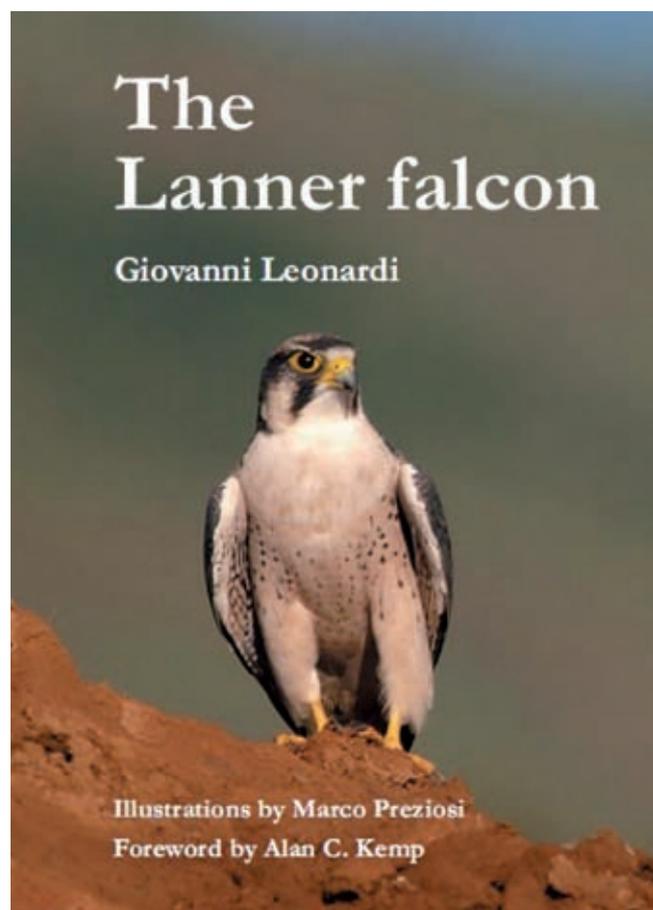


Book review



The Lanner falcon

Giovanni Leonardi

Illustrations by Marco Preziosi

Foreword by Alan C. Kemp

331 pagine, 32 tavole con 52 foto e illustrazioni a colori, foto e illustrazioni in bianco e nero
ISBN-13: 9788827581995

Ugo Mellone

Vertebrates Zoology Research Group, Departamento de Ciencias Ambientales y Recursos Naturales, University of Alicante, Apdo. 99, Alicante, E-03080, Spain
E-mail: u.mellone@gmail.com

© 2018 Ugo Mellone

Received: 13 October 2018

Accepted for publication: 15 October 2018

This self-published work aims at becoming the reference on the lanner falcon and probably one of the most in-depth monographs on a single raptor species. The author is already known for his studies on the species carried out in the last decades. In this book, not only he made a re-compilation of all the existing studies available from both indexed and “grey” literature. He also recompiled and analyzed all existing data, transforming seemingly useless sporadic observations into sound science. Some analyses presented in this book would worth, taken alone, a publication in a peer reviewed journal. In particular, the one on the phenotypic index, for which the author used hundreds of pictures of both alive and collected individuals from which got scores of plumage characteristics. Or, also, the distribution models, performed taking into account the different subspecies, and showing among them clear differences in the bioclimatic preferences. I also learnt intri-

guing phylogenetic relationships among the subspecies: for example, Italian individuals from the mainland are more connected with *erlangeri* than Sicilian ones! On the other hand, the latter are more aligned with *tanypterus*. The species itself is one of the most special ones of the European avifauna, being its range mainly in Africa. It spans from the slope of the Apennines to the Namib Desert. An important proportion of the *feldeggii* subspecies occurs in Italy, especially in Sicily, and this should convert it in a priority for conservation agents in our country, possibly the foremost among raptors. Hopefully this book will be useful also for this aim. The only weak point is, in my opinion, that the book would have benefited of a better graphic layout: margins are somehow narrow and also the alignments within table cells may be improved. Finally, unpublished photos and brand new illustrations contribute to make this work even more valuable.