



INDIANA FALCONRY LICENSE REGULATIONS

Indiana DNR, Division of Fish and Wildlife

Summary of Changes, August 2011

NEW APPLICANTS

New applicants and those that have had a license lapse for five (5) years or longer will have to pass an examination with a score of at least an 80% prior to obtaining a falconry license. An information packet is available from the Division of Fish and Wildlife that includes a list of the testing locations, the regulations, and a list of general and master class falconers, recommended reading materials, and information about the test. Applicants must call the testing location for an appointment.

After passing the test, a new applicant must submit an application form to the Indiana DNR, Division of Fish and Wildlife with the fee of sixty (\$60) dollars. The Division of Fish and Wildlife will notify DNR Law Enforcement, and a conservation officer will contact the applicant to arrange a time for an inspection of the facilities and equipment. All facilities of new applicants must be inspected by an Indiana conservation officer and found to meet the requirements of the law before obtaining a bird for use in falconry.

New applicants must begin as an apprentice class falconer, be at least 12 years of age, and have a sponsor. The sponsor must be a general or master class falconer that has had at least 2 years of experience at the general class level, and the sponsor must submit a signed, dated document to the DNR and agree to sponsor and assist the applicant with learning about the husbandry and training of raptors for falconry, learning about the relevant wildlife laws and regulations, and deciding upon which species is appropriate for the applicant.

UPGRADES

Apprentice class falconers can upgrade to general class if they are at least 16 years old and submit with the application a signed and dated document from the sponsor stating that the applicant has practiced falconry with a wild raptor possessed under the applicant's apprentice class falconry license for at least 4 months of at least 2 consecutive years and have hunted with that raptor and captured and released at least one falconry raptor.

General class falconers can upgrade to master class if the falconer has practiced falconry at the general class level for at least 4 months of each of 5 calendar years and has hunted with at least one raptor.

BANDING AND REPORTING

A licensed falconer must acquire a leg band from the Indiana DNR prior to attempting to acquire a raptor from the wild in Indiana. The leg band must be attached to the raptor within 10 days of acquisition. Within 10 days of acquiring, transferring, releasing, banding or rebanding, microchipping, losing a raptor due to death or theft, or losing a raptor that has escaped and not been found within 30 days, a licensed falconer must submit a Form 3-186A to the Indiana DNR or enter the required information in the federal electronic database (starting January 1, 2012). If a seamless metal band is removed or lost, a license holder must report it and request a replacement band from the Indiana DNR within 10 days of the removal or noting the loss of the band. If a leg band is removed or lost and the bird is still in the falconer's possession, the falconer must report it to the Indiana DNR within 5 days and either request a replacement band and reband the raptor within 10 days or purchase and implant an ISO compliant microchip in the raptor. If a licensed falconer documents health problems or injury in a raptor caused by a leg band or seamless metal band, the falconer can request an exemption from the Indiana DNR for that raptor. If an exemption is approved by the

Indiana DNR, the license holder must keep a copy of the exemption paperwork on his or her person when transporting or flying the raptor. If the raptor is a wild goshawk, Harris's hawk, peregrine falcon, or gyrfalcon, the license holder must replace the band with an ISO compliant microchip that will be supplied by the Indiana DNR. The Indiana DNR will not provide a microchip for a wild goshawk, Harris's hawk, peregrine falcon, or gyrfalcon unless the license holder has demonstrated that a band causes an injury or a health problem for the raptor.

A licensed falconer cannot band a raptor taken from the wild with a seamless metal band.

POSSESSION OF RAPTORS

Apprentice Class

An apprentice class falconer cannot possess more than 1 raptor at a time. The first raptor must be either a wild American kestrel or a wild red-tailed hawk that the apprentice falconer actively participated in capturing from the wild. After possessing at least 1 of these species for at least 6 months and releasing it, the apprentice falconer may subsequently possess a kestrel, red-tailed hawk, or a Harris hawk that is either wild or captive-bred and chamber-raised. The raptor cannot be taken from the wild as an eyass and cannot be imprinted on humans.

General Class

A general class falconer can possess no more than 3 raptors at a time. These raptors may be of any Falconiform or Strigiform species except for a federally listed threatened or endangered species, bald eagle, white-tailed eagle, Steller's sea eagle, or golden eagle. The raptors may be wild, captive-bred, or hybrid species.

Master Class

A master class falconer can possess no more than 5 wild raptors at a time and an unlimited number of captive-bred raptors, as long as the raptors are trained in the pursuit of wild game and used in hunting. Only one of a federally listed threatened or endangered species may be possessed. A maximum of 3 eagles of the following species may be possessed if the Indiana DNR approves a request to possess an eagle: golden eagle, white-tailed eagle, or Steller's sea eagle. A master class falconer must obtain approval from the Indiana DNR before obtaining one of these species of eagles by providing the individual's experience in handling large raptors, including the information about the species the individual has handled and the type and duration of the activity in which the experience was gained, and at least 3 letters of reference from individuals with experience handling or flying large raptors such as eagles, ferruginous hawks, red-tailed hawks, goshawks, or great horned owls. Each reference letter must contain a concise history of the author's experience with large raptors and must also assess the falconer's ability to care for eagles and fly them in falconry.

CAPTURING RAPTORS FROM THE WILD

A licensed falconer must acquire a leg band from the Indiana DNR prior to attempting to acquire a raptor from the wild in Indiana. A licensed falconer may take no more than 2 raptors from the wild per calendar year, regardless of a falconer's license class. A licensed falconer cannot take a species of raptor from the wild in Indiana that is classified as endangered or threatened in Indiana by state law (312 IAC 9-4-14) or by federal law (50 CFR 17.11).

A falconer (any class) can take a passage bird from September 1 through the last day of February of the following year. Only general or master class falconers can take an eyass from the wild, and at least 1 eyass must remain in the nest. Eyasses can be taken from January 1 through August 31 of each year. A general

class falconer can take no more than 1 eyass each year, and a master class falconer can take no more than 2 eyasses each year.

Kestrels and great horned owls can be taken if over one year of age and at any time of year.

A licensed falconer cannot intentionally capture a raptor species that he/she cannot legally possess. A licensed falconer must obtain permission from the landowner on whose land he/she wishes to trap. A licensed falconer cannot take (capture) raptors in any manner that violates any law. A licensed falconer must immediately release any raptor that is captured unintentionally or that he/she is not allowed to possess.

A master class falconer can take no more than 1 raptor that is a federally threatened species from the wild each year if it is allowed in the location where the raptor was taken, the raptor is taken in accordance with the laws governing falconry, and the falconer obtains an endangered species permit from the USFWS before taking the raptor.

A licensed falconer can take a raptor for another falconer only in accordance with 312 IAC 9-10-13.1(u).

Unless you are a general or master class falconer and have captured a raptor for a falconer that cannot physically capture a raptor from the wild, any other wild raptor that you capture and later transfer to another license holder in the same calendar year will count as one (1) of the raptors that you are allowed to take from the wild that year. The transferred wild raptor will not count against the take of wild raptors by the transferee.

If a raptor is injured by trapping efforts, a licensed falconer must:

(1) put the raptor on your falconry license and:

- (a) count the raptor against your take of wild raptors;
- (b) count the raptor against your possession limits;
- (c) band the raptor and report it either electronically or through a paper Form 3-186A; and
- (d) have the raptor treated by a veterinarian or a licensed wild animal rehabilitator;

or (2) give the raptor directly to:

- (a) a licensed veterinarian;
- (b) a licensed wild animal rehabilitator; or
- (c) an appropriate employee of the Indiana DNR.

Under either option, the licensed falconer is responsible for the costs of care and rehabilitation of the raptor.

If you obtain a raptor from a licensed wildlife rehabilitator, it will count as one of the raptors that you are allowed to take from the wild that year.

If you capture a raptor that is banded or marked with any other type of research marking or transmitter, you must comply with the requirements in 312 IAC 9-10-13.1(y) and (z).

If you recapture a falconry raptor, you must:

- (A) Report the capture to the Indiana DNR within five (5) working days after the capture.
- (B) Return the raptor to the individual who lost it if the individual is authorized to possess it.
- (C) Dispose of a raptor whose legal possession cannot be determined at the direction of the Indiana DNR.

A licensed falconer may keep a falconry raptor that was lawfully recaptured if the individual who lost the raptor is not authorized to possess the raptor or does not wish to possess it. The temporary possession of a

falconry raptor that was recaptured will not count against the license holder's limit of birds. The recapture of a wild raptor is not considered to be taking a raptor from the wild.

HOUSING RAPTORS

All facilities must be inspected by an Indiana conservation officer and found to meet the standards in this subsection before obtaining a bird for use in falconry.

All facilities (mews and weathering areas) must provide humane and healthful living conditions for the raptors. Compatible raptors may be housed together untethered. Each raptor housed in a mew or weathering area must have access to a pan of clean water unless weather conditions, the perch type used, or some other factor makes access to a water pan unsafe for the raptor.

Primary enclosures must include a mew or weathering area or a combination of characteristics of both that provides the following:

- (1) A suitable perch for each raptor with at least one (1) opening for sunlight.
- (2) Protection for the raptor from the environment, predators, domestic animals, or other undue disturbance.
- (3) An area large enough to allow the raptor to fly if not tethered or, if tethered, to fully extend its wings or bate without damaging its feathers or contacting other raptors.

For mews:

- (1) Mews must be large enough to allow easy access for the care and feeding of the raptors.
- (2) For raptors that are not tethered, walls of mews that are not solid must be protected on the inside. Suitable protective materials may include vertical bars spaced narrower than the width of the body of the smallest raptor housed in the enclosure. However, heavy-duty netting or other such materials may be used to cover the walls or roof of the enclosure.
- (3) Acceptable mews may include shelf perch enclosures where raptors are tethered side by side. Other innovative housing systems are acceptable if they provide the enclosed raptors with protection and maintain healthy feathers.
- (4) A raptor may be kept inside a license holder's place of residence if:
 - (a) a suitable perch is provided; and
 - (b) the raptor is tethered except when being moved into or out of the location where it is kept.

The license holder is not required to modify windows or other openings of the residence.

For weathering areas:

- (1) A weathering area must be totally enclosed and be made of:
 - (a) heavy gauge wire;
 - (b) heavy-duty plastic mesh;
 - (c) slats;
 - (d) pipe;
 - (e) wood; or
 - (f) another suitable material.
- (2) A weathering area must be covered.
- (3) A weathering area must:
 - (a) have at least one (1) covered perch for each raptor; and
 - (b) be constructed of acceptable design to protect the raptor from predators, weather, domestic animals, or other undue disturbance.
- (4) A weathering area must be large enough to ensure that the raptors cannot strike the enclosure when flying from the perch.

(5) New types of weathering areas or husbandry practices, or both, may be used if they satisfy the requirements above and are approved in writing by the Indiana DNR.

A temporary housing facility must:

- (1) be used for not more than one hundred twenty (120) consecutive calendar days;
- (2) have a suitable perch; and
- (3) protect the raptor from extreme temperatures, predators, domestic animals, wind, and excessive disturbances.

Raptors may be kept outside in the open if they are under watch by the license holder or the license holder's designee in a weathering yard at a falconry meet or other location.

A falconer's housing facilities may be located on property owned by another person only if the falconer submits a signed and dated statement to the Indiana DNR confirming that the property owner agrees that the falconry facilities and raptors may be inspected by a conservation officer at any reasonable time of day without advance notice in the presence of the license holder or in the presence of the property owner, except the conservation officer may not enter the facilities or disturb the raptors unless the license holder is present.

A licensed falconer must inform the department within five (5) business days if the location of the housing facilities has changed.

A licensed falconer must provide a suitable perch that is protected from extreme temperatures, wind, and excessive disturbance when transporting a raptor, hunting with a raptor, or if the a raptor is away from the permanent facility where it is housed. A giant hood or an enclosure is acceptable for transporting or housing a raptor when the raptor is away from its primary enclosure.

EQUIPMENT FOR RAPTORS

A licensed falconer must have the following equipment for each raptor:

- (1) A pair of jesses of high quality leather or suitable synthetic material or the materials and equipment to make them. Traditional one (1) piece jesses may be used on a raptor when not being flown.
- (2) A flexible, weather-resistant leash and a strong swivel of acceptable falconry design.
- (3) An appropriate, reliable scale or balance graduated to increments of not more than one-half (1/2) ounce (15 grams) for weighing a raptor.

TRANSFERRING RAPTORS

A licensed falconer can sell, purchase, barter, or trade a captive-bred raptor that is marked with a seamless metal band or microchip to another individual who is licensed to possess that species of captive-bred raptor. Wild raptors may not be sold, traded, or bartered. Wild raptors may be gifted with no compensation of any kind to an individual who is authorized to possess that species of wild raptor. Unlimited transfers of wild or captive-bred raptors are allowed, but a licensed falconer must not exceed the possession limit of the license class held.

A licensed falconer may acquire any age of raptor of a species authorized to possess if it came directly from a rehabilitator only as follows:

- (1) Transfer to a license holder is at the discretion of the rehabilitator.
- (2) A raptor that is acquired from a rehabilitator will count as one (1) of the raptors allowed to be taken from the wild that year.

A licensed falconer may transfer the following:

(1) A wild raptor to the holder of another permit type as follows:

(A) To the holder of a raptor propagation permit as follows:

(i) A sharp-shinned hawk, Cooper's hawk, Merlin, or American kestrel after used in falconry for at least one (1) year.

(ii) All other wild raptors after used in falconry for two (2) years.

(B) At any time after the license holder's acquisition of a wild raptor the raptor may be transferred to the holder of another permit type that authorizes the possession of the wild raptor if the wild raptor has been injured and a licensed veterinarian or licensed wild animal rehabilitator has determined that the wild raptor can no longer be flown for falconry. The license holder shall submit a certification from the veterinarian or wild animal rehabilitator to the Indiana DNR confirming that the wild raptor is not useable in falconry.

(2) A raptor to another license type possessed by the falconer.

HUNTING WITH RAPTORS

A licensed falconer must have a valid Indiana hunting license to hunt wild animals with his/her raptor(s). You must also possess a valid Indiana game bird habitat stamp privilege to hunt game birds such as pheasants, quail, or doves with your raptor. If you will hunt waterfowl with your raptor, you must also possess a valid Indiana migratory waterfowl stamp privilege.

The season for hunting:

(1) eastern cottontail rabbits, northern bobwhite quail, and ring-necked pheasants is from September 1 through February 28 of the following year; and

(2) gray and fox squirrels is from August 15 through February 15 of the following year.

The daily bag limit per raptor is two (2) rabbits, two (2) squirrels, one (1) quail, and one (1) pheasant, except during the seasons for these wild animals established under 312 IAC 9-3 and 312 IAC 9-4, when the daily bag limits established under those rules apply. The season and bag limits for taking waterfowl and migratory birds are those set forth in 312 IAC 9-4 and 50 CFR 21.

If a raptor kills an animal without the intent of the license holder that is not in the regular hunting season or in excess of a bag limit, the license holder must not possess the animal but the raptor may feed upon the carcass before leaving the site.

A licensed falconer can hunt the species listed above at any time of day. A licensed falconer can carry a handgun in accordance with the laws governing the possession of handguns in IC 35-47.

A licensed falconer must ensure that his/her raptor does not take state or federally listed threatened or endangered wild animals. Contact the Indiana DNR or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Bloomington Field Office for more information about listed species and locations where they are known to be found.

A licensed falconer may hunt wild animals on public lands where authorized and on private lands with the permission of the landowner or custodian.

A licensed falconer may hunt the following species of birds:

(1) American crows in accordance with 312 IAC 9-4-7.1 and 312 IAC 9-4-7.2.

(2) European starlings.

(3) English sparrows.

(4) Rock pigeons.

The use or aid of a motor driven conveyance that is not under power or in motion and on private property is allowed to be used to take these 4 species of birds only. A licensed falconer cannot possess a firearm of any

type while hunting from a motor driven conveyance except for a handgun carried in accordance with IC 35-47.

A licensed falconer may hunt a wild animal without wearing hunter orange only on property in which a local ordinance prohibits the use of firearms.

A licensed falconer that is hunting with a raptor may be accompanied by other individuals who have not:

- (1) paid a fee to accompany the falconer; and
- (2) handled a raptor possessed by a falconer except to hold or practice flying the raptor while under the direct and on-site supervision of the falconer.

A license holder must affix at least two (2) functioning radio transmitters to any hybrid raptor being free flown for any reason.

RELEASING RAPTORS

A licensed falconer cannot permanently release a raptor that is not native to the state of Indiana or a hybrid of any species. A licensed falconer may release a captive-bred raptor that is native to Indiana at an appropriate time of year and an appropriate location only after:

- (1) obtaining prior written approval from the Indiana DNR, and
- (2) hacking the raptor in accordance with 312 IAC 9-10-13.1(dd) at an appropriate time of year and an appropriate location.

A licensed falconer may release a wild raptor that is native to Indiana at an appropriate time of year and at an appropriate location without prior approval from the Indiana DNR, but the falconer must remove the raptor's leg band prior to the release, return the leg band to the Indiana DNR, and report the release within ten (10) days.

USING RAPTORS IN EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

A licensed falconer may use a raptor possessed under this section in conservation education programs presented in public venues as follows:

- (a) A licensed falconer is not required to obtain a special purpose educational permit from the Indiana DNR provided that any fee charged does not exceed the amount required to recoup the costs of presenting the program.
- (b) A licensed falconer must hold a valid special purpose educational permit from the Indiana DNR if the falconer presents conservation education programs for profit.

Apprentice class falconers may present conservation programs only under the direct supervision of a general or master class falconer. A raptor used in conservation education programs must be used by a license holder primarily for falconry.

All conservation education programs must provide information about:

- (1) raptor biology;
 - (2) the ecological role of raptors; and
 - (3) the conservation needs of raptors and other migratory birds;
- although not all of these topics must be addressed in every presentation.

A raptor mounted by a taxidermist may also be used in conservation education programs.

A licensed falconer is responsible under 50 CFR 13.50 for all liability associated with conservation education activities undertaken.

USE AND DISPOSITION OF FEATHERS

A licensed falconer may possess flight feathers for each species of raptor possessed or previously held for as long as the person has a valid falconry license and uses the feathers for the purpose of imping. A licensed falconer may for imping purposes receive feathers from and give feathers to other individuals holding valid falconry, wild animal rehabilitation (for migratory birds), or raptor propagation permits.

A licensed falconer may donate raptor feathers, except golden eagle feathers, to:

- (1) any person or institution with a valid permit to possess them; or
- (2) anyone exempt from the permit requirement under 50 CFR 21.12.

A licensed falconer is not required to gather feathers that are molted or otherwise lost by a raptor except for primary or secondary flight feathers or retrices from a golden eagle.

A licensed falconer holder must collect all molted flight feathers and retrices from a golden eagle. If the license holder does not need the feathers for imping purposes or upon expiration, denial, suspension, or revocation of a falconry license, the license holder must send all golden eagle feathers (including body feathers) to the National Eagle Repository at the following address: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Eagle Repository, Rocky Mountain Arsenal, Building 128, Commerce City, Colorado 80022.

A licensed falconer cannot buy, sell, or barter raptor feathers.

Upon the expiration, denial, suspension, or revocation of a falconry license, all feathers of any species of raptor except a golden eagle must be:

- (1) given to an individual or any institution exempt from the permit requirements under 50 CFR 21.12;
- (2) given to an individual authorized by permit to acquire and possess the feather;
- (3) burned;
- (4) buried; or
- (5) otherwise destroyed.

DISPOSITION OF CARCASSES

A licensed falconer must dispose of a carcass of a raptor only as follows:

- (1) For golden eagles, the entire body, including all feathers, talons, and other parts, must be sent to the National Eagle Repository.
- (2) For all other species, the body or feathers of the raptor must be:
 - (a) given to an individual or institution exempt from permit requirements under 50 CFR 21.12;
 - (b) given to an individual authorized by permit to acquire and possess such parts or feathers;
 - (c) burned;
 - (d) buried; or
 - (e) otherwise destroyed;

within ten (10) days of the raptor's death or final veterinarian examination to determine the cause of death.

A licensed falconer may keep the body of any falconry raptor, except a golden eagle, if the raptor was banded or micro-chipped prior to its death for:

- (1) feathers useable for imping; or
- (2) mounting by a taxidermist with the leg band remaining on the body or microchip left in place.

A licensed falconer must take appropriate precautions to avoid the risk of secondary poisoning of eagles and

other scavengers by carcasses of euthanized raptors. A licensed falconer who does not donate the carcass or feathers or have the body mounted by a taxidermist may possess the flight feathers for as long as he/she holds a valid falconry license and maintains documentation of the acquisition of the raptor.

OTHER REQUIREMENTS

A licensed falconer must make the records, housing facilities, raptors, and equipment available for inspection by an Indiana conservation officer at any reasonable time without advance notice, but the inspection must be done in the presence of the license holder. In the event of immediate concern for the welfare of the raptor, the Indiana DNR may conduct an inspection with a court order without the presence of a license holder.

A licensed falconer must have his or her falconry license, or legible copies, in immediate possession at all times if he/she is not at the location of his or her primary housing facilities and is:

- (1) trapping;
- (2) transporting;
- (3) working with; or
- (4) flying;
the raptor.

A licensed falconer may without receiving compensation allow a raptor possessed under this section to be photographed, filmed, or depicted visually by other means to create sources of information on the following:

- (1) The practice of falconry.
- (2) Raptor biology.
- (3) The ecological role of raptors.
- (4) The conservation needs of raptors and other migratory birds.

A licensed falconer cannot use a falconry raptor to:

- (1) Make movies or other commercial entertainment.
- (2) Make commercials or other advertisements.
- (3) Make any other commercial ventures that are not related to falconry.
- (4) Promote or endorse any:
 - (a) products;
 - (b) merchandise;
 - (c) goods;
 - (d) services;
 - (e) meetings; or
 - (f) fairs;

except as otherwise provided in 312 IAC 9-10-13.1 (pp); or to

- (5) Represent any:
 - (a) business;
 - (b) company;
 - (c) corporation; or
 - (d) other organization.

A licensed falconer can, with or without receiving compensation, use a falconry raptor to promote or endorse the following:

- (1) A nonprofit falconry organization or association.
- (2) Materials, equipment, products, or endeavors related to falconry, including falconry training and education.

(3) Scientific research and publication.

Falconry licenses expire on the last day of February of the third year following the year in which the license is issued. Renewal applications are mailed out to licensed falconers approximately sixty (60) days prior to the expiration of the license.

NOTE: This document is intended only to be summary of some of the regulations governing falconry, but a license holder must abide by all of the provisions found in 50 CFR 21, IC 14-22-23, and 312 IAC 9-10-13.1.

CONTACT FOR MORE INFORMATION/QUESTIONS:

Linnea Petercheff
Operations Staff Specialist
Indiana DNR Division of Fish and Wildlife
402 W. Washington Street, Rm. W273
Indianapolis, IN 46204
Phone: (317) 233-6527
Fax: (317) 232-8150
E-mail: lpetercheff@dnr.in.gov