

Falconry Policy for Alberta



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Alberta 

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Falconry Policy in Alberta

1.0 Intent

The intent of this document is to provide guidance on establishing a falconry society in Alberta and to provide direction on licensing for the purposes of collection and possession of certain species of falconry birds for the sport of falconry. The policy is guided by the following overarching results-based objectives:

- 1) To provide information on those portions of Alberta's *Wildlife Act* and Wildlife Regulation that pertain to falconry to ensure an understanding (within and outside government) that falconry is recognized as a valued and regulated form of hunting;
- 2) To assist in regulating the sport in Alberta to ensure that falconry continues to be practised at the very highest standard;
- 3) To provide understanding (within and outside government) of procedures and paperwork required to ensure compliance with regulations;
- 4) To ensure good stewardship and humane care of captive falconry birds utilized by falconers.

2.0 Application

This document applies to any person or organization seeking to establish a falconry society, and any person who has, or is applying for, permits and/or licences to:

- capture or hold a falconry bird for the purpose of hunting wildlife and/or the purpose of breeding falconry birds for use in falconry or sale;
- import or export of falconry birds to/from Alberta for use in falconry or breeding.

3.0 Definitions

- **Apprentice falconer:** a person who is licensed by the province to practice falconry and is in an apprenticeship program offered by an approved designated falconry society
- **Captive-born:** a falconry bird that is hatched and raised in captivity
- **Director:** a Director with the Fish and Wildlife Stewardship Branch, Alberta Environment and Parks

- **Eyas raptor:** a young-of-the-year falconry bird that is taken from the nest prior to it being able to fly
- **Falconer:** a person who trains and uses falconry birds for hunting or bird control activities
- **Falconry:** the hunting of wild quarry in its natural habitat with a trained bird of prey
- **Falconry bird:** a bird listed as such in Alberta's Wildlife Regulation
- **Falconry permit:** a specific permit that allows an individual to practice recreational or commercial falconry
- **Falconry society:** a society that has been designated by the Minister of Environment and Parks as an approved falconry society under Alberta's Wildlife Regulation
- **Haggard raptor:** a falconry bird that is in adult plumage
- **Licensed falconer:** a person who holds a Falconry Permit (Recreational or Commercial) from Alberta Environment and Parks
- **Ministry:** the Ministry of Environment and Parks
- **Non-resident falconer:** a falconer from a jurisdiction outside of Alberta
- **Passage raptor:** a falconry bird that is captured while free-flying in the wild during migration or in the winter and prior to the first molt
- **Permit or licence:** authority granted for an activity under Alberta's *Wildlife Act* or Alberta's Wildlife Regulation
- **Seamless bands:** individually marked/coded bands that are closed and placed on a captive-born falconry bird at an early age so that the bird grows with the band in place so that the band eventually cannot be removed without cutting either the band or the leg of the bird
- **Split bands:** individually marked/coded bands that are open and can be applied to eyas or passage falconry birds, identifying the bird as taken under a Collection Licence and where ownership has been transferred from the Crown to a falconer using a Property Transfer
- **Raptor:** A bird species belonging to families Acciptridae or Falconidae
- **Resident:** A resident of Alberta, as defined in Alberta's *Wildlife Act*
- **Wild-caught:** a wild falconry bird, either eyas or passage, that is captured under a Collection Licence from a wild population for falconry purposes

4.0 Government Roles and Responsibilities

The Fish and Wildlife Stewardship Branch, Alberta Environment and Parks, is responsible for the following:

- creating, maintaining and updating this policy;
- designating approved falconry societies;
- issuing Collection Licences and Property Transfers for eyas and passage falconry birds to Alberta resident falconers;
- providing numbered split bands for the banding of wild-caught falconry birds taken for falconry;
- providing numbered seamless bands for the banding of captive-raised falconry birds;
- issuing annual Falconry Permits;
- issuing permits for the import and export of live falconry birds for falconry purposes; and
- completing a minimum of one inspection of each licensed falconer's facilities each time such facilities are built, and the submission of inspection reports to a Director of Fish and Wildlife, Environment and Parks.

5.0 Falconry Societies

Falconry was first legalized in Alberta in 1981. Since then, Alberta's Wildlife Regulation has required that practising falconers belong to the Alberta Falconry Association in order to apply for a Falconry Permit each year. In August of 2020, Alberta's Wildlife Regulation was amended to allow the Minister of Environment and Parks to designate more than one falconry society; practising falconers must belong to an approved falconry society in order to be eligible to apply for a Falconry Permit.

The following outlines the minimum requirements that must be met to be designated as a falconry society by Alberta Environment and Parks:

1. Must have a Code of Ethics for membership that has been reviewed and approved by a Director of Fish and Wildlife, Alberta Environment and Parks;
2. Must have a set of Bylaws for their membership that are reviewed and approved by a Director of Fish and Wildlife, Alberta Environment and Parks.

3. Must have an effective apprenticeship scheme that involves signoff by the falconry sponsor stating that the apprentice demonstrates the competence to move from “apprentice” to the ranks of a “falconer”. The apprenticeship scheme must be approved by a Director of Fish and Wildlife, Alberta Environment and Parks. More detail on apprenticeship schemes appear as Appendix 1 of this document;
4. Must provide its members with a proof of membership in the form of a membership card or other recognized method as approved by a Director;
5. Must agree that matters of discipline for society members or refusal of membership to any prospective falconer are the purview of the society. However, the final arbiter as to whether an individual is issued a falconry permit will be a Director.

Falconers in Alberta who join a society that meets the above standards are required to follow not only the bylaws of that society, but all requirements under law as outlined in Alberta’s Wildlife Regulation and *Wildlife Act*.

6.0 Permitted Species

- wild-caught raptors allowed for harvest as identified as falconry birds in Alberta’s Wildlife Regulation
- captive-reared native raptors identified as falconry birds in Alberta’s Wildlife Regulation
- captive-reared exotics: Harris’s hawks and Aplomado falcons
- captive-reared hybrids of exotic/native raptors identified as falconry birds in Alberta’s Wildlife Regulation

7.0 General Conditions

Possession

- wild-caught birds may not be sold, traded or bartered (i.e., trafficked)
- permitted wild-caught species will not exceed two such falconry birds per year per Recreational Falconry Permit
- Recreational Falconry Permit holders cannot possess more than 4 falconry birds and their offspring under 6 months old

- there are no restrictions on the number of falconry birds possessed by the holder of a Commercial Falconry Permit
- non-resident falconers cannot capture raptors from the wild in Alberta

Falconry Permits

- Alberta resident falconers must:
 - present proof of membership in a recognized falconry society in Alberta
 - make application for a Falconry Permit (Recreational or Commercial) at a Fish and Wildlife office of Alberta Environment and Parks each year in March.
- all Falconry Permits will expire on March 31 following the date of issue
- prior to March 31 of each year, all licensed falconers will re-apply by filling in and submitting an Annual Report (Appendix 2) stating the species, sex and band numbers of all birds currently held or held during the previous permit year

Import/Export of Falconry Birds

- any non-Alberta resident individual who requests to import or export a falconry bird for falconry purposes must complete a *Wildlife Import/Export Permit Application Form*
- Falconers from within Canada do not require a Certificate of Veterinary Health to temporarily import falconry birds to Alberta
- resident falconers must also complete an *Wildlife Import/Export Permit Application Form* when permanently importing a falconry bird or when exporting a falconry bird permanently or for the purpose of hunting out of the province
- Falconers importing birds permanently from outside of Alberta require a Certificate of Veterinary Health with the Import Permit
- once issued, an Export Permit will apply to movements of Alberta resident licensed falconers with their own falconry birds into or out of Alberta for a period of not more than 90 days

Capture of Falconry Birds

- subject to approval by the Fish and Wildlife Stewardship Branch, licensed falconers may capture eyas or passage raptors for falconry purposes under the authority of a Collection Licence, up to a maximum of two wild-caught birds may be taken in one year;

- capture techniques are to follow Class Protocol 001 at: <https://open.alberta.ca/publications/class-activity-raptor-collection-for-falconry>;
- non-resident falconers cannot capture raptors from the wild in Alberta;
- the permittee must report any capture of any eyas or passage falconry bird to the Ministry official listed on the Collection Licence within seven days of capture to arrange for a split band to be attached to the bird and a Property Transfer is paid to the government of Alberta for the bird at that time;
- removal of eggs is not permitted;
- removal of eyas birds must be timed to prevent premature fledging;
- a minimum of one live young must be left in the nest;
- Collection Licences will not be issued for any species that is listed as **threatened** or **endangered** under Alberta's Wildlife Regulation or the federal *Species at Risk Act*;
- for eyas capture, the permittee must provide the exact location (legal land description or GPS coordinates) of all nest site(s) that are visited, to the Ministry official listed on the Collection Licence;
- the licensee must have permission of the landowner, occupant or lessee prior to accessing privately controlled land for the purpose of capturing an eyas falconry bird or passage falconry bird; and
- any injury or death resulting from the capture or attempted capture of a falconry bird must be reported immediately reported to the Ministry official listed on the Collection Licence.

Housing of Falconry Birds

- the minimum requirements for housing of falconry birds can be found in the Falconry Mews Inspection Sheet (Appendix 3);
- falconry birds held under a Falconry Permit may be housed temporarily at a location of another licensed falconer with a letter of authority from the permittee and the stay is not for more than 90 days;
- this letter will include the date custody was given and the anticipated duration of care, the permit number and the band number(s) of the falconry bird(s) to be temporarily housed.

Retired Wild-caught Falconry Birds

- if a wild-caught falconry bird is no longer used for falconry purposes, it may be released into the wild if it is deemed capable of hunting and surviving on its own;
- if a wild-caught falconry bird is no longer an effective hunter, is no longer used for falconry purposes, and cannot be released to the wild, and if the cause of ineffectiveness is not a result of neglect by the falconry permittee, the wild-caught falconry bird may be retained as a retired falconry bird under permit as a licensed wild-caught bird or can be transferred to the holder of a Commercial Falconry Permit for use in breeding;
- if a retired wild-caught falconry bird is not retained by the original permittee, donation of the falconry bird to an approved facility for captive breeding purposes should be reported in the annual report of both falconers.

8.0 Administrative Information

1. Legislative References/Authority:

- Alberta's *Wildlife Act, 1998*
- Alberta's Wildlife Regulation 143/1997

2. Permits/Forms

- Falconry Permit
- Wildlife Import/Export Permit
- Application Form for the Falconry Collection Licence (<https://www.alberta.ca/wildlife-research-and-collection.aspx>)
- Alberta Wildlife Property Transfer

3. The following documents may be obtained from the Licensing Specialist:

- Falconry Mews Inspection Sheet

4. Contact

BRANCH: Fish and Wildlife Stewardship

CONTACT: Gordon Court

PHONE: 780 422 9536


9.0 Approved by

NAME: Travis Ripley

TITLE: Executive Director

Fish and Wildlife Stewardship Branch, Alberta Environment and Parks

DATE: October 29, 2020



*This document is based on a similar policy prepared by the Ministry of Environment, Government of Saskatchewan. **In cases where interpretation/wording in this policy differs from that in Alberta's *Wildlife Act* or Alberta's *Wildlife Regulation*, the *Act* and *Regulation* supersede this policy.**

Appendices

Appendix 1—Notes on Apprenticeship Schemes

If sponsored by a recognized falconry society in Alberta:

- an initial training period with a licensed falconer must be completed without a bird, during which time the apprentice falconer illustrates his/her interest and ability to become a licensed falconer
- upon completion of this initial period:
 - the apprentice falconer must:
 - submit an application to Alberta Environment and Parks for a Falconry Permit and a Collection Licence in order to capture and hold one bird and;
 - must sign a Falconry Apprentice/Supervisor Agreement
 - the licensed falconer who supervises an apprentice must:
 - ensure that the apprentice has adequate equipment, transportation and facilities to care for a falconry bird before the apprentice is eligible to hold or capture a falconry bird for falconry purposes and this facility must be inspected and approved by an agent of the Fish and Wildlife Stewardship Branch, Alberta Environment and Parks;
 - sign the Falconry Apprentice/Supervisor Agreement;
 - the approved falconry society must:
 - in writing, sponsor the applicant and endorse the licensed falconer who will supervise the applicant and;
 - ensure that the applicant and supervisor have signed a Falconry Apprenticeship/Supervisor Agreement and return a copy to Alberta Environment and Parks;
- the supervisor and the recognized falconry society must notify the Fish and Wildlife Stewardship Branch when an apprentice has completed his/her apprenticeship or if the apprentice/supervisor agreement has been severed;

- the licensed falconer must sign off as the falconry sponsor by stating, in writing, that the apprentice demonstrates the competence to move from “novice/apprentice” to the ranks of a “falconer”. In most cases, the licensed falconer (supervisor) will petition and make a case to the Society’s board of directors for the advancement of the novice/apprentice under his/her supervision. The Society’s board of directors has the final say when it comes to advancing the status of falconers.

Appendix 2—Falconry Permit Holder’s Annual Report

FORM WA 287
(Section 144 of this Regulation)

**Environment and Sustainable Resource Development
Fish and Wildlife Division**

**Falconry Permit Holder’s Annual
Report for _____ (Fiscal Year)**

Permit No. _____
 Permittee: (Name) (Phone No.)

 (Mailing Address)

A. Falconry birds belonging to the permittee in possession under this permit during the fiscal year:

Leg band No.	Common name	Kind of falconry bird	Age (yrs.)	Sex M/F	Obtained d/m/yr	Parents’ leg band nos. & source of bird

Offspring produced during the fiscal year:

Falconry birds belonging to others in possession during the fiscal year:

B. Falconry birds that died or were transferred under this permit during the fiscal year:

Leg band No.	Date d/m/yr	Cause of death or recipient

 (Date)

 (Signature of Permittee)

AR 143/97 Sched.16,206/2001;85/2011;170/2012

Appendix 3—Falconry Mews Inspection Sheet



Alberta Environment and Parks

Facility Inspection Form Commercial and Recreational Falconry Permit

Permittee's Name _____

Address _____

Postal Code _____

Telephone _____

Required Standards for Facilities

The primary consideration is the protection of the bird from harsh environmental conditions, predators, undue disturbance, and self-injury. The intention is to allow for flexibility and ingenuity while providing protection for the bird and encouraging optimal use of the bird for the permitted purposes.

Mews = Indoor Facility	Yes	No
Space is present to allow easy access and maintenance		
Access is by secure door(s)		
There is space for each raptor to fully extend its wings		
If a window is provided it is vertically barred on the inside with the bar-to-bar distance narrower than the width of the raptor		
The facility is able to provide each bird with either natural daylight or artificial light during the day		
The floor material is dry or well-drained, is non-dusty, and can be easily cleaned		
At least one perch of a safe design is available per raptor		
Falconry permit birds, if not set up for breeding, can be separated by tethering or by partitions		
Breeding quarters have provisions to allow observation of the nest contents without disturbing the birds		
A suitable bath container, 5–12 cm in depth and wider than the length of the raptor, is available		
An outdoor perch is available for use of falconry permit birds which do not have an enclosed weathering area		
A reliable raptor weighing device, graduated in increments of not more than 1/2 ounce (15 grams) is available		

Weathering Area = Outdoor Facility	Yes	No
Space is provided to allow tethered bird(s) to bate (attempt flight) without touching wings on side or top of facility		
Sides of facility are sufficient to exclude predators		
Top of facility is covered with wire, netting, or roofed to exclude predators		

Birds that are capable of flight are not to be housed loose in a facility with wire-covered sides or window that can be flown into and clung to.

.. /2



Protection is provided against:	Yes	No
Excessive heat		
High winds, heavy rains and winter storms		
Avian and ground predators		
Disturbances which would likely cause injury		
Structures which would cause entanglement		

Approval	
	Approved—Facilities for commercial permit birds meet the standards.
	Approved—Facilities for recreational permit birds meet the standards.
	Provisional approval—except as indicated below, facilities meet the standards. Permittee agrees to correct all noted deficiencies within 30 days.
	Not approved—Facilities fail to meet the standards
<p>Deficiencies:</p> 	

For Fish and Wildlife
Stewardship Branch

Approved by:

Date:

Permittee

I agree to correct deficiencies, if any,
within 30 days and to maintain the
facilities at or above the required
standards.

Signature:
