



NOTICE TO THE WILDLIFE IMPORT/EXPORT COMMUNITY



February 1, 2003

Subject: Transport of Eagle Items Within North America

Background: The U.S. Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act has long prohibited anyone from entering or leaving the United States with eagles, eagle parts, or eagle feathers. In 1999, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) introduced eagle transport permits to accommodate enrolled members of U.S. federally recognized tribes who travel internationally with eagle items for religious use. Special procedures allowing U.S. tribal members to take such items into Canada and Mexico without transport permits were introduced in 2000.

Existing FWS regulations and enforcement policies did not allow Indian people from Canada and Mexico to bring eagle items into or out of the United States. Many of these individuals, however, routinely travel to the United States to participate in religious and cultural ceremonies involving the use of eagle items.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has worked successfully with the Canadian Wildlife Service and other authorities from Canada to resolve this problem. The FWS continues to work with the government of Mexico to find a way to accommodate Indian people who visit the United States from that country.

Action: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is implementing a new policy that will allow Indian people from Canada to bring personally owned, legally possessed eagle items into the United States for religious and cultural use. Existing FWS policies that allow U.S. tribal members to take lawfully acquired eagle items to Canada or Mexico without permits remain in effect.

Transport of Eagle Items by Indian People From Canada: As of February 1, 2003, Indian people from Canada who are recognized by the Canadian Government under that country's Indian Act may legally travel to and from the United States with their personally owned eagle parts and eagle feathers for religious and cultural use.

When visiting the United States with eagle items, these individuals must:

- Carry and present a "Certificate of Indian Status" card issued by the Federal Government of Canada.
- Declare all eagle items to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service or U.S. Customs Service by filing an FWS Form 3-177 (Declaration for Importation or Exportation of Fish or Wildlife). A declaration must be filed when entering or leaving the United States at border crossings and airports
- Transport only personally owned and lawfully possessed eagle items that will be used for religious and cultural practices.
- Enter and leave the United States with the same eagle items.

Transport of Eagle Items by U.S. Native Americans Traveling to Canada and Mexico: Under a U.S. policy implemented in 2000, Indian people living in the United States may travel to Canada and Mexico with personally owned, legally possessed eagle items. While these individuals do not need to obtain an eagle transport permit from the Fish and Wildlife Service, they must meet the following requirements:

- Be an enrolled member of an Indian tribe recognized by the U.S. government under 25 U.S.C. 479a
- Declare all eagle items to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service or U.S. Customs Service by filing an FWS Form 3-177 (Declaration for Importation or Exportation of Fish or Wildlife). A declaration must be filed when entering or leaving the United States at border crossings and U.S. airports.
- Transport only personally owned and lawfully possessed eagle items that will be used for religious and cultural practices.
- Leave and return to the United States with the same eagle items.

U.S. tribal members who travel to Mexico with eagle items should be aware that Mexican law officially requires permits for all wildlife items entering or leaving that country.

U.S. tribal members who want to travel to countries other than Canada and Mexico with eagle items for religious use must obtain an eagle transport permit from the FWS. See our public bulletin on Native American Travel Overseas with Eagle Items.

Contact:

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