



Obtaining Eagles and Eagle Feathers from the National Eagle Repository

For hundreds of years, Native Americans have used eagle feathers for religious and cultural purposes, including healing, marriage, and naming ceremonies. Recognizing the significance of eagles and eagle feathers to Native Americans, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service established the National Eagle Repository in the early 1970s to provide Native Americans with the parts and feathers of golden and bald eagles needed for religious purposes.

May Native Americans collect their own eagle feathers?

No. Years of habitat loss, exposure to deadly agricultural chemicals, and poaching dramatically reduced populations of bald and golden eagles. To protect these birds, Congress passed the Bald Eagle Protection Act in 1940 and amended it in 1962 to include golden eagles. This law prohibits take, transport, sale, barter, trade, import, export, and possession of eagles, making it illegal for anyone to collect eagles and eagle parts without a permit.

How does the Repository obtain eagles?

We serve as a national collection point for dead eagles. State and Federal wildlife personnel salvage most of the birds we receive. Many have died as a result of electrocution, vehicle collisions, unlawful shooting and trapping, or from natural causes. We also receive eagle carcasses and feathers from zoos and nature centers.

How does the Repository process eagles?

We assign each bird an identification number for tracking purposes and enter descriptive information about it in a database. We note the condition of the bird and its feathers and record its species and age. If part of the bird or feathers are missing, damaged, or broken, we may add replacement parts from another bird to make it complete. (We notify the recipient before shipping if we have made such substitutions.) The bird is then stored in a freezer until we are ready to ship it, usually within 3 to 5 days.

Who may obtain an eagle from the Repository?

Only enrolled members of a federally recognized tribe may obtain an eagle or eagle feathers from the Repository for religious use.

How do I obtain an eagle?

You must apply to the Service for an eagle possession permit. This permit authorizes you to receive and possess an eagle or eagle feathers from the Repository.

To apply for a permit, you must complete and submit the following documents to the nearest Service Regional Migratory Bird Permit Office:

- A permit application and shipping request (Service Form 3-200-15a, Eagle Parts for Native American Religious Purposes).
- Certification of tribal enrollment signed by an authorized tribal official.

How do I get these forms?

You may request a permit application (which includes the tribal enrollment certification form) by writing or calling the Regional Migratory Bird Permit Office that issues permits for people in your State.

These forms and related instructions are also available on the internet at <<http://forms.fws.gov/3-200-15>>. You can print these documents, fill the forms out, and mail them to the appropriate permit office. Or you can type in the required information before you print them.

What information must be included in my application?

You must specify whether you want a golden or bald eagle, a mature or immature bird, or have no preference, and identify whether you want a whole bird, specific parts, or loose feathers.

You must provide a current telephone number so we can call you when your order is ready to ship. You should notify your Regional Migratory Bird

Permit Office if your address or phone number change after you submit your application.

How does the Service process my application?

The Regional Migratory Bird Permit Office reviews and approves your application. It is then forwarded to the Repository where we fill your request as quickly as possible.

How long is the wait to obtain an eagle?

We fill requests for eagles on a first-come, first-serve basis. We typically keep eagles at the Repository just long enough to contact the next applicant on the waiting list, usually 3 to 5 days.

About 95 percent of orders are for whole eagles. As a result, there are now over 3,000 people on the waiting list for the approximately 1,500 eagles we receive each year.

Because of the large demand and limited supply, applicants can expect to wait from 3½ to 4 years for a whole eagle.

Is the waiting time less for loose feathers?

Yes. We can usually fill requests for loose feathers within 90 days to six months.

May I apply for more than one eagle?

Due to the large demand and limited supply, each applicant may apply for only one whole eagle or specific parts equivalent to one bird (i.e., two wings, one tail, and two talons) at a time. You may have only one request pending. After we fill your request, you may reapply to receive another eagle or parts.

May I sell objects made from eagle feathers and parts?

No. No one may sell, buy, barter, or trade the feathers or parts of bald or golden eagles and other migratory birds. As a Native American, however, you may hand eagle items down to family members from generation to generation or give them to another Native American for religious

purposes. But you may not give eagle feathers or parts to non-Native Americans as a gift because these individuals may not legally possess eagle items.

May I take eagle feathers or parts with me when I travel to Canada or Mexico?

Yes. As an enrolled member of a U.S. federally recognized tribe, you may travel to Canada or Mexico with eagle items for religious and cultural use. No U.S. permit is required. You must, however, declare your items to the Fish and Wildlife Service or Customs and Border Protection when you enter or leave the United States at any border crossing or U.S. airport. You may travel only with personally owned, legally possessed items, and you must leave and return to the United States with the same items. You should also check with Canada and Mexico to see if those countries require permits.

May I take eagle feathers or parts with me to other countries?

If you want to travel overseas with eagle items for religious or cultural use, you must obtain an eagle transport permit from the Service. Since eagles are protected under an international treaty, you need this authorization so that you can clear customs in other countries and keep your eagle items from being seized overseas.

How does the National Eagle Repository benefit wildlife?

Our salvage efforts provide a legal means for Native Americans to acquire eagles and eagle feathers for religious purposes. Our work reduces the pressure to take birds from the wild and helps to protect eagle populations.

How can I learn more about obtaining eagles or eagle feathers for religious use?

For more information or to obtain a permit application, contact the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Regional Migratory Bird Permit Office that handles requests from the State where you live:

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Migratory Bird Permit Office
911 N.E. 11th Avenue
Portland, OR 97232-4181
Phone: (503) 872-2715
States: *CA, HI, ID, NV, OR, WA, & Pacific Island Territories*

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Migratory Bird Permit Office
P.O. Box 709
Albuquerque, NM 87103
Phone: (505) 248-7882
States: *AZ, NM, OK, TX*

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Migratory Bird Permit Office
One Federal Drive
Ft. Snelling, MN 55111-4056
Phone: (612) 713-5436
States: *AL, AK, FL, GA, KY, LA, MS, NC, PR, SC, TN, VI*

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Migratory Bird Permit Office
P.O. Box 779
Hadley, MA 01035-0779
Phone: (413) 253-8643
States: *CT, DE, DC, ME, MD, MA, NH, NJ, NY, PA, RI, VT, VA, WV*

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Migratory Bird Permit Office
P.O. Box 25486, DFC
Denver, CO 80225-0486
Phone: (303) 236-8171
States: *CO, KS, MT, NE, ND, SD, UT, WY*

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Migratory Bird Permit Office
1011 East Tudor Rd.(MS 201)
Anchorage, AK 99503
Phone: (907) 786-3693
States: *AK*

How can I learn more about Federal laws and regulations that protect eagles?

Check the Service Law Enforcement website at <www.le.fws.gov> or contact the Office of Law Enforcement at the following address:

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Office of Law Enforcement
4401 N. Fairfax Drive, MS-LE-3000
Arlington, VA 22203