U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

News Release

October 27, 2003

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE ANNOUNCES NEW PERMIT FOR REHABILITATION OF INJURED MIGRATORY BIRDS

News Releases Home Page

Search the News Releases
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Home

Contacts

Nicholas Throckmorton 202-208-5636

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service today published a regulation that creates a new permit specifically for the rehabilitation of sick, injured and orphaned migratory birds. Creation of this permit offers rehabilitators a definitive regulatory framework and ensures that migratory birds removed from the wild for rehabilitative purposes will receive quality care.

"The new permit regulation for rehabilitation of injured migratory birds sets the bar for excellence in the field," said Service Director Steve Williams. "Concerned citizens all over the country provide a great service to these wild creatures to help ensure their release back to their natural habitats."

The Migratory Bird Treaty Act protects more than 800 species of birds; possession of them is strictly prohibited unless an exemption is provided by either regulation or permit. Previously, wildlife rehabilitators who treated migratory birds have done so with the authority of permits issued under a miscellaneous permit category used to authorize activities not specifically covered by other existing types of permits. Because the permit was a "catch-all" permit, there were no specific regulatory provisions addressing criteria and standards for rehabilitative care for migratory birds.

By creating the new permit category specifically authorizing rehabilitation of migratory birds – including migratory birds listed as threatened or endangered, the new permit regulation provides rehabilitators with a clear set of provisions, criteria and standards under which they may possess and treat birds under their care.

The new regulation establishes criteria to obtain the permit, and sets clear requirements for facility standards and recordkeeping requirements. The regulation also establishes protocol for working with threatened and endangered species and bald and golden eagles; requirements for releasing, euthanizing, and transferring birds; and restrictions on who may assist with the permitted activities; among other provisions. Permittees will benefit from a consistent framework that provides certainty regarding the conditions and criteria that apply to their activities.

The Service developed the regulation after years of informal input from migratory bird rehabilitators. The proposed rule was published in December, 2001 and generated about 200 comments from the public, which the Service relied upon in crafting the final regulation.

To view the new regulation, please see the Division of Migratory Bird Management's website at <http://migratorybirds.fws.gov/> or contact the Division at 703-358-1714.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal Federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting and enhancing fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 95-million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System, which encompasses 542 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands and other special management areas. It also operates 69 national fish hatcheries, 64 fishery resources offices and 81 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, and helps foreign governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Aid program, which distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state fish and wildlife agencies.

- FWS -

For more information about the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service,

visit our home page at http://www.fws.gov

Back to Top

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.
Privacy Notice.