



Submitted By
Alaska Falconers Association
Submitted On
10/27/2017 8:14:25 PM
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Mr. Ted Spraker, Chairman, Alaska Board of Game (BOG .

My name is David Lorring and I am the president of the Alaska Falconers Association (AFA . Alaska has 54 licensed falconers in three license classes (Master, General, and Apprentice . AFA has 36 members.

As president of AFA, We thank the BOG for allowing us to comment on proposals that will affect falconry in Alaska. I will be presenting both written and oral to the Board on six falconry related proposals. (Proposals 18 thru 23

Proposal #18 requests that the Board of Game remove the requirement for testing for West Nile Virus (WNV on raptors imported into the State of Alaska under terms of 5AAC 92.037(permits for falconry .

The Alaska Falconers Association supports proposal #18, which will eliminate the West Nile Virus testing and immunization requirements for raptors that are imported into the State of Alaska. Current falconry regulations require a raptor that is imported into the State of Alaska be vaccinated against West Nile Virus or have a blood test that produces a negative titer within 30 calendar days prior to the date of import.

In an Addendum to the Alaska Falconry Manual #9 dated March 29, 2013, (Manual #9 has been adopted into regulation by reference by the Board of Game , the Department stated that it will no longer enforce the West Nile Virus testing or immunization requirements listed in Falconry Manual #9 for importing raptors into the State of Alaska. In this Addendum, the Department outlines reasons that they feel would make it highly unlikely that West Nile Virus could be introduced into Alaska by imported raptors. Even though the Department stated that it will not enforce the requirement to test or vaccinate, the regulation is still in place and falconers feel that they are bound by its requirements.

Due to the reasons outlined in this Addendum and other research into the unlikely possibility that importation of raptors into Alaska will cause virus transmission, the Alaska Falconers Association requests that the Board of Game remove the testing and immunization provision from regulation.

The following excerpts are from research by:

Patrick T. Redig DVM, PhD

Professor Avian Medicine & Surgery

The Raptor Center, College of Veterinary Medicine

University of Minnesota

St. Paul, MN 55108

(Complete report can be found at" Biology of West Nile Virus"—Patrick Redig DMV, PHD

3. "Risk posed by raptors for introducing WNV to Alaska:

Raptors, like humans and horses, are regarded as "dead end" hosts for West Nile virus. This means they are not part of the amplification cycle. In experimental infections it has been shown that viremic tiers do not exceed 10⁴ viral units/ml of blood (Komar except in great horned owls. Competent amplifiers are typically juvenile passerine species (catbird, robin, English house sparrows) that develop viral titers of greater than 10⁶ viral units/ml and maintain that for days to a couple of weeks, generally without developing clinical disease. Similarly, it has been shown that in order for a mosquito to become infected, they need to ingest blood that contains greater than 10⁵ virus



particles/ml of blood. In addition, raptors exhibit very short-term viremias beginning to rise on day 2 after infection and peaking about 3-5 days post-infection after which the virus is rapidly cleared from the blood and they are incapable of passing on the disease (Redig 2012). Most susceptible raptors develop clinical disease upon infection and die acutely; the number that develops mild or subclinical infections is unknown, however there is no evidence that they become carriers, rather they quickly clear the virus from their systems. Beyond the negligible risk raptors pose for introducing West Nile virus to Alaska, it should be considered that for large portions of the calendar year, essentially from October through May, there is no risk of them transporting or transmitting the disease.

1. Why Alaska has little or no risk of WNV presently

The reasons are stated on Alaska Fish & Game Web page (<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=disease.wnv> – what follows reinforces the accuracy of that information in the context of current information. Not only does Alaska not have West Nile virus, but most of Canada does not (still, having been found only in the southern portions of Saskatchewan, Quebec and Ontario; Yukon Territories and Northwest Territories are devoid of WNV (figure 1 as recently as 2012. West Nile infections peaked in Canada in 2007 (table 1 and while the numbers were greater than in 2012 the distribution was the same. It is of interest to note that all of the cases reported in British Columbia were associated with travel outside the province. It may be suggested that human travel poses a greater risk of WNV introduction than does raptors based on known information. The factors that determine presence in any region are availability of competent mosquito vector species and temperature with the latter being the more important determinant. As noted above, nighttime temperatures in excess of 60 F (15 C for extended periods of time are necessary for amplification in mosquitoes; table 2 shows that at no time do the average minimum temperature in Juneau reach 60 F. Therefore, it is inconceivable that, absent climate change of catastrophic proportions or some incredibly and unlikely mutation of this virus, WNV would ever become established in Alaska. And, any such occurrence would be preceded by evidence of substantial northward expansion of its range long before it arrived in Alaska for which there is adequate monitoring in place. Several pieces of online information by experts in Alaska further argue against WNV becoming established in Alaska (Arctic Science Journeys, 2004 .

1. **Opinion:** Given the near zero risk of raptors intended for use in falconry would be able to carry West Nile virus into Alaska and the already apparent inability of West Nile virus to become established after 13 years of presence on the continent, it is not apparent why there is a need to implement complex control procedures. Further, this regulation would require veterinarians to use unapproved products for vaccination; products which, though used, have not been subjected to any kind of challenge study to determine their efficacy or establish their ability to seroconvert a proportion of the vaccinated population. It would seem entirely adequate for raptors entering the state do so with a Health Certificate signed by a licensed veterinarian.

Proposal #19: Requests the BOG to change the non-resident season take dates from August 15th thru October 31st to September 5th thru November 20th

The AFA supports this proposal with an amendment, which would read “the nonresident season for capturing a passage raptor by permit would start September 5th in GMU 23 and 26. The season would remain the same as current regulation for GMU 1 thru 22, 24 and 25.

The current regulation allows the take of one “passage” raptor by non-resident drawing permit only. In unit 26 and North-Western unit 23 on the Lisburne Peninsula Tundra peregrine falcons and some Gyrfalcons have not fledged (left the nest or are still at the nest site depending on the adult birds for food on August 15th. By delaying the season opening until September 5th, those birds in this category will be true passage birds (Passage is a term used to describe a bird captured from the wild, often on migration, whilst still in its immature plumage, with the intent to train the bird for falconry .

Proposal #20 Requests the BOG to limit nonresident falconers to take one raptor every 4 calendar years.

As the proposer of #20, AFA would like to amend the language of this proposal to limit nonresident falconers who take a Gyrfalcon or a Peale’s peregrine falcon from GMU’s 1 thru 10 to one raptor every 4 calendar years.

The intent of the BOG, which was placed on record, when they implemented a non-resident capture allocation for raptors in Alaska was to allow the every day American falconer to experience a chance in his lifetime to come to Alaska to have the opportunity to take a falcon or a hawk that was not available to that person in his area. The large falcons, although they are found on the mainland of the US, are more abundant in Alaska and have been the targeted species of the non-resident falconer to date. One nonresident falconer, in the three years of the program, has won two tags and has taken two raptors. AFA feels that BOG intent was to spread out the opportunity in a way to allow more access to the permits by American falconers. This is one way that this process is commonly done.

Proposal # 21 Requests the BOG to require that a raptor that is captured under a nonresident capture permit, be implanted with a microchip by a licensed veterinarian prior to their export from Alaska.

As the proposer of #21, AFA would like to amend this proposal to read “require Gyrfalcons taken statewide and Peale’s peregrine falcons taken in GMU’ 1 thru10 be implanted with a microchip by a licensed veterinarian prior to export from Alaska”.

Microchip implantation is currently an option to identify a raptor that currently requires banding by the USFWS regulations. Literature indicates that the microchip implant is a safe procedure for the bird and will provide positive and permanent identification of ownership. The microchip is the size of a grain of rice and is implanted in the breast muscle of the bird. The microchip is implanted into the bird with a syringe by a Vet and the cost of the procedure is ~\$85.

This proposal is designed as a law enforcement tool and used as a way to permanently mark a wild origin falcon taken in Alaska, and provide positive tracking as they leave the state and are possibly introduced into a breeding program. Wild origin birds are illegal to sell. Leg bands (zip-ties with a number on them) can be cut off and the bird identification and the origin of the bird could become clouded.



An important side benefit to the falconer is that ownership of a falcon with an implanted microchip can never be disputed in the case of recovery of a disputed lost or stolen falcon.

Proposal #22 Requests that the BOG change the current non-resident allocation to add an additional five eyes goshawks to the current non-resident allocation of five passage raptors of any allowable Alaska species. (Eyas is originally a term for a young bird taken from the nest for training; it is often used to describe a young bird whose training is incomplete. In this proposal eyas is a term for a raptor that is still a chick in the nest that has not attained the age required to fly from the nest.

AFA is opposed to this proposal, as it will change the current nonresident allocation that only allows passage raptors to be taken. This proposal will allow chicks to be taken from the nest. AFA has requested the BOG and ADFG to keep the current allocation of up to 5 passage raptors in effect for a full five years in order to evaluate the current nonresident falconry program. AFA sees that this evaluation by the Department would include a review of the bird species targeted by non-resident falconers, the timing of the captures, the areas in the State that are targeted by non-resident falconers, any problem areas and illegal activities, internal Department logistics as the Department deals with in the implementation of the program which may include, but is not limited to, the cost to administer the non-resident program, training field biologists to identify the species of raptors that are taken, cost to develop area closures and prevent conflicts with resident falconers if changes are made to allocations, and other internal issues.

AFA believes that this evaluation by the Department demands a full five-year window of data, which will show a valuable trend of resource activity. AFA does not want to move too fast into a new increased exploitation of a very valuable State resource. There is no reason to rush into increased exploitation by allowing an eyas take with out making timely educated decisions about what might happen to Alaska's very valuable raptor resource if changes are made. AFA believes that this proposal is a gateway proposal into the realm of eyas take for all species of raptors including the highly sought after large falcons. AFA believes that regulated eyas take may be available in the future by non-resident falconers, but not without a good evaluation of the pros and cons of developing that program. AFA requests the BOG to continue to keep the current allocation of up to five passage raptors in place for an additional two years.

Proposal #23: requests an up date to the Alaska Falconry Manual. AFA supports this proposal and has been a partner with ADFG in developing this up-dated manual.

The Alaska Falconers Association, founded in 1979, represents the interests of all Alaska resident falconers.



I would like to see Alaska open up the take of first year raptors to 5% of population numbers and half of those opened up to non-residents. It is well known that the majority of first year birds do not survive in the wild and this will have no impact on wild populations. I fail to understand how Alaska can open up Brown bear to non-residents but still maintain severe limits on raptors for licensed out of state falconers. Furthermore the season should be 365 days for non-residents or the same as residents. Please consider much greater numbers and longer trapping season.

Doug Alton
Madera California



October 26, 2017

To: Alaska Board of Game

From: American Falconry Conservancy

Please accept our comments on the statewide regulations:

PROPOSAL 18 – 5 AAC 92.037. Permits for falconry. Remove the West Nile Virus testing requirement for raptors.

We support this proposal.

PROPOSAL 19 – 5 AAC 92.037. Permits for falconry. Change the nonresident season for taking passage raptors.

This proposal should be rejected. The raptor resource of Alaska is abundant and the harvest by nonresidents is so small it cannot possibly have an impact on raptor populations. Absent a legitimate concern (demand exceeds sustainable harvest) nonresidents should have the same access to the resource as residents.

PROPOSAL 20 – 5 AAC 92.037. Permits for falconry. Limit nonresident falconers to take raptors every four or five years.

Reject this proposal. The Alaska Board of Game has approved only 5 permits per year which is insufficient to meet the small demand. The unreasonably restricted harvest is responsible for the conflicts suggested by the petitioner. To make matters worse the Game Department has arbitrarily used its discretion to limit the harvest to three. The petitioner’s example of Alaska not allowing a person who successfully fills a drawing hunt to apply for the same hunt the following year is not applicable to this situation. The most sought after big game animals have a high demand as it relates to sustainable use, which is an appropriate reason to carefully monitor who has access to the limited resource. This is certainly not the case with wild raptor harvest for American falconers. As an example, the State of Alaska approved the 2009 Environmental Assessment on the take of peregrine falcons for falconry. The EA approved the very conservative sustainable harvest of 41 anatum peregrine falcons per year from Alaska. Each year only a handful is taken by residents, and nonresidents are denied equal access. If the Board and petitioners genuinely want to make trapping a raptor in Alaska available to nonresident falconers, they should consider our petition to allow nonresident American falconers the same access as residents to this abundant resource.



PROPOSAL 21 – 5 AAC 92.037. Permits for falconry. Require raptors taken under nonresident capture permits be implanted with microchips.

Reject this proposal.

This appears to be another attempt by a few resident falconers erect hurdles to deter nonresidents from enjoying an abundant resource. The petitioner fails to point out that the federal law which prevents the sale or export of these birds from the country is applicable to both residents and nonresidents alike and, yet they want to make the rule applicable only to nonresidents where it has no force and serves no purpose.

There is already a federal policy in place requiring the banding of these birds for identification. If Alaska implements this rule, it should be applied only to birds remaining in Alaska since this would be the only way it could be enforced. Once a bird leaves the state the chip could be legally removed by anyone who chooses to do so; however Alaska could require that birds residing in Alaska be microchipped at all times, which is perfectly acceptable.

They site one specific example of a migratory bird which was banded in the Yukon Delta and was later identified in the Middle East as if this were evidence that nonresident American falconers should be viewed as potential criminals. We do not know what year this occurred or any other details about this circumstance, however we do know that these are “migratory birds” which do not recognize the international border between Alaska and Russia. Gyrfalcons are known to roost on icebergs floating across the ocean. Gyrfalcons and other migratory birds also fly across this border using their wings. There is no evidence of any illegal international trafficking of falcons in the U.S. that we are aware of, however it is well documented that falcons are trapped in Russia where they are exported to the Middle East. We feel that an Alaska state microchip identification rule for falconers is an unnecessary burden since it will not deter the trafficking of birds trapped in Russia.

PROPOSAL 22 – 5 AAC 92.037. Permits for falconry. Allow the take of up to five eyas goshawks by nonresidents.

We support the nonresident take of goshawks, however there is no reason to restrict this very common species to an annual limit of five or to restrict the take to only eyas (pre-fledged) birds. Due to the expense of traveling to Alaska, we can imagine that a group of 3-5 falconers may want to travel to Alaska to enjoy fishing and harvest goshawks on the same trip. We do not see a compelling state interest which would necessitate a lottery or a one or two year waiting period before being qualified to reapply for this lottery.

Given the limited demand for goshawks by both residents and nonresidents, we support a no restriction limit of annual take of eyass and passage (juvenile) goshawks with a bag limit of two birds per falconer which complies with federal regulation of this species.

Thank you,

Troy Morris





Submitted By
Ryan Anthony
Submitted On
10/26/2017 1:18:07 PM
Affiliation

Proposed restrictions on non-resident take of raptors are burdensome and excessive. No raptors that are commonly used or desired in falconry are in threat of extinction. Raptors populations in Alaska are doing wonderful, thanks to the conservation ethic of ADFG and the Alaskan public. It is pertinent that non-resident take for falconry not be restricted any further than what it currently is. Doing so would be biologically absurd and detrimental to the efforts taken at national levels to conserve migratory birds which included raptors. While the states govern and regulate the take of raptors for falconry, the migratory nature of raptors demands that conservation be done at a national scale. This not only makes every American responsible for cleaning raptors, but also be allowed to possess and use them in falconry. Restrictions on nonresident take will burden many falconers in succeeding to draw and successfully take a raptor for falconry or breeding. Breeding of raptors in falconry has conservation benefits as it serves as a "Noah's Ark" such as demonstrated previously during the recovery efforts made by falconers nationally to bring back the peregrine falcon from the brink of extinction. I am a migratory bird biologist, and in my opinion, the restrictions proposed by Alaskan falconers are not only biologically unsound, but also childish. I plead the ADFG to consider biological implications rather than fear mongering by selfish individuals. Thank you for allowing me to comment on this issue.



Submitted By
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Submitted On
10/26/2017 12:58:22 PM
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Dear Members of the Alaska Board of Game and associated Alaska Department of Fish and Game staff -

Thank you for the opportunity to submit these comments. My comments relate specifically to Proposals 18 thru 23 which focus on falconry. While my wife and I now live in Montana, we lived in Alaska from 1989 thru 2009. We are no longer Alaska residents. However, we own a cabin on the Anchor River near Homer, pay property taxes, and our family spends at least a few months each year at our cabin. Additionally, one of our daughters has remained in Alaska, married an Alaskan, and both of their children (my grandchildren) were born in Alaska.

My wife began falconry in 1965 at the age of 12. Her father was a falconer and he taught her how to hunt with raptors. She was my falconry mentor after we met in 1973, and we actively practiced falconry until 1989. We are both lifetime members of the Montana Falconers Association. We are also founding and lifetime members of the Wyoming Falconers Association. Additionally, we are members of the North American Falconers Association, and the International Eagle Austringers Association. We maintained strong ties to falconry while we lived in Alaska, but did not practice falconry in Alaska. We restarted hunting with raptors when we retired in 2009 and moved back to Montana. Over the years we have hunted with a variety of raptors, but enjoy hunting with Golden Eagles the most.

With this background in mind, I believe the following comments are relevant and I hope you will find them helpful.

Proposal 18 - I support. While some falconers may continue to vaccinate their birds for West Nile, it is currently unnecessary in Alaska. This is an overly cautious requirement, that can easily be reinstated if/when necessary.

Proposal 19 - I oppose. As a wildlife biologist, I find this proposal in conflict with scientifically sound biological principles. Natural mortality rates are typically high in first year raptors. Taking young (eyass) raptors from the nest has been scientifically demonstrated to have the least potential for impact on raptor populations, including those species which might be of most concern in Alaska such as gyrfalcons. If ten falconers remove ten nestling gyrfalcons from the wild, that will have a smaller impact, if any, on the gyrfalcon population than if ten immature (passage) gyrfalcons are removed from the population, weeks or months after fledging from their nest. Yet this is exactly what this proposal intends - to not only disallow the taking of nestlings, but rather to promote the taking of flighted birds which have a better chance of surviving to adulthood. Rolling back the start date is inconsistent with sound wildlife management principles. While I understand the desire to minimize particular nests/eyries being repeatedly targeted by falconers, there are much better ways to manage for that. Rotating falconer take between the various ADFG management regions from year to year, for instance. Additionally, it is hard to imagine that three falconers will ever have any discernible impact, of any kind. In fact, it would be nearly impossible for thirty falconers to have any measurable impact on Alaska's raptor populations, if managed properly. Further, I do not know any biological research that suggests nonresident take of any fish or wildlife species has a discernable negative impact that is somehow different from resident take. This proposal seems to be motivated by something other than concern for the raptor species it purports to protect.

Proposal 20 - I support either Option, but prefer Option B. Restricting successful applicants from reapplying year after year for another opportunity is counterproductive. Many States handle this sort of concern with "point" systems or similar methods. Trapping a wild passage raptor in Alaska is the opportunity of a lifetime for some falconers. In fact, if Golden Eagles become available for falconers in Alaska, my wife and I will be guaranteed applicants. I would suggest the Board of Game consider another Option - Allow one nonresident falconry take permit to be auctioned off each year and let ADFG split the auction proceeds with the auctioning party. This could be the Alaska Falconers Association or the North American Falconers Association. This auction permit could be valid for anyone, from anywhere - providing they are a properly licensed falconer their home State or Country.

Proposal 21 - I oppose. This is another proposal that seems to be motivated by something other than concern for the raptors it purports to protect. Requiring any falconer to microchip a raptor is biologically, scientifically, and philosophically inappropriate, in my opinion. I doubt the Board of Game or ADFG personnel think falconers are somehow not worthy of the trust and respect that is shown any other hunting group. In my experience, falconers are law-abiding citizen-scientists, and follow a myriad of laws and regulations that govern falconry. Also, banding requirements are already in place.

Proposal 22 - I support. This could be increased to 50 goshawks, and the Alaska population wouldn't have a dent put into it.

Proposal 23 - I support. These seem like reasonable and prudent updates/changes.

Respectfully,

Mike Barker, 7739 Schafer Road Bozeman, MT 59715

(406) 581-0629

Montana Master Falconer number 13035801122





Submitted By
Darryl Barnes
Submitted On
9/16/2017 2:34:26 PM
Affiliation

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Dear Sir/Madam,

Regarding Falconry regulation proposals 19, 20 & 21:

My name is Darryl Barnes and I am a falconer living in Idaho. I writing in response to the proposed further limiting of access to out of state falconers to Alaska raptors, specifically peregrine falcons and gyr falcons.

First, the current limit of three, non-resident tags for a peregrine falcon OR gyr falcon is more than adequate to protect the birds themselves and the land in which the birds would be trapped or otherwise harvested on. The severe limit of three raptors of either species would preclude the adverse effect of any of the feared effects stated in these proposal such as in proposal 19 which states: "can ultimately effect the presence and maintenance of certain scarce genetics in the wild". While this sounds scientific it is illogical. Even if all three tags were filled in the same area, and this is unlikely, three, even compounded annually is an insufficient number to be bio-statistically significant. Please keep in mind the well documented biological fact that 75% or more of these dispersing youngsters perish before reaching breeding maturity where they have opportunity to contribute to the gene pool in question. If the number of tags were increase to a scientifically reasonable and ethical number then the AK F&G could restrict certain areas in future years if the harvest data collected at the time of harvest did in fact reveal a "targeted harvest" that was concerning for a potential negative impact.

Second, given the huge landmass and available habitat in Alaska that support very large, healthy populations of both peregrine falcons and gyrfalcons a limit of three of either species seems overly cautious. Such a quota cannot possibly be based on any kind of scientific data. Rather, the Game Board must have set an arbitrary number on the suggestion or inference of some other rationale. In my opinion this is very short sighted and begs the question what possible logic has been presented for the board to set such a low limit in the first place. A model used by the USFWS performed by professional biologist stated allowing a 5% harvest of juvenile peregrine falcons would not adversely effect the health of the wild population. The Service set an even more conservative limit of 2.5%. There is precedence for Alaska to use the same model and set a 2.5-5% quota based on known population data then divide the quota between resident and non-resident falconers. I suspect this would constitute a significant increase in available tags available.

Third, these proposals by Alaska resident falconers and their state falconry association is especially confounding at a time when several state Game Departments, all Eastern Flyway Counsels, the USFWS, many state falconry associations and The North American Falconers Association have managed to workout a multi-state sharing of migrating tundra peregrine permits fairly and equitably to each of the three flyways. All American falconers, including those who reside in Alaska are beneficiaries of this cooperation. Again, the Alaska falconer's Association and F&G rationale in limiting non-resident access begs explanation.

Forth, I submit managing two species within a single pool of tags is also illogical and equivalent to managing moose and caribou in the same pool of tags. With the current, non-resident tag limit of three (3) gyr OR peregrine falcons, it is assume that the department would not consider a total annual harvest of three gyr falcons or three peregrine falcons in a single year an adverse event because with an open tag that could occur. Further, the two species annual production of juvenile falcons do not effect one another and are totally separate populations. Therefore, an annual allotment of 3 gyr falcon tags and 3 peregrine falcon tags would not increase the currently allowable, species specific harvest level but would effectively increase the available permits to a total of 6.

I welcome the opportunity to better understand the thoughts of both the AK F&G and the AK falconers Association in limiting non-resident

falconers access to precious American resources particularly considering the climate of cooperation and reciprocity with most other states and our national Association concerning raptorial resources.



In closing I appreciate being given the opportunity to comment on Alaska proposed changes to their falconry regulations.

Sincerely,

Darryl Barnes,

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Submitted By
Mark Borden MD
Submitted On
9/26/2017 1:48:37 PM
Affiliation

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Dear Sirs, I have been a licensed Master Falconer and Frequent visitor to AK. For over 30 years.

Alaska is a vast state, with extensive renewable resources that could be better utilized to assist the survival and preservation of wildlife. I have hunted Caribou in Alaska, and appreciated the opportunity to benefit from the adventure and savored the delicious meat for many months. I have also fished from Sitka annually for the last 5 years.

Similarly the raptors of Alaska could be managed. In falconry, though, the birds are kept live, and live much longer in captivity than in the wild. Many Wild taken birds are later used in captive breeding and thus have been used to restore wild populations, as well as for education.

There is a large and stable population of many species of raptor in AK. Issuing permits for the take of several thousand immature raptors to be taken annually for falconry would have no impact whatsoever on the wild population.

The fact is that if permits were issued on an unlimited basis there would still be only minimal demand. The bottom line is that there are not very many falconers.

I would be glad to speak to the commission.

When I moved to Ohio in 1990 for Medical School there was no legal take of eyass raptors allowed in that state. When I asked I was told there were few nesting birds. Within a week I was able to locate and document dozens of nesting sites of the "rarest species," the Sharp Shinned Hawk, in the Cleveland area.

Mark Borden MD. (BS Zoology, WSU, 1989)



Submitted By
Jeff
Submitted On
9/10/2017 3:12:55 PM
Affiliation
none

Dear members of the Alaska Board of Game, Thank you for this opportunity to comment on proposed rules affecting nonresistant falconry take. I am a lifelong falconer, and one of my dreams is to have the opportunity to visit Alaska and capture a passage gyrfalcon. I want to mention that my interest is exclusive to falconry. I don't breed raptors and I am not affiliated with any raptor breeders. I simply want the chance to fly a passage gyr, and Alaska affords me the best opportunity to fulfill that desire. From that perspective, I would appreciate your consideration of the following comments:

PROPOSAL 19 – 5 AAC 92.037. Permits for falconry. Change the nonresident season from Aug 15-Oct 31 to Sept 5-Nov 20.

I don't object to this change, though I wonder how true the comment is that "A majority of the nonresident permit applicants are raptor breeders and/or their affiliates and are targeting certain localities and very specific genetic stock". The people I know that have applied for permits were interested in falconry birds (though none of them have been fortunate enough to draw one). In any event, I do agree that changing the dates will still provide nonresidents a reasonable opportunity to take a passage bird.

PROPOSAL 20 – 5 AAC 92.037. Permits for falconry. Limit nonresident falconers to take raptors every four or five years as follows

While I agree with the principle, 4 or 5 years is too long. Alaska does not allow a person who successfully fills a drawing permit for a big game animal to re-apply for that same hunt the following year, and I think an every two or three years should be long enough for nonresident raptor take. Utah does this now for peregrine take, and my sense is this does help spread the opportunity to secure a wild peregrine across the falconry community.

PROPOSAL 21 – 5 AAC 92.037. Permits for falconry. Require raptors taken under nonresident capture permits be implanted with microchips

I strongly disagree with this proposal. The federal bird band does everything needed in terms of tracking, and unlike microchips, is readily recognized by state wildlife agencies across the US. It is important to note that there is currently no uniformity across microchip readers, so the chip reader one agency is using might not even recognize the chip in a falcon whose chip was implanted by an Alaskan veterinarian. Thus, microchips are actually quite likely to undermine reasonable efforts to document track a legally acquired raptor. Finally, the argument that chips somehow protect against nefarious actors is obviously false. Anything that can be implanted can also be removed.

PROPOSAL 22 – 5 AAC 92.037. Permits for falconry. Allow the take of up to five eyas goshawks by nonresidents

I strongly support this proposal, and urge the wildlife board to extend this consideration to two other highly prized species whose populations also can readily sustain increased levels of take: peregrine falcons and gyrfalcons. The benefits to the resource and to the state that are outlined for increased take of goshawks would extend to increased harvest of these species as well.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Jeff Broadbent, PhD



Submitted By
Scott Coleman
Submitted On
10/27/2017 4:31:49 PM
Affiliation

I am a non-resident falconer who is concerned about some of the proposals regarding falconry currently being considered. In general, I oppose unwarranted protectionism of native raptors for falconry purposes. It is an established scientific fact, acknowledged by USF&W Service that falconry does not affect wild raptor populations. Alaska has robust populations of raptor species commonly flown by falconers across the United States. Rather than adopting regulations which will negatively impact the ability of non-resident falconer to obtain a raptor in Alaska, I strongly argue that Alaska consider adopting rules that are consistent with the falconry community in other States that allow for generous non-resident passage raptor trapping and eyass permits. Proposal 19 and 20 if adopted reduce the likelihood non-resident take. One Proposal, 22, suggests that nonresident falconers be required to purchase a hunting license simply to enter raptor permit lottery. Alaska could greatly benefit from a more inclusive nonresident permit policy. These new proposal will exacerbate the current, unsatisfactory, non-resident falconry regulations in Alaska.

Sincerely, Scott Coleman



Submitted By
Robert Collins
Submitted On
10/25/2017 2:55:09 PM
Affiliation
Retired

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed falconry regulations. I have been an active falconer for over 55 years and am a licensed attorney in Alaska. I retired from the Alaska Department of Law after a 34 year career (AK and IL) as a prosecuting attorney.

Proposal 18: Removal of the testing requirement for the West Nile Virus. I support this removal. As recently as 2013, ADF&G itself sent a notice to falconers that this testing was not required. The "requirement" was reinstated after someone in ADF&G apparently decided that BoG approval was needed prior to removal of this regulation. A copy of the notice of the testing is not required letter is available if one cannot be supplied by ADF&G.

In addition, a lengthy, well-researched article in the February 19, 2017 issue of the Anchorage Dispatch News detailed "Alaska's population of backyard chickens is booming." The article states that according to the state veterinarian Bob Gerlach, in the 2016 fiscal year almost 125,000 birds were imported into the state for mostly backyard farming. Other farm animal imports, including cattle, swine and horses also had increases but not as much as poultry.

The number of falconry birds imported into the state is miniscule, probably less than 10. Almost all these birds were in Alaska prior to being "exported" for a few weeks for a falconer's hunting trip in the lower 48. There appears to be a double standard taking place. One cannot imagine that 125,000 chickens are subject to WNV testing but a handful of raptors are.

Proposal 23: Falconry Manual Number 10

This proposal is held out to be a rewrite of Falconry Manual Number 9 to simplify and clarify the regulations. The idea is to be commended; however, the manual consists of 41 pages. The number of pages likely exceeds the number of active falconers in Alaska. Respectfully, the BoG should consider deferring action and request that the ADF&G simplify and rewrite the regulations to delete requirements and notices that are not necessary. For example: 1) There is no reason a falconry permittee should be required to notify the department prior to attempting to capture a raptor. The permit alone and the required federal 3-186 form filing post capture should suffice. The regulation requires TWO notices, one to the regional ADF&G office for the area of the proposed take, and another to the office of the permittee as well as reports to the Permit office and regional falconry representative for release, loss, and death of a raptor. A successful take or capture reported is already required. Simply, there are not enough birds taken annually to justify so much reporting and detail. For example, no other trappers - such as fur trappers - who take many more animals annually are required to so report before, during, and after. 2) It should be noted that the USFWS has already determined that such detailed reporting is not necessary for its purposes. The USFWS reporting was much less onerous than the reporting presently required by ADF&G. The USFWS does NOT require that its own 3-186 form be filed with the USFWS and has transferred the use of that form to the states. The additional, double reporting simply is not necessary.

Thank you.



Submitted By
Simone Cook
Submitted On
10/27/2017 9:32:35 PM
Affiliation

PROPOSAL 18 – 5 AAC 92.037

I agree with PROPOSAL 18 – 5 AAC 92.037 stating that the WNV testing requirement should be removed, as it is unnecessary and costly. There is not enough of a risk of WNV entering the state via a captive bird to warrant this requirement.

PROPOSAL 19 – 5 AAC 92.037

I strongly disagree with PROPOSAL 19 – 5 AAC 92.037. I was a permit winner this year (2017) and spent my time on the Seward Peninsula where the weather was fair for the months of September and half of October. However, this would most certainly not be the case into the later part of November. If this proposal were to be adopted a non-resident trapper may be forced to trap in winter conditions while attempting to rent the correct gear (e.g. snow machine) and combating all the other issues that may go with below freezing temperatures and snow. I stayed in Alaska from the beginning of September to the middle of October and it took me the entire time to secure a bird to export. There is no way to guarantee that a bird will be trapped quickly, thus with this proposal someone may find themselves trapping into the end of November if they are only allowed to start trapping on Sept. 5.

The cost of trapping in remote areas of Alaska is extremely high and perhaps why there are low numbers of applicants for these permits to begin with. A proposal to push trapping back will only add to the cost of a non-resident's trip due to weather conditions, rental of snow machines, etc.

This proposal also states that certain genetics are being targeted thus the reason for the push back on dates. However, only 5 raptors have been exported from Alaska in the last three years of non-resident take. Of those five raptors, two were trapped in their natal territories. The other three (one was a goshawk) were trapped on migration. Two birds from one site in three years does not qualify as "targeting certain genetics/year after year/loss of certain scarce genetics."

This proposal also goes on to state that, "the majority of nonresident permit applicants are raptor breeders and/or their affiliates." The individual behind PROPOSAL 19 – 5 AAC 92.037 seems to have an odd grasp of numbers and the definition of "majority." To the very best of my knowledge (the falconry community is small, and I know the majority of other permit winners), one, I repeat, one, of nine winners possesses a breeding permit. One. I am not a breeder and do not possess a breeding permit. I went to Alaska to trap a bird to fly for falconry, as I know personally four other friends did as well (they also do not have breeding permits). The other two successful trappers I do not know personally.

This trip was about watching wildlife, hopefully catching a bird to fly for FALCONRY and meeting some wonderful locals, falconers and otherwise. There is no conspiracy here to remove certain genetics from nest sites year after year after year. The **data** from non-resident trapping efforts shows that the MAJORITY (*a noun, meaning, "the greater number"*) of birds were trapped during migration, and not near nest sites. In addition, many of the non-residents who were **not** successful trapping were trapping during migration, and not in early August near nest sites.

Lastly, the proposal states that "As nonresident demand for Alaskan birds increases..." The number of applicants in 2015 was 23, in 2016 it was 24, in 2017 it was 18. This is a low number of applicants to begin with. "Increasing" is an odd word to use for a lower number of applicants this year than the previous two years.

I would urge the board to consider that perhaps some folks pushing this proposal are aspiring breeders of raptors themselves who may not be keen on (perceived) competition from non-resident falconers on the very, very slim chance that they (non-residents) may breed birds taken in Alaska, which in and of itself is perfectly legal if said permit winner had the proper federal permits in addition to a falconry permit.

PROPOSAL 20 – 5 AAC 92.037

I strongly disagree with PROPOSAL 20 – 5 AAC 92.037. With an already low number of people applying for a nonresident permit there is a high chance of any one of the applicants being successful. In addition, the proposal states "The board's intent language placed on record when nonresident take was instituted in 2014 was to make available the special opportunity and experience of trapping a raptor in Alaska available to as many nonresident falconers as possible. The Alaska Falconers Association agrees with the board's intent." It seems ironic that the entity claiming they want to make trapping a raptor in Alaska available to as many nonresidents as possible is also the entity that pushed for 3 permits to be allocated instead of the 5 allowed. Additionally, I personally know that one falconer that drew a permit was in his 70's. It would be a shame for the older folks to draw a permit with such a long wait in between applying again. This proposal, along with proposal PROPOSAL 19 – 5 AAC 92.037, seem to be implying that Alaska's raptor resource is limited and thus non-resident take should



be quite limited as well. The biology does not match up with this assessment. Alaska hosts large and healthy populations of breeding PC306 raptors, including gyrfalcons, peregrines and goshawks. There is no threat to "certain genetics" or populations and non-resident take 2 of 2 should reflect that the population can handle (without any detriment) the maximum number of permits allowed and would be able to handle an even larger number without a doubt. I spent 6 weeks watching raptors and trapping in Alaska. There is no shortage of raptors in Alaska, no populations are at risk, and the area I trapped in was infinitesimal when compared to the state as a whole. This should be a biological question and not an emotional one: can Alaska's populations of raptors handle the maximum number of permits allowed without detriment to the population and the answer is without question Yes.

Lastly, the big game hunts that this proposal references where successful applicants have to wait a certain number of years before applying again is comparing apples and oranges. Hundreds to thousands of people apply for big game hunts in Alaska for a handful of permits showing that there is a very high demand for big game permits. Non-resident falconry permit applications thus far have never numbered more than 24. Compared to big game draws, non-resident falconry applications are a very small number indeed.

PROPOSAL 21 – 5 AAC 92.037

I disagree with PROPOSAL 21 – 5 AAC 92.037. It is hard enough to get an appointment with vets that will see raptors. I saw a mobile vet due to my flight schedule, ADF&G check out hours, and the fact that you do not know in advance when you will be successful in getting a bird and thus may need a vet appointment last minute before your flight. Some vets I spoke to were booked for a week or two out.

A mobile vet would most likely be unable to administer a microchip. In reference to **one** wild Alaska gyrfalcon showing up in the Middle East: well-known studies show that wild Alaskan gyrfalcons migrate to Russia. The chances of a raptor trapped in Alaska and then smuggled to the Middle East is so unlikely that I am almost shocked to see it mentioned here, as a reason for law-abiding non-resident falconers to be required to microchip their birds. The chances of a bird migrating to Russia and then being trapped there, where laws are much more lax, is much, much more likely. Additionally, if someone were to take the time and effort to smuggle birds out of Alaska (which I have never heard of happening) it would not be beyond them to cut a microchip out of a bird the same way that it would not be beyond them to cut a band off. But this is a non-issue anyway and is why I disagree with PROPOSAL 21-5 ACC 92.037

PROPOSAL 22 – 5 AAC 92.037

I agree with PROPOSAL 22 – 5 AAC 92.037 and the points brought up within it: Alaska has very healthy populations of goshawks and raptor mortality is high in the first year of life. Allowing up to five eyass goshawks to be taken by non-resident falconers would not impact populations and would be a great opportunity for non-residents to fly a bird raised from a young age while perhaps even helping out the siblings in the nest by reducing competition. Eyass goshawks are popular in falconry and I do believe there would be interest from non-residents in flying an eyass goshawk from Alaska.

I would like to thank ADF&G for how wonderful they have been to deal with in terms of permits, and the many wonderful Alaskan falconers I met on my travels in Alaska who were willing to lend help in many different ways. Lastly, I would like to thank the board for taking my comments into consideration.



Submitted By
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Submitted On
10/1/2017 4:47:50 AM
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Falconer

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Board Members and Alaska Residents, I respectfully submit the following comment in furtherance of your consideration regarding the proposed Non-Resident Raptor Take.

I was fortunate to be one of the original 3 non residents awarded the take. In retrospect, the entire experience was both good and bad.

Having spent the first 32 years of my life in Alaska, I was thrilled to be able to return and pursue the permit. However, it became apparent along the way that the red tape and costs associated with doing so was not without a commitment that most average income folks could ever accomplish. Furthermore, the resident falconry community was little or no help. Not that I needed any. I know Alaska better than most of them perhaps. But to not be lost, the falconers in Alaska that are most influential towards the Board of Commisioners are clearly interested in protecting their breeding programs so they can make money selling the gyr falcons.

Now this theory is backed up by having read the new proposals being considered. A later start date and microchipping birds? Both of these proposals are so as to make the costs associated with the pursuit of the permit being filled even more out of reach for the average person.

To travel to Alaska, find lodging, travel to search for the raptor, vet inspection, food, and all the other necessary costs along the way when I did it costs me in excess of ten thousand dollars. I could have easily purchased a bird from a breeder instead.

To the board, please leave things as they were originally set. Allow the original number of permits be offered. You will note that its very likely that even if all the permits were accepted and even if every non resident came to the greatland, that the success rate for take would still be at 50% or less.

The mention of protecting the gene pool in certain areas is obviously related to serving the greed of the resident falconry guys associated with breeding programs. I ask the board to take a serious look at who the mouth peices are at your meetings. You will most likely note there is a breeder or two amongst them.

Stop the politics and let Americans enjoy all of our Nation.

Thank you and Good Luck.

Scott Dinger



Submitted By
Paul Domski
Submitted On
10/19/2017 10:09:26 AM
Affiliation

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October 19, 2017

Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Boards Support Section
P.O. Box 115526
Juneau, AK 998115526

Ladies and Gentleman,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the falconry proposals being considered for your October meeting. My name is Paul Domski I reside in the state of New Mexico and I have been the president of the New Mexico Falconers Association (NMFA) for the last 6 years. In my capacity as president of the NMFA I have worked closely with our game and fish department on the falconry regulations, and our raptor take policy, so I feel that I am qualified to make educated comments on the proposals before the Alaska game board. I will limit my comments to the proposals which directly impact nonresidents, therefore, I will not comment on Proposal 18 – 5 AAC 92.037.

I strongly oppose Proposal 19 – 5 AAC 92.037. This proposal is discriminatory against nonresident falconers. If, as Mr. Schmidt asserts, nonresidents are “targeting certain nesting pairs over the years”, then so must to be residents targeting these same pairs, and why is that allowed? Further, Mr. Schmidt asserts nonresident take “could cause the loss of certain scarce genetics”, I would like to see the scientific documentation of such claims, and exactly why this same principle does not apply to Alaska falconers? In addition, Millsap and Allen in their peer reviewed paper, *Effects of Falconry Harvest on Wild Raptor Populations in the United States: Theoretical Considerations and Management Recommendations*, determined that falconry take had zero impact on raptor populations, and given that there are only three nonresident take permits annually issued in Alaska the effect of take would be nil.

Additionally, moving the take season for nonresidents back by 20 days would severely limit the possibility of a successful take by nonresidents because many of the raptors would have migrated by this time. This proposal could potentially endanger the lives of nonresidents who could get stranded in the backcountry should foul weather move in during these later dates. Overall proposal 19 was submitted to further limit nonresidents from participating in raptor take practices in Alaska, and there is no scientifically documented basis for the claims made by Mr. Schmidt.

Regarding Proposal 20 – 5 AAC 92.037 which seeks to limit nonresidents to receiving a take permit to every 5 years I am strongly opposed to this arbitrary proposal. Is there a scientific study which documents that the taking of a raptor by the same person in consecutive years has a deleterious impact on the population? While I appreciate the sentiment of allowing the maximum number of nonresidents to experience taking a raptor in Alaska, however, everyone who enters the drawing has an equal chance of being drawn. This proposal is yet another protectionist ploy to discourage nonresidents from applying for Alaska nonresident take.

Proposal 21 – 5 AAC 92.037 which seeks to require birds taken by non-residents be microchipped prior to export from Alaska is an example of regulatory overreach. This proposal assumes that all nonresident falconers have ill intent, and want to smuggle Alaska birds out of the country for sale in a foreign market. The Alaska Falconers Association asserts that “*Highly prized raptors such as Alaska passage gyrfalcons and peregrine falcons have been traded and sold illegally in the past.*” When did this occur? Did the parties involved have official nonresident take permits issued by the state of Alaska? Most certainly not. Falconers are the most self-policing group of sportsman that exist, and given that there are only three nonresident permits issued per year the probability of any criminal activity going unnoticed by the falconry community is impossible. Please do not allow this Draconian proposal to become part of the Alaska falconry regulations.

Proposal 22 – 5 AAC 92.037 submitted by Timothy Sell to institute a nonresident eyas goshawk take of five birds per year is an excellent proposal. The biology clearly supports the taking of eyas goshawks in Alaska, and speaking from experience, New Mexico allows nonresidents to take of eyas goshawks from a far more limited population than AK with no negative effects on our population. I applaud



Mr. Sell for embracing nonresident take.

Proposal 23 – 5 AAC 92.037, I agree with the Alaska Department of Game and Fish, improving the falconry manual is in the best interest of all falconers.

Finally, I would like to say that the falconers of Alaska should consider the falconers of Texas as a role model. Texas has a highly sought after raptor resource in the species of Harris's hawks and northern migrant peregrine falcons, and rather than trying to make more difficult for nonresidents the Texas falconers go out of their way to assist nonresidents in taking birds. By working with nonresidents the Texas falconers insure that nonresidents do not trespass or break any of the local customs with regard to dealing with landowners. This comradery builds an environment of trust rather than suspicion, and invests the nonresident in behaving in the best possible manner.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Kind Regards,

Paul S. Domski

36 Brendan Lane

Tijeras, NM 87059

**To: Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Boards Support Section
P.O. Box 115526
Juneau, AK. 99811-5526**

Subject: Multiple Falconry Proposals

My name is Brad Felger & I have been a falconer since 1970. I reside in Mount Vernon, Washington and I am the President of the Washington Falconers Association and this is my second term as President. Prior to residing in Washington I lived in California and beginning in the early 1980's I served 4 terms on the board of Directors and on legal committees with falconry organizations that were dedicated to legislation and preservation of falconry in California and the USA. I have spent the majority of my lifetime as a dedicated falconer who educates the public and gives of my time towards the preservation and to the future of birds of prey.

I want to thank you for this opportunity to comment on the Alaska proposals that pertain to Falconry non-resident take of Alaska raptors. My intention is to comment on these proposals with respect and courtesy towards the Alaska Dept. of Fish and Game and also to the resident falconers of Alaska.

First, I want to state that I understand that ALL wildlife management decisions (seasons, take, etc.) must be decided upon and supported by good biology. I am certain that when resident and non- resident annual take of Halibut, Salmon, other fish species, Bear, Sheep, Moose, Caribou, Deer, & other large game species, Ptarmigan, Grouse, different species of gamebirds and other small game, that it is fully supported by good Biology in Alaska and that annual take is decided to be as generous as possible while staying within the confines of that biology and that the well being of the resource is kept first and foremost to insure the future of the species that are taken.

Also from an economic standpoint non-resident take in Alaska for fishing and hunting is vital to many towns, businesses, the Alaska DFG, etc. so for many years it has been encouraged and wide economic benefits have resulted. Alaska is the #1 place in the USA for us in the lower 48 states to go for great Salmon fishing, Halibut, Northern species of Big Game, etc. and it is also a destination where the person(s) that decide to go to Alaska for fishing or hunting are prepared to spend a generous amount of money and have probably saved for quite some time to afford that "trip of a lifetime!" For example, the falconers, fisherman, hunters, etc. that I know that have gone to fish, hunt, take a raptor, etc. in Alaska have each spent around \$10,000 on average and sometimes more depending on the length and location of their adventure.

I will now make my comments on some proposed changes to non-resident falconry take of raptors in Alaska.

***Proposal 19- I strongly oppose Proposal 19, this proposed change in take season. The author states that "the majority of non- resident permit applicants are raptor breeders and/or their affiliates" this statement is based on assumption and it appears that the author is talking**

about certain genetic lines (color phase) of Gyrfalcons. Of the very few permits that have been issued and of the birds that I know about that were taken they have been, and are being used for falconry. Once again good biology with evidence needs to accompany this which has an obvious bias against non-resident take for falconry raptors. Also Winter happens early and it happens fast in the Pacific Northwest and much more so in Alaska. The change in seasons goes beyond dispersal of raptors, it results in the migration of many species of raptors out of Alaska. I cannot even think of a true biological reason behind moving the season later with both the start date and end date being moved later. If the intention of the Alaskan Game and Fish is to only allow the take of fledged (flighted) or passage raptors then the start date for that season needs to be no later than August 15th, however if you want to move the existing end date to the proposed end date I would have no objection to that. Also it is my understanding that eyas (nestling) take is legal for resident Alaska licensed falconers so it is unclear to me as to what the biological reasons are for the disallowance of non-resident take of nestling raptors in Alaska? If it is biologically ok for Alaskan falconers to take nestling raptors then what is the biological reasoning behind not adding eyas take for non-resident falconry raptor take? I believe it should be added and that Alaskan biology would support this.

***Proposal 20-** I strongly oppose Proposal 20. This proposal limits the non-resident falconers to having to wait for 4 or 5 years before entering the drawing after they are successful in being drawn for non-resident take. I oppose this as it is written because waiting that many years is extreme and not supportable by biology. I believe that if the intention is to be fair to the others that have entered (this is only an assumption of mine) then a reasonable solution would be that when a non-resident falconer successfully gets drawn and takes a raptor during the August-October season then the next year that non-resident falconer can only apply for the eyas Goshawk season (as is suggested in Proposal 21), or visa versa if the situation is reversed. But if the number of applicants is less than the number of available non-resident permits then that non-resident falconer can apply in that consecutive year for the same permit. Biology supports this because if a resident Alaskan falconer takes a certain species of raptor from the wild, that resident falconer can take another from the same species the following year. If Alaskan biology did not support this then resident falconers would have to wait for additional seasons before taking that species of raptor from the wild again.

***Proposal 21-** I strongly oppose Proposal 21. Legal falconry take (both resident and non-resident) is what we as licensed falconers practice and uphold. The illegal trade and sale of raptors is NOT what licensed falconers do! This is what criminals do that sneak into protected raptor territories and illegally poach raptors. They are a different group of people. The reasoning listed on this Proposal does not take into consideration the export process by the USFWS to export raptors out of the USA. There is an extensive process that legally documents the origin of the raptor as captive bred (including a USFWS seamless band that goes on the raptor at approx. one week – 10 days old before the foot grows too large for the solid band to go over) with documentation of the origin and band numbers of the parents of that raptor by

the breeders of that raptors parents. It is impossible to get a permit to legally export a wild take raptor or any MBTA raptor that is not wearing a USFWS seamless band out of the USA.

I and the other licensed falconers in the lower 48 states are greatly offended by the suggestion that we might illegally trade or sell a wild take raptor that we legally captured and exported out of Alaska. This is the same thing as saying that an Alaskan Falconer would illegally sell or trade a wild take Alaskan raptor (of course they would NOT!) so I would assume that resident Alaskan Falconers would also be required to microchip their wild take birds also. I consulted a well known and very experienced exotic animal/raptor veterinarian who told me that insertion of a microchip is done with a large 12-14 gauge needle (and unlike a dog or cat), that on a bird there are very few places to safely insert a microchip (he said perhaps into the breast muscle). These raptors are for falconry and if a microchip is not inserted carefully or is too large for the species of raptor being microchipped it can hinder the flight and performance of that bird and worst case scenario jeopardize the health of that raptor. If future identification of an individual raptor is what Alaska DFG is wanting a good safe method would be that when an Alaskan Veterinarian or the Alaskan DFG is examining/certifying the raptor then pluck one or two breast feathers to keep an exact record of that birds DNA which will accurately identify that bird in the future if necessary.

***Proposal 22-** I support the addition of 5 eyas Goshawk permits for non-resident falconers. I also would support an additional drawing for a take of 5 eyas Peales Peregrines. This is supportable by biology also as is the proposed non-resident Goshawk take. Proposal 22 is consistent with biological data that documents how legal falconry take (this includes non-resident take) has zero negative impact on the wild resource as is evidenced and stated in USFWS published biology.

In conclusion- Please keep these and any future proposed changes to non-resident capture of raptors for falconry regulations based only on good biology and logic and away from bias and assumptions. Alaska is an amazing, wonderful State in our great Country with a great resource that draws a lot of people from down in the 48 to experience. In the present and into the future we want Alaska to remain a wild State with abundant, healthy populations of its wildlife. This is the Alaska that we know and love. Thank You.

Respectfully,
Brad Felger- President
Washington Falconers Association



Submitted By
Flyyomomma
Submitted On
9/17/2017 6:04:59 PM
Affiliation

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Fly yo momma say ten non res falconry takes. And Ak falconers get theirs heads out the bootie! We all Americans Yo. Peace y'all inpeating my right to life liberty and pursuit of happiness. Enacting uncivil and roadblocking mines ability to trap my dream bird. Y'all Alaska folks ain't no different than any of the rest of us and under federal law y'all cheatin. But Ima fix it if you don't get it straight. You don't know me I got power. Ima set you strait boyz



Submitted By
Dale Hall
Submitted On
9/29/2017 11:37:35 AM
Affiliation
Mr.

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I would like the Board to consider a charge for the NON-resident Falconry take permit to cost \$1200 to \$1800, this a fair price, if you buy a nice shotgun and or a good huntinng dog, thats what you'll be into.

Thank you for your time.

Dale Hall



Submitted By
Gary Hampton
Submitted On
10/8/2017 9:26:45 AM
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I agree with Tim Sells proposal #22. A five eyes goshawk nonresident take.

Thanks

Gary Hampton



Submitted By
Laura Hazelett
Submitted On
10/14/2017 6:52:42 AM
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~~To: Alaska Board of Game
P.O. Box 115526
Juneau, AK 99811-5526
(907)465-4110

Re: 92.037 Permit for Falconry
Falconry Regulations Proposals 21 - 23
AGENCY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game
ACTION: Proposed rule.

Dear Commissioners,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed changes to the Falconry Regulation in state of my birth, Alaska. I regard Alaska as my first home since my birth in Fairbanks and I believe that fact bears great relevance as to why I have always kept track of the goings on in my birthplace.

At this time I would like to make comment on the proposals for Falconry regulation in order that it be fair for both residents, non-residents, and former and potential residents alike.

PROPOSAL 18 – 5 AAC 92.037. Permits for falconry. Remove the West Nile Virus testing requirement for raptors as follows:
Remove the requirements to test birds for West Nile Virus.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention acknowledge that West Nile Virus (WNV) is not transmitted from human to human or human to animal, WNV is not transmitted from animal to person contact, WNV is not transmitted from handling live or infected birds, or from consuming infected birds or animals.

The transmission cycle of WNV additionally shows that humans horses and other animals are 'dead end' hosts, meaning that they do not develop high levels of the virus in the blood stream and cannot pass the virus on to other biting mosquitoes.

Proper facilities maintained for the keeping of raptors discourage the presence of mosquitoes and falconers are more than attentive to keep their facilities mosquito free using double doors, mosquito netting, and other techniques to minimize mosquito borne illnesses.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention do not have any record of human WNV cases in Alaska or Hawaii and the mosquito most blamed for the transmission of WNV is the Culex mosquito who's range does not include Alaska.

When looking at the facts, the necessity of this proposal seems unclear at best.

PROPOSAL 19 – 5 AAC 92.037. Permits for falconry. Change the nonresident season for taking passage raptors as follows:
Amended regulation should read:

(7) take is limited to one passage, hatching-year raptor;

(8) the annual nonresident season for acquiring a passage raptor is from September 5 – November 20; The regulation currently reads:

(7) take is limited to one passage, hatching-year raptor;

(8) the annual nonresident season for acquiring a passage raptor is from [AUGUST 15 – OCTOBER 31];

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? This proposal would seem to be completely geared towards preventing non-resident falconers from completing a successful take after all the time and energy and money spent to accomplish that goal.

When researching the best times to take a raptor who has left its natal area, gyrfalcons in particular are documented in the research published by respected Wildlife Biologist Carol McIntyre with the Denali National Park and Preserve, Alaska, entitled, McIntyre, C.L., D.C. Douglas, and L.G. Adams. 2009. Movements of juvenile Gyrfalcons from western and interior Alaska following departure from their natal areas. *Journal of Raptor Research* 43:99-109.

The study documents that 1) Gyrfalcons left their natal areas between 15 August and 6 September, but most left within a 2-wk period in late August and early September. 2) Research cited by the study reveals that regardless of the natal area dispersion dates were similar to estimates reported in the literature (Nielsen and Cade 1990, Clum and Cade 1994). Our results suggested that Gyrfalcons departed their natal areas from late August to early September. 3) Birds are highly mobile organisms and their spatial and temporal movement patterns are among the most diverse among vertebrates (Welty 1963, Alerstam 1990, Newton 2008). Some bird species remain within several kilometers of their natal nest throughout their entire lives, whereas others travel thousands of kilometers annually, starting with their initial movements away from their natal nests (Newton 2008). Juvenile raptors exhibit a wide range of movement patterns (Newton 1979), with individuals originating from high latitudes often traveling hundreds or thousands of kilometers across different habitats and often across international boundaries within their first year of life (e.g., McGrady et al. 1997, McIntyre et al. 2008).

Therefore the dates for both the old and proposed regulation seem prohibitive of success knowing that once they disperse their natal areas they immediately travel vast distances, including the Russian coast. I would suggest dates that allow for earlier trapping of dispersed birds. Since non-residents come long distances and spend lots of money supporting the Alaskan economy, they should have opportunity



equal to the that of the Alaskan falconer.

PROPOSAL 20 – 5 AAC 92.037. Permits for falconry. Limit nonresident falconers to take raptors every four or five years as follows:

Option A: A nonresident falconer who draws a permit and captures a raptor in Alaska may not apply for a nonresident capture permit for five calendar years.

Option B: A nonresident falconer who draws a permit and captures a raptor in Alaska may not apply for a nonresident capture permit for four calendar years.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? This proposal is one again wholly unnecessary when considering the fact that once a nonresident falconer returns to his or her home state, they are limited by that states regulations on possession numbers per calendar year of raptors taken from the wild, with a cap on how many wild taken raptors may be in their possession. Up to the limit allowed by the Federal Regulations from which each states Falconry regulation come which may not be exceeded by any states regulation.

PROPOSAL 21 – 5 AAC 92.037. Permits for falconry. Require raptors taken under nonresident capture permits be implanted with microchips as follows:

Add a new section that reads:

Prior to exporting a raptor from Alaska that was taken by a nonresident falconer under the terms of a nonresident capture permit, the raptor must be implanted with a microchip by a licensed veterinarian. Documentation of the procedure and registration must be presented to ADF&G during the check-out process.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? It appears here that members of the Alaska Falconers Association wish to continue to allow regulators and the general public to believe that there is a huge black market of gyrfalcons from the state of Alaska based on a single incident of DNA. This would seem to be yet another example of local falconers wanting to impose restrictions to prevent take by non-residents, but not be subject themselves to those same restrictions for the same reason. As gryfalcons are documented in many studies as being the most widely dispersing birds in the world, it is entirely possible that any DNA from any wild bird may be found in birds from Greenland to Russia and beyond. I contend that Operation Falcon itself proved that there is truly no black market of falcons from the United States or Canada and since the birds may be purchased legally and are subject to CITIES restrictions, this step is completely uncalled for. If the Alaskan falconers agree to microchip their own birds, than this might be considered a detriment to any sort of black market as they are just as liable to sell falcons to an alleged black market as they have considerably more access to the birds year round. This rule should certainly not be included in the regulations as it is arbitrary unless Alaskan falconers also agree to microchip their raptors. They know that falconers do not do this regardless of the "value" of the raptor.

PROPOSAL 22 – 5 AAC 92.037. Permits for falconry. Allow the take of up to five eyas goshawks by nonresidents as follows:

#1. The proponents request an annual take of up to five eyas goshawks (*Accipiter Gentilis*) by nonresident falconers.

#2. This proposed regulation is a new addition to the present Alaskan nonresident take of raptors, and is specific to goshawks.

#3. The proponents request the nonresident take of goshawks using an application and a lottery system administered by the ADF&G. We also suggest applicants be required to purchase a nonresident hunting license to enter the lottery.

#4. The proponents suggest that areas for nonresident take would be determined by ADF&G with the input of Alaskan falconers.

Nonresidents must comply with all local state and federal laws concerning raptor take and must have prior approval to enter privately owned or native lands.

#5. The proponents suggest that successful applicants be required to check-out with ADF&G before being issued an export permit to leave the state with an eyas goshawk.

#6. The proponents suggest that a successful applicant will have a one or two year waiting period before being qualified to reapply for this lottery.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? There is obviously no need to limit the take of goshawk in Alaska via a lottery system of any manner. You should simply be able to apply for the permit and pay the fee. This is traditional in all states who have goshawk take unless the take is restricted in certain areas where studies or other criteria are being met. If the resource is indeed vast and virtually untapped by local falconers this restriction is arbitrary and simply another method to discourage take by nonresidents. It is once again going to be regulated to limited wild caught birds in possession once the falconer reaches their home state.

PROPOSAL 23 – 5 AAC 92.037. Permits for falconry. Update the falconry manual as follows:...

I applaud the states falconers and regulators for efforts to clean up the language in the falconry manual and regulations booklet. I request that you consider addition of two birds to the list of non-natives which are flown for falconry in the species of Red-shouldered Hawks (*Buteo lineatus*) and Northern Harriers (*Circus cyaneus*).

In conclusion, it is common knowledge that falconry does not affect the population numbers of species flown or the population numbers of the game taken. Considering the comments above and including them in the regulation will go a long way toward improving the public perception of falconry as a sport that is continuing based on the science that we use to govern our regulatory practices and the relationships between Alaskan falconers and other falconers around the country who are just as involved in conservation of species and the continuation of our age old pastime. Thank you for your consideration.

Laura Hazelett

Licensed Falconer



Submitted By
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Submitted On
10/26/2017 6:51:27 AM
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I would like to comment about the non-resident falconry regulations . Would like to see the amount of permits given out increased . Basing that on science , raptor populations are very healthy in Alaska, as well as the rest of the country . Federal regulations ,just increased the wild caught Peregrine permits from 48 to 148 . Non-resident falconry take in other states works well, with few problems . Treat Alaska falconry take the same, and like other non-resident hunting permits, and take are allowed in Alaska. The negative comments a few Alaska falconer's write about, are based on fear, and selfishment , not reality. And the few Alaska falcon breeders, keeping their personal monopoly on selling Captive bred Gyrfalcons . So I ask the Commision to please consider increasing the number of non-resident permits for non-resident falconer's . Thank you.



Submitted By
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9/27/2017 7:16:47 AM
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~~With respect non-resident and resident take of raptors for falconry~~

- 1) The same basic biological principles govern the populations of all organisms, invertebrates and vertebrate -- both game and non-game species.
- 2) Unless there is evidence to the contrary, species exist as self-sustaining populations.
- 3) Self sustaining populations represent renewable wildlife resources.
- 4) Reproduction creates a surplus. Thus, renewable wildlife resources can withstand some level of take and remain as sustainable populations.

The amount of take (demand) that species can sustain is contingent on 'supply'. The biologists in your wildlife agency should have some rational understanding of the 'supply' (populations) of all Alaskan raptors that are used in falconry. Agency biologists should also understand that relative to supply, demand is miniscule.

Richard F. Hoyer (Wildlife Biologist, OSU, '55')



Submitted By
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10/13/2017 10:54:44 PM
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proposal 18: please support. fish and game has sent out a memo in 2013 that essentially duplicates this proposal. Alaska does not have the environment for west nile virus to live. think about it, 20,000,000 birds migrate or fly up here every year and west nile virus is not up here. obviously none of them are tested, why are we going to test the 2 or 3 that a falconer owns and travels with?

proposal 19: please do NOT support. moving the trapping season for non resident take makes it later and even more difficult and dangerous for a non resident to try and use his permit. please leave passage take dates as they are. the concerns are greatly overblown. first, non residents take about 2 falcons (of the 3 allowed) per year. to date, no two birds have been taken from the same area. so certain genetics are NOT being targeted. even if they were, we are talking about two falcons in a population of maybe 2,000 young birds of the year? this is a biological non issue. i believe the true issue is to make it even more difficult than it already is to access a very limited take.

proposal 20: i do agree with making a successful permittee waiting after drawing a permit, but three years would be plenty of time to wait. if the alaska falconer association want to allow more non resident opportunity to take a wild falcon, we should support upping the number of birds available. comparing to bison or coastal brown bears is not a reasonable comparison.

proposal 21: please do NOT support. microchipping a hawk is an unnecessary stress on birds. in the justification, it is said that a chipped alaskan gyrfalcon ended up in the middle east. gyrfalcons fly all over the northern world, they are birds! to assume somebody took one from alaska and transported to the middle east is much less likely than the gyrfalcon that flew to russia on its own (they have been gps tracked doing this) and was trapped and later sold. if the state really wants birds to be micro chipped then the state should pay for it.

proposal 22: please SUPPORT: the goshawk is a lightly used raptor in alaska by residents, they are common raptor in alaska. there is no biological issue with taking up to 5 eyay (nestlings) from the wild each year. this would be an opportunity of a lifetime for many lower 48 falconers, and would give non residents access to birds that alaskan falcons take small numbers of in any given year.



Submitted By
James M Ingram III MD
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10/5/2017 1:46:01 PM
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Proposal 18-23 5-AAC 92.037

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the non resident raptor take proposals. As an American citizen I am for the equal treatment of a non resident falconer's access to healthy non threatened or endangered wildlife for the following reasons:

1. There are about 50 resident falconers who have unlimited access to all species of raptors in the State of Alaska. Alaska is about 1/5 the size of the entire lower 48 states, bigger than California, Texas and Montana combined. There are about 5000 falconers nationwide with the same qualifications, thus resident falconers represent only 1% of all the falconers. Because of their residency in Alaska this 1% has effective control over a massive national resource (raptor population) and land mass. Currently, 61% of Alaska (223 million acres) is federally owned which represents 36% of all the federal land in the U.S. Therefore, that 1% of the tax paying falconers control access to that federal land by 99% of the rest of the tax paying falconer population. This is an unfair situation. I feel that all US citizens who are qualified falconers, should have equal access to the land and the resource (raptors).
2. Raptor take by both resident and non resident falconers should be based on science, not politics. USFWS study (2004 by Millsap and Allen: Effects of Falconry Harvest on Wild Raptor populations in the United States) concludes that falconers have ZERO impact on raptor populations, thus, biologically speaking, all raptor take in Alaska by falconers would not affect the populations that live there. In 2016 Lydia Ash published an article "Impact of Wild Take of Raptors for Falconry in Washington State" The study covered 10 years and followed all species of raptors taken by falconers in the state, and it concluded that the Impact of falconry was a net POSITIVE gain of 251 raptors to the wild that would have otherwise perished. September 16, 2017 issue of Alaska Dispatch News indicates that there are usually only a half dozen (6) new raptor captures per year by the 4 dozen falconers who live in Alaska. There are about 25 non resident requests for a raptor capture permit per year, and only 3 are awarded by Alaska. The past 2 years of non resident take was the following: 2 gyrfalcons trapped by nonresidents in 2015, 1 gyrfalcon and 1 goshawk in 2016). Alaska Dispatch News also states that 80% of the wild youngsters don't survive the first season.
3. Gyrfalcon: There is only 1 state in the United States that a citizen can get an eyas (nestling) Gyrfalcon, and that is Alaska. Currently, there are 2500 nesting pairs of gyrfalcons which produce about a clutch of 1-5 eggs) If the average production is 2 offspring that would be about 5000 juvenile gyrfalcons per year. The number of juveniles that die per year is 50-80% which is 2500 to 4000. It is a biological fact that if an eyas (nestling) is removed from the eyrie it will improve the survival of the remaining eyases. The demand for raptor take in Alaska by nonresidents is about 25, therefore if all of them would take a gyrfalcon, it would be 0.5% of the juvenile gyrfalcons. Non resident take would have no biological impact, and improve the survival of the few taken. Currently, non resident falconers are not allowed to take an eyas (nestling). Unfortunately, this policy is based on politics not biology. Only resident Alaska falconers have access to that resource. There are Alaska falconers who take gyrfalcons from the wild in Alaska and sell the offspring to American falconers as well as to international falconers. Those falconers want to prevent any competition to their business and force any other non Alaskan falconer to buy a bird from their breeding project. Thus, these gyrfalcon breeders want to control access by proposing Alaska regulations that prevent non resident raptor take for eyases.
4. Peregrine falcon: In 2004 USFWS published a management plan. The reported nesting pairs in Alaska in 2003 was 930 pairs, which was more than the entire Western United States, 879 pairs. At that time USFWS allowed a 5% peregrine take by falconers. Alaska was allowed 44 peregrines to be harvested. Since that time over the past 14 years the population has exploded. Alaska falconers only harvest a few peregrines per year out of the allowable number. Biologically, non resident falconers should have access to the balance of the 44 allowable take set 14 years ago. There is no impact on the peregrine populations. The production of juveniles in 2003 was about 880 per year so between 440 and 704 of those offspring would die naturally per year. Removing 44 peregrines makes no biological difference.
5. Coming to Alaska to trap a raptor is the dream of a life time for a falconer. Most will never be able to do it. It is costly for the falconer, but it is an experience never forgotten. Falconers who come to Alaska to trap a raptor spend time and money that is beneficial to the State of Alaska. In addition, falconers don't come to kill wildlife, but to take care of it. which improves the survival of that bird taken.

In conclusion, I want to thank the Alaska Game Board for allowing me to make a comment on the upcoming non resident raptor take proposals. I hope that the board will make a decision that is based on sound biological science, beneficial to the raptor resource, as well

as in fairness to all US citizens



PC317
2 of 2

Sincerely, James M Ingram MD, biologist



Submitted By
Clifford Kellogg
Submitted On
10/4/2017 9:12:03 AM
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Subject: Multiple Falconry Proposals

My name is Clifford Kellogg, and I reside in North Bend, Washington. I am the North Pacific Director for the North American Falconers Association; my directorate includes Alaska, Washington and Oregon. I am also an associate member of the Alaska Falconers Association.

Currently, there are a number of falconry related proposals before the board for consideration. As a non-resident falconer, 4 of these proposals could affect me and my constituents in the lower 48. I would therefore like to comment on these specific proposals.

Proposal 19

This proposal would move the season for non-resident take to start on September 5, rather than the current August 15. This further restricts an already limited non-resident harvest.

I oppose this proposal in that there is no biological justification for it. It is well known that responsible harvest from a specific location has no impact on further reproductive activity. To move the start date by 20 days will ensure that those who are attempting to fill their non-resident permit will not have adequate access to young birds around their natal area. Also, the proponents of this proposal cite "ever increasing demand" from non-residents, which is simply not true. Demand is currently controlled by the number of permits issued by the Department.

I would submit that a better alternative would be to open up the take to both nestlings (eyasses) and passage birds, expanding the take season accordingly.

Proposal 20

This proposal would limit non-resident falconers to a harvest every 4 or 5 years.

I oppose this proposal as it is based on limited data and on misplaced logic. The proponents cite one non-resident falconer who was successful in being drawn and harvesting raptors for two consecutive years. What they do not point out is that during these two years, he was able to take two separate species of raptors, a Gyrfalcon and a Goshawk. While they may be correct in pointing out that Alaska places similar restrictions on certain species harvest, such as Tok sheep, Brown bears, or Musk ox, the proposal aims to prohibit consecutive take on all raptors.

Should the Board deem it appropriate to place further restrictions, it might be a better idea to place them on species, as with Tok sheep, rather than raptors as a whole, and to make the wait period much shorter, a year for example.

Proposal 21

This proposal would require that a non-resident falconer have his new bird micro-chipped prior to leaving Alaska with it.

I oppose this proposal because it is invasive and unnecessary. It attempts to impose a restriction on non-residents that is not imposed on resident falconers. The proponents claim illegal activities, but cite no specific examples. This is a case of "fixing something that isn't broken". It also assumes bad intentions on the part of non-residents only. If this is a legitimate concern, then it should apply to all raptors harvested, by both residents and non-residents.

If the concept of future identification of raptors leaving Alaska (whether by residents or non-residents) is a legitimate concern, it might be a better idea to pluck a breast feather from the raptor, for DNA analysis and filing, rather than implant a microchip which can later be removed.



Proposal 22

This proposal would allow the take of up to 5 eyas goshawks by non-residents.

I support this proposal, in that it is biologically defensible and that it expands non-resident opportunity in Alaska.

In summary, I oppose proposals 19-21, and support proposal 22. I believe that non-resident harvest of raptors should be encouraged in all states in which falconry is legal. There is no question that the biology of Alaskan raptors supports a more liberal non-resident harvest.

Rather than add additional restrictions, I would encourage the Alaska Department of Fish & Game to seriously consider going in the opposite direction and eliminate restrictions.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Respectfully,

Clifford S. Kellogg

North Pacific Director, North American Falconers Association

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Submitted By
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10/26/2017 12:16:44 AM
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Please allow non-resident take of Alaska's plentiful raptor resources in a simulare manor and quantity to the way that bears and other trophy hunting is conducted in the great state of Alaska.



Submitted By
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10/24/2017 9:13:36 PM
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Kristy Tibbles, Executive Director Alaska Board of Game, Mr. Ted Spraker, Chairman and remaining Board members,

As President of the Alaska Falconers Association, and maker of proposals #20 and 21, AFA wishes to ammend language in both proposals.

Proposal #20 ammendment will change proposed language to say that **"non-resident falconers who take a Gyrfalcon, or a Peale's peregrine falcon from GMU's 1 thru 10 under the terms of a non-resident capture permit, are ineligible to apply for a subsequent nonresident capture permit for a period of four calendar years.**

Proposal #21 ammendment will change proposed language to say that **"Prior to exporting a Gyrfalcon, or a Peale's peregrine falcon that is taken in GMU's 1 thru 10, under the terms of a non-resident capture permit, the raptor must be implanted with a microchip by a licensed veterinarian.**

Alaska falconers association also wishes to propose an ammendment to proposal #19. The ammended language would read **"that the annual nonresident season for aquring a passage raptor from GMU's 23 and 26 is from September 5th thru November 20th"**

The maker of proposal #19, Mr Kurt Schmidt, supports this ammendment and will submit a comment with this request also.

Thank you, Dave lorrington



Submitted By
Wendy R Louie
Submitted On
10/27/2017 4:37:35 AM
Affiliation

Greetings, I would like to ask that the board please base out of state/non-resident raptor trapping opportunities in accordance with biology and healthy raptor population levels, and not due to the complaints of gyrfalcon breeder falconers.

I personally am a falconer from Washington state, your nearest US neighbor, who am not interested in the slightest for gyrfalcon trapping, but of Harlans red-tailed hawk trapping. My father in law in one of the few pharmacists in Sitka, and I'd love to visit him, and perhaps capture a lovely early season young Harlans hawk for hunting with back in Washington. These birds are abundant, and visit my state in the fall and winter anyways, but I would be doing this due to adventure of the process, and as a way to make lifelong memories with my father in law, who would love to see me flying a bird from his home state.

My reason is of course, all my own, with significance only to me, but everyone applying for a raptor take permit has their own reason as well. These birds are numerous, their populations healthy and stable, and the cost of the adventure is high. There will not be a mass exodus of raptors from Alaska, only a beloved, hard-obtained few. Raptor trapping will endanger none of the raptor populations in Alaska. I ask that this wonderful opportunity be expanded and extended, for all falconers to enjoy, in accordance with actual scientific and biological population data.

Thank you for your consideration.

-Wendy Louie



Submitted By
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10/1/2017 4:24:51 PM
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RE: Falconry: Proposals: 19 - 5 AAC 92.037 through 22 - 5 AAC 92.037

The historic and legal take of raptors from the wild for falconry purposes has no measurable biological impact on the raptor resource whatsoever. No documented scientific evidence exists anywhere to suggest otherwise. States such as Wyoming and Kansas have had open wild take for residents and nonresidents alike for decades with no reported issues.

Individuals promoting that the wild take of raptors has any negative consequence is inconsistent with the long standing premise that wild take, specifically for falconry, is environmentally harmless.

Therefore, I respectfully request that the Board take into consideration the insignificant impact falconry wild take actually has and develop more generous nonresident take quotas for American falconers.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Dan McCarron

Biologist



Submitted By
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10/8/2017 2:58:33 PM
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October 8, 2017

The North American Falconers Association is the largest membership falconry organization in the world, representing the falconry community of all three countries on this continent. On behalf of our membership, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposals that have been submitted to your board for consideration.

Wild raptors are an important and integral part of the long traditions of the cultural heritage of falconry; and, therefore, falconers are among the most ardent raptor conservationists. NAFA continues to strongly support science-based, biologically sustainable management of falconry and birds of prey and we have always encouraged the development of non-resident take provisions across the United States.

NAFA was very pleased, therefore, when the Alaska Board of Game and Fish introduced a modest non-resident take for the first time in 2015. It was our understanding that the Alaska Board of Game and Fish would review this new program after 5 years. Only 2 years have passed, and we believe that is simply not enough time to gather the experience or trend data that would support sound decision-making on some of the restrictive changes proposed.

Alaska has enormous raptor resources with species that are difficult to obtain in many other parts of the country. A trip to Alaska to obtain a falconry raptor represents the opportunity of a lifetime for many falconers in the lower 48. Our detailed comments on the individual proposals are as follows:

Proposal 18 – NAFA Supports. Removing the West Nile virus vaccine requirements, it is scientifically defensible and will abolish an unnecessary portion of the regulations that govern falconers in Alaska.

Proposal 19 – NAFA Opposes. Moving to a later start-date for nonresidents who are permitted to trap raptors in Alaska further restricts access to a resource that is already more than adequately protected through an extremely limited level of access. A later start-date could potentially endanger out-of-state falconers seeking birds in remote areas, due to the onset of foul weather. The concern stated as a rationale for the proposal is scientifically indefensible and, if true, would apply to residents as well as non-resident falconers. In addition, there simply has not been enough time to determine whether the focus on specific nests is, in fact a meaningful trend.

Proposal 20 – NAFA Opposes. This is an onerous restriction and at this point there is almost no data on the level of "repeat" demand from non-resident falconers. This proposal is simply one more restriction on a system that is already incredibly restricted, further limiting already limited access. It is biologically unnecessary. The comparison to large game animals is inapposite, as the biology, take levels, and non-resident demand for these animals is very different.

Proposal 21 – NAFA Opposes. Requiring nonresident or resident falconers to microchip a passage raptor is biologically, scientifically, and philosophically indefensible, and is a restriction founded upon the presumption that falconers are not worthy of the trust and respect of any other group of citizens practicing an outdoor activity involving wildlife. To the contrary, falconers are law-abiding citizen-scientists, that scrupulously adhere to the myriad of laws and regulations that govern the falconry heritage that we all practice. Suggestions to the contrary are false and unacceptable; and our board of directors condemns any accusation or action that is inconsistent with the fact that the falconry community is composed of honest and honorable people. Furthermore, banding requirements are already in place, making microchips superfluous.

Proposal 22 – NAFA Supports. This proposal is a step in the right direction. Further, the closing paragraph in the supporting language of this proposal is in keeping with the views shared by the community of falconers that NAFA represents. In particular, we are referencing the line which reads; "We are proud of the privilege of residing in Alaska and having access to its vast natural resources, and are willing and happy to share with others our passion for the sport." However, we would note that falconry is better referred to as an intangible cultural heritage of mankind, and has been recognized as such by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

Proposal 23 – NAFA Supports. These proposed changes appear to be simply clerical and are clean and concise. We are in favor of adopting all of the proposed edits outlined herein.

Once again, we thank you for the opportunity to comment on these proposals and would like to offer any additional assistance that you are willing to call upon us for.

Respectfully,
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Submitted By
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10/26/2017 6:37:47 PM
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I am respectfully requesting the adjustments to limits for non-resident take of raptors be reconsidered. The impact non-residents Falconers have on the population is minimal, and easily trackable through the permitting process and required 3-186A reporting. This wildlife resource is mostly migratory anyways and they travel across the boarder into Canada and many into the NW United States along the Pacific Flyway at some point in their life. My understanding is the few Alaskan Falconers who are against non-resident take are concerned about the well being of the birds and protecting the resource. The vast majority of Falconers feel the same way, and we all want to protect the resources throughout the United States. However, restricting legal take for residents or non-residents, or making it to difficult will likely have the opposite effect. If you consider the level of dedication it takes to travel from the lower states to AK just to get a raptor, you can rest assure those Falconers are also dedicated to the safety of the birds and protection of the resources. Additionally, by allowing legal take, Falconers are likely to report any criminal acts that threaten the resource or access to it. I am a Texas falconer, and our state honors reciprocity. We also have the highest number of wild peregrine permits allocated to nonresident take due to the 60/40 allocation resulting in 12 total non-resident permits this year. We are glad to have non-residents come to our state for a resource that is not readily available in their state. I would like to see the same courtesy in AK, granting access to different species of birds that are not available in Texas or other states. Please consider the intent of the regulation is protecting the resource, and the environmental assessment has shown the population is not affected by the number authorized for take regardless if it's a resident or nonresident. The majority of the falconry community is asking for resident and nonresident trapping regulations to match and to grant at least a 60/40 allocation of permits. Non-residents already need to travel long distances, collect extra permitting and licenses, and many times get additional health certificates for raptors taken. Having extra requirements for nonresidents performing the same activity as residents does not fall inside the intent of protecting the resource.



Submitted By
Daniel Murray
Submitted On
9/26/2017 10:13:03 AM
Affiliation

As it pertains to **PROPOSAL 19 – 5 AAC 92.037. Permits for falconry. Change the nonresident season for taking passage raptors**

I would like to comment against this proposal, as the justification for it is not based on any science, nor is it accurate what so ever. Falconry has been scientifically proven to have no impact on any wildlife populations, and this is simply a targeted effort by a few Alaskan falcon breeders (who take full advantage of their allowable take), to monopolize on a resource that belongs to all citizens of the United States. Making the assertion that this proposal is for the purposes of maintaining genetic diversity as opposed to a self-serving means to fulfilling certain people's selfish desires is ludacris, and I personally find it disgusting.

As it pertains to **PROPOSAL 20 – 5 AAC 92.037. Permits for falconry. Limit nonresident falconers to take raptors every four or five years**

I would like to comment against this proposal. The system of utilizing a lottery to distribute permits is fair and satisfactory. No additional stipulations need to be applied.

As it pertains to **PROPOSAL 21 – 5 AAC 92.037. Permits for falconry. Require raptors taken under nonresident capture permits be implanted with microchips**

I would like to comment **against** this proposal. It is excessive, and results in no benefit to the state of Alaska. Furthermore, it will in no way assist biologists, law enforcement, or state wildlife agencies when attempting to keep track of wild origin birds that must stay in state falconry programs. This is because those "easily installed" chips can just as easily be removed by these fictional, non-existent bad guys that this proposed regulation was created to address. Additionally, I find it outrageous that in the last paragraph, the Alaskan Falconry Association is attempting to perpetuate the myth that US falconers are selling wild caught birds out of Country. The mentioned incident occurred roughly 30 years ago, and was addressed and resolved by the Federal Fish and Wildlife Agency.

As it pertains to **PROPOSAL 22 – 5 AAC 92.037. Permits for falconry. Allow the take of up to five eyas goshawks by nonresidents**

I would like to comment In Favor of this proposal. Falconry has been proven to have zero impact on wild populations, and allowing nonresident falconers the opportunity to take five goshawks annually would not only greatly benefit falconers in North America, but would be an increase in revenue for the state of Alaska. **I would like to comment against the stipulations set forth in sections 3** though, which requires an out of state license to be purchased prior to entering the lottery. This is simply a money grab tactic, and also an attempt to deter the number of out of state permit applications. If the intent was to mitigate the cost of implementing and maintaining a nonresident take program, then a simple application fee of ten or twenty dollars would be more appropriate to offset the costs, being it would more aptly correlate with the financial requirements of the program. **Additionally I would like to comment against the stipulations set forth in sections 6.** The system of utilizing a lottery to distribute permits is fair and satisfactory. No additional stipulations need to be applied.



Submitted By
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10/1/2017 9:06:25 AM
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Comments to Changes to Nonresident Take for Falconry

The reason the Federal Constitution replaced the Articles of Confederation in the late 18th century was due to the type of issues we are today facing with falconry regulations regarding wild take of raptors: Residents wish to protect their personal interests at the expense of all others. Human selfishness is at the base of such behavior, but with no compelling justification. Of course, if there are compelling State interests, such as high demand of a scarce resource, States rights (of which I am a huge advocate for) require that they place their residents' interests before nonresidents. However, this is not the case with raptors; the supply exceeds the demand to the point where no measurable impact of raptor take would occur. Therefore, Federalist principles, as enumerated in various portions of the Federal Constitution, must prevail, and my position is supported by a number of U.S. Supreme Court cases. To do otherwise may compel nonresidents in other States to take prohibitory actions against Alaska residents with some form of retaliation. This is form of balkanization that the Constitution was instituted to prevent. Therefore I ask that the Board open raptor take by nonresidents to levels that science supports rather than by restrictive measures a few residents are selfishly demanding of you. Thank you for your consideration of this matter.



Submitted By
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10/14/2017 11:21:34 AM
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Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the falconry related proposals, 18 thru 23.

By way of introduction, I've been a falconer for 50 years, and practiced this sport in Alaska for 26+ years between 1974 and 2001. I am a founding member, and first Vice President, (southern) of the Alaska Falconers Association, which started in 1979. I pioneered the hunting of ptarmigan and sharp-tailed grouse in Alaska with big falcons and pointing dogs, and achieved scores which have yet to be duplicated. I found the, "Hatcher Pass" (actually Snowbird Valley) gyrfalcon nesting location, which, over the years, has been the only place near the Anchorage Bowl where bird watchers can experience a nest of this species—and I shared this location with ADF&G so birdwatchers could also enjoy it. It is only for health reasons that I'm still not an Alaskan resident.

Proposal 18 I support

Proposal 19 I support. This is important to pass because it's the raptor breeders that want eyass (nestling) birds—while those that actually hunt with birds, would be happy with passage (flying, already on the wing in immature plumage) raptors.

Proposal 20 I support

Proposal 21 I support. This is a great tool for wildlife law enforcement, and if the BOG passes it, within a few years you'll see that nestling raptors will end up in captive breeding projects outside our country—and this is simply a way to make money selling Alaskan wildlife.

Proposal 22 I oppose. The AKBOG should not allow ANY eyass (nestling) raptors for non-residents because those wanting eyasses, are NOT falconers, but raptor breeders in disguise! REAL falconers would be just as happy to come to Alaska and trap a passage bird of their dreams—and these proposals are about falconry, and NOT captive raptor propagation, which is a much different (and often not connected) endeavor. I fully support a non-resident harvest of raptors for falconry—but ONLY passage birds. I'm rather certain that the BOG will get opposite commentary; but by NOT ALLOWING a non-resident raptor take of nestlings—it can easily separate falconry take, from raptor breeder wants—which are two entirely different agendas.

Proposal 23 I oppose. This proposal is not legal on the Federal level, because there is a statement to allow the hybridization of these listed species—and the Feds do not allow any hybridization of golden eagles (which is on this list). This list needs to be fixed first.

I urge the BOG great caution on this proposal, because it is already being used as a generalized method of keeping captive wildlife—allowing the take of species which were NEVER intended to be used for falconry—and the BOG has NEVER allowed wildlife to be kept for individual enjoyment. Last season, an Anchorage falconer took a small owl, and kept it in his house for his childrens entertainment, but not paying adequate attention to this bird, it fell into the toilet and drowned (saw this on Facebook). This bird would have NEVER been used in falconry; and if the BOG wishes to allow the use of these very small owls for falconry, please require the falconer to prove that it is actually used as a falconry (hunting) bird (not as a pet). If the BOG allows falconers to keep raptors as pets, this will, in time, allow hunters to keep other wildlife like deer, martin, moose, etc., as pets. I ask the AKBOG to be very careful about, "opening this door"—because once open, shutting it will be very difficult or impossible. Just because falconers hunt with birds, does not mean they should be allowed to keep other raptors as pets.



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9/29/2017 8:16:55 AM
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Regarding Falconry Permit Proposal 18 (HQ-2016-ACR8) Removal of West Nile Virus testing requirement. As a former resident-falconer in Alaska I have direct experience with this regulation and agree it should be removed. In my case, I legally secured two male Peale's falcons (tiercels) from the Aleutians in early July (2011) with the intention of training and hunting with them in Unalakleet throughout the summer and fall. An unexpected health crisis with my elderly mother in Washington State caused me to travel to Washington with the young tiercels in order to assist my mother who was in intensive care at Harborview Hospital in Seattle. I remained with her through the summer to aid in her recovery, but when I was ready to return for work with the Bering Strait School District in August, I discovered the West Nile Virus quarantine regulation caused me to keep the tiercels indoors for 30 days. When I finally was able to move them out-of-doors for training, some of the most important days for early training and "entering" were irreparably lost, and by the time the young falcons were ready for free-flight, many of the young migratory waterfowl I had hoped to hunt with them had left the area and moved south. While I complied with the regulation, I felt it was unreasonable. Migrating raptors and other birds move from Alaska to Washington and back to Alaska numbering in the millions, twice a year, without being quarantined. Alaska non-falconer residents travel to and from the Lower 48 with other birds (such as parrots, chickens, and pigeons without being subject to quarantine). To selectively apply this regulation to the few falconers and their small numbers of raptors not only adds a financial burden, but also significantly corrupts the management and flying of the falcons/hawks and seemingly does nothing to actually safeguard indigenous wildlife in an appreciable way.



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Regarding Falconry Permit Regulations Proposal 19 (EG-F17-090), "rolling" the dates of trapping for passage falcons for non-resident take "out 20 days".

I object to this proposal.

1) The premise of the proposal is to preserve genetic stock of nesting falcons in Alaska by making it virtually impossible to remove young falcons from the vicinity of their natal eyrie. The proposal is disingenuous at best coming from an Alaskan falconer who is part of a larger group (resident Alaskan falconers) who have been taking eyesses from a limited number of "favorite eyries" for decades. If the Alaskan falconers indeed had an authentic concern for the depletion of genetic stocks by virtue of take of young from a particular nesting area (be it for genetic preference or for simple runway/roadway-access convenience) this same regulation should have been self-imposed by resident falconer upon the resident falconers themselves. However, these falconer know full well that traditional eyries site, if responsibly harvested (meaning leaving one young in the nest as required by law) has no impact on further reproductive activity and success at that site, which is why Alaskan falconers have practiced the removal of eyess falcons from individually targeted eyrie sites for many, many years with no ill results. This no-impact from harvest at favored nest sites has been observed and recorded for centuries around the globe, the prime example being the falcons of Lundy Island in Great Britain, but there are many more examples as well. In short, the claim of genetic harm to a specific location from the harvest of young falcons in consecutive years is a false narrative and should be rejected as pseudo-science.

2) Another false narrative that this proposal seeks to propogate is that of "increasing demand" (implying increasing pressure upon nesting falcons). The "demand" for Alaskan falcons cannot practically impact nesting falcons beyond the number of permits allotted. Once the permit numbers are established, people can demand all they want, but their "demand" (a better word might be "desire") is made moot by the limit of permits issued.

3) Lastly, the point should be considered that to push the dates further out in the calendar places an unfair burden on non-resident falconers by making it virtually impossible to locate young falcons for trapping once the young are dispersed from the nest sites. Yes, it is theoretically possible that one might be lucky enough, through happenstance, to cross paths with a dispersed young falcon somewhere near enough to civilization to realistically secure it, but more often than not, the non-resident falconers will journey to Alaska on an expensive and fruitless quest. If the state allows permits for falcon take, isn't the idea to allow that take to be predictably successful? The state doesn't prevent salmon fishermen (resident or non-resident) from fishing in rivers because the river systems are where salmon **can most predictably be found**. In the Lower 48, non-resident falconers are allowed to journey to the states along the Atlantic seaboard and some offshore barrier islands that are within the tundra peregrine's narrow flyway because that is the locations a trapper is **most likely to encounter** these birds. Because no such flyway exists in Alaska, to disallow trapping in the nesting localities (by virtue of pushing out the dates for this activity post dispersal) is to **all but ensure failure** for the vast majority of visiting falconers.

In summary: 1) The notion that trapping young falcons near their nesting sites will cause a depletion of falcons or their genetics in that area is a false narrative and should be disregarded. If it were indeed true, those falconers promoting this proposal should self-impose this same regulation upon themselves and curtail their own taking of youngsters, year after year, from "favoritite eyries." 2) The notion that there is "increasing demand" for any particular type of raptor is offset by permit limits. Those concerns can be reasonably addressed in other ways without selectively imposing onerous regulations on visitors to the state who arrive with permits issued by the state presumably for the purpose of succeeding in their quest. And 3) it should be considered that if the idea of issuing any form of permit is for the permittee to succeed in filling the permit, onerous regulations which place unreasonable barriers to that success should not be imposed. Because dispersed young raptors within a region as vast and impenetrable as most of Alaska is rarely encountered in situations reasonable for trapping, the reasonable approach is to trap the fledged young where they can be predictably located: ie. in their natal area before they wander away from it. It is the same reason sport fishermen fish for salmon in streams and rivers more than in the open ocean, and why non-resident falconer in the Lower 48 are allowed to trap migrating falcons in those states and locations where the falcons funnel through in concentrated numbers during their fall migration.



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Regarding Falconry Permit Proposal 20 that proposes a non-resident falconer who successfully takes an Alaskan raptor be compelled to wait 4 to 5 years for another chance to be drawn for a permit.

I object to this proposal on the grounds that it is both punitive and unnecessary. The State of Alaska may already impose such a restriction on the gun-hunting of some big-game species by non-resident hunters, but this situation is entirely different in two significant ways.

1) There are currently (approximately) 12.5 million registered gun hunters in the United States. There are about 3,500 licensed falconers in the United States. That means the ratio of falconers to gun hunters in this country is approximately 1 falconer for every 3,300 gunhunters (1:3,300). The purpose of the long wait between drawings for gun hunters is the result of such a large, and unwieldy volume of potential applicants for a limited resource. This just isn't the case with falconers.

2) As the proponents state in their rationale, the gunhunters are currently restricted in this way by successful take of a determined **species**. However, in their proposal, the proponents request this system be applied to the successful take of **raptors**. The term "raptors" applies to a fairly abundant number of species of hawks and falcons and other birds of prey. To apply this system to all raptors would be the same as saying a gun hunter who successfully harvests a Tok sheep cannot apply for another permit for hunting **ungulates (all hooved mammals)** in Alaska for a determined period of time. It should be noted the non-resident falconer mentioned by the proponents who drew a permit two years in a row in fact trapped a passage gyrfalcon the first year and a passage goshawk the second year. Not only are these two birds **not the same species**, they are not even in the same genus. So the big-game permit analogy cited by the proponents was exactly what did occur (the taking a different species during consecutive seasons) without the need for the imposition of yet another regulation.

If the state does determine that there is a need to create a waiting period between drawings for successful non-resident falconers, I suggest the waiting period be no longer than **every other year per species** (the comparatively small pool of applicants in this case does not warrant a punitively long wait of 4 to 5 years in order to efficiently manage this program), and that the successful non-resident **remain eligible in the interim** to be drawn for another raptor **provided he/she trap a different species** than the year before.



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Regarding Falconry Permit Proposal #21, where it is proposed that all non-resident falconers who successfully take an Alaskan raptor under permit be required to microchip the bird before exporting from the state.

Again, the Alaska falconers' proposal creates an "us" vs. "them" environment by proposing to impose restrictions on non-residents that Alaskan falconers do not assume upon themselves. The supposition made by the Alaskan falconers is that the temptation to market wild-taken wildlife illegally is a flaw in the character of non-resident falconers that Alaskan falconers are immune to. I oppose this proposal--in the main--for the following reasons:

- 1) The proposal assumes potential bad intentions on the part of non-resident falconers only. If this issue really is of authentic concern to Alaskan falconers, then it should apply to Alaskan falconers as well. They are humans and capable of making bad choices in life as any other group of people.
- 2) The proposal is designed to create a regulation for something already being regulated. The banding of captured raptors marks them as wildlife, which makes their sale illegal. An implanted chip would be an unnecessary redundancy that adds a cost burden and a time burden on non-resident falconer that does not effectively change the situation. After all, if a person is so corrupt they would sell a wild-taken falcon overseas, what would prevent them from surgically removing a chip in order to do so? Just as with gun owning, the assumption should be that only criminals commit crimes, and the rest of us should not have to go through unreasonable over-regulating on off-chance someone may or may not be prevented from doing the wrong thing already regulated by law.
- 3) If the state of Alaska is in favor of this proposal, I would suggest it apply only to species known to have a significant overseas market value (ie: gyrfalcons and peregrine falcons) and that this regulation apply equally to Alaska falconers and non-residents alike. In addition, such a regulation should be of a reasonable nature in that the chip should be required to be implanted, say, within two weeks of a bird's capture to give the falconer the opportunity to return home and organize such a procedure with a veterinarian of their choice in a location of convenience to them. That way, a non-resident falconer that captures a falcon in Alaska is not compelled to find one of the few veterinarians available in the state (possibly on a weekend or holiday) before the return flight back home. Once home, the falconer could have the procedure completed, documented and faxed or emailed from the veterinarian to the state of Alaska.

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10/2/2017 12:44:38 PM
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Regarding Falconry Permit Proposal #22 where it is proposed a non-resident take of 5 eyess (nestling) goshawks per year be allowed.

I support this proposal and would add that based on realistic biology-based management this proposal be extended to include all raptor species indigenous to Alaska that are allowed for falconry-take under current regulations. At the very least, this could be extended to a similar take of 5 eyess merlins, a species of high interest to falconers, but without any of the "baggage" regarding illegal-marketing fears that surround the larger falcon species.



Submitted By
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Submitted On
10/21/2017 8:05:50 AM
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Proposal 18 - Support

West Nile Virus is not an issue in Alaska and therefore should not be required.

Submitted By
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Submitted On
10/21/2017 8:20:19 AM
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Proposal 19 - Oppose

Submitted By
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Submitted On
10/21/2017 8:24:06 AM
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Proposal 20-Support

I agree with AFA that raptors taken from Alaska by nonresident falconers hold that same special value and that a nonresident falconer should only be allowed to capture one raptor every five years

Submitted By
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Submitted On
10/21/2017 8:27:40 AM
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Proposal 21 Support

Submitted By
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Submitted On
10/21/2017 8:33:35 AM
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Proposal 22 Oppose

This proposal should be deferred until after the five you evaluation period has been completed.

Submitted By
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Submitted On
10/21/2017 8:35:31 AM
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Proposal 23 Support



Submitted By
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10/24/2017 2:15:05 AM
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To Whom It May Concern,

After reading the proposals to modify the Non Resident take, I would like to add my two cents. As current president of the Nebraska Falconers Association I was active when Nebraska revised their falconry regulations. We had an active discussion on non resident take. It appears to me there are some concerned individuals who appear to be motivated by their own personal agendas. We had some of the same issues. I brought order to the chaos by reminding them that falconry is, and will most likely always remain, a ZERO impact sport.

While Alaskas wild resources are vast in a manner that dwarfs Nebraskas, Nebraska will be hosting both the North America Falconers Association and the International Association of Falconers field meet the week of Thanksgiving. Unlimited numbers of non resident take permits are available for purchase to visiting falconers with the following restriction. The state you come from must offer non resident take as well. The biologist in charge of the non game species has zero concern that these events and the trapping that occurs with them will effect the wild populations in any way shape or form.

I do not believe making an individual purchase a 160\$ hunting permit just for the honor of being in the drawing is morally right. You are collecting money for no services rendered. All of the hunting permit holders who are not drawn will most likely not come to Alaska to hunt. Nebraska has a few lottery permits and last I knew they were 10\$ to enter the lottery, but you have a completely guided hunt if you were to win. Please consider something to this effect. Additionally the proposal to move the trapping season before September would effectively eliminate the ability for anybody to legally trap a passage bird by USFW regulations.

I hope my thought have helped. Someday it would be a dream for me to trap a Peales in Alaska, but after seeing these proposals I believe I will settle for trapping Tundra peregrines as they move through Texas.

Respectfully

Chris Podraza



Submitted By
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9/26/2017 6:16:30 PM
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Proposal 18-5AAC 92.037 Please remove the WNV testing requirements. Current regulation is costly and the vaccines are unnecessary as well as the stressful and hazardous quarantines.

Proposal 19-5AAC 92-037 not in favor Please make no changes in this proposed regulation starting date and do not allow those with a breeding permits to trap passage birds. Also do not allow as a condition of the permit a non-resident to transfer passage birds taken from your State to breeders.

Proposal 20-5 AAC 92.037 not in favor please make no changes there are very few falconers that can take advantage of a trip to Alaska to trap any way and quoting the Alaska Falconers Association its a trip in a lifetime. Continue to Allow the non-resident the same prividlege.

Proposal 21-5 AAC 92.037 not in favor takes more money and time and is more stress on the fresh taken raptor. Micro chip readers are different and often dont work. Peregrine falcons are numerous in central flyway and are now just another falcon and falconry take numbers have been increased in most every State. There are so many captive bred Gyrfalcons available that are bred in the Middle East also exported from US to Middle East Cities permit that wild Gyrfalcons are not sought as "highly prized". Again dont permit breeders and breeders that are falconers to take birds from your State or a falconer to transfer the bird to a breeder.

Proposal 22-5AAC 92.307 not in favor of #3 a lottery system for Goshawks and #6 having to wait one to two years if you successfully take one on the first attempt. Ther would not be a reason for licensed falocners to go all the way to Alaska from the lower States to take an young goshawk.



Submitted By
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Submitted On
9/18/2017 1:23:55 PM
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Dear ALaska Department of Fish and Game. Regarding: PROPOSAL 21 – 5 AAC 92.037. Permits for falconry.~PROPOSAL 20 – 5 AAC 92.037. Permits for falconry, and PROPOSAL 19 – 5 AAC 92.037. Permits for falconry.

These are all extremely short sighted and self serving proposals. They appear to be based on some sort of "protectionism" idea designed to benefit eighteen (18approx) local Alaskan resident/licensed falconers and breeders by specifically excluding more than One Thousand Eight Hundred (1,800) United States licensed Falconers and Breeders from any access to more than 663,300 square miles of a United States National resource.

I would like to remind those who want to exclude their fellow Americans from the lawful enjoyment of interstate commerce and national resources that Alaska is not self sufficient. Alaskans need interstate commerce and trade of resources just as much as the rest of us in the lower 48 do. I submit that most of the lower 48 states have interstate reciprocity incorporated in their falconry and other applicable regulations for that very purpose.

I have personally spent Tens of Thousands of US Dollars in the Alaskan economy traveling to, and legally hunting and fishing in, your beautiful state several times. Alaska is a big place, while traveling in your great state, I have personally seen nesting populations of Gyrfalcon and Peregrine falcons in areas of Alaska that I suspect have never been seen by, or know of by, any of the 18 (approx) licensed members of the Alaskan Falconers Association who are pleading for the exclusion of their fellow Americans access to the states abundant natural resources.

After reading some of the comments supporting these ill conceived restrictions it appears to me that the proponents of the same are worried about the sale and export of their own limited and linebred captive falcons in addition to a few nest locations, easily accessible to them, that they dont want anyone else to have access too. Again - Alaska incorporates over 663,000 square miles of surface area. A substantial portion of which is prime habitat for the falcons in question.

In my opinion - the proposed restrictions dont pass the "smell test". It appears that these proposed restrictions are not designed to protect and properly manage Alaska's abundant natural resources but are rather (incorrectly) attempting to protect a small number (less than 20 people) of the local falconers/breeders consumption and production of the same. The ecological impact of allowing non-resident falconers to take nestling falcons from Alaska is non-existent, however the financial cost to the states economy is significant. Thus those who are trying to restrict the legal take of nestling falcons from Alaska are not only hurting their fellow Americans they are also financially hurting their fellow Alaskans.

If the proponents of these restrictions logic was sound Alaska would be closed to ALL Hunting and Fishing by anyone that is not a Resident of Alaska. I submit that the further restrictions on legal falcon take are not based on sound scientific, economic, or ecological data. I request that you do not add the proposed restrictions to the statutes and furthermore ask that Alaska open up a limited legal take (by draw if necessary) of eyass falcons for use in Falconry.



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9/26/2017 7:52:36 PM
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Proposal #18. I concur. Please remove the west Nile requirement! Thank you, Tim Sell

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Concerning Proposal #19. There is no need for a date change. No specific areas or falcon eyries have been visited more than twice in the three years that the Non-resident take has been in effect. The broad based statement that raptor breeders are the people receiving non-resident permits is erroneous. The date change would expose non-resident applicants to possibility of harsh fall/winter weather for no reasonable purpose. The current dates are sufficient. Thank you, Timothy Sell

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concerning Proposal #20. I agree with this proposal. There is a lineup of eager to become successful applicants in this system. A once every five year limit is justified. Thank you, Timothy Sell



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This is a unnecessary requirement. The federal 3-186A data base already tracks all raptors involved in falconry throughout the country. A micro chip would be useless and redundant. The fact that Alaskan raptors have been found in middle eastern falcon market has nothing to do with non-resident take and the correlation is ridiculous. Please turn down this requested proposal. Thank you, Timothy Sell

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I wrote this proposal and I support it. We have a healthy and robust population of goshawks and five eyass birs year is a small and unnoticable request. The proposal was written with input from The ADF&G. There is no viable reason to wait 1,2 or 3 years to istall this non-resident take. It is justified. Thank you, Timothy Sell



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I am a second year apprentice falconer living in Arizona. As a hunter I greatly look forward to one day visiting Alaska and spending some quality time with nature. I would ask that given the very stable population of the vast majority of north american raptors and the very unique access that Alaska provides for American citizens particularly with Gyrfalcons that you increase the non resident take limit. Gyrfalcons are considered by many to be the apex experience possible within our sport and I hope very much by the time I am ready for such a relationship I will be welcome to trap one in your state. Here in the Sonoran desert the unique and sought after experience is the Harris's Hawk. There is a very stable population with 10 non resident tags issued every year for trap. It could be argued that in my own state this could easily be increased but generally speaking we get less than that in applications every year and everyone seems to be happy with that number. Thank you for your time.



Submitted By
Lew Souder
Submitted On
10/19/2017 7:39:11 PM
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Dear Sirs,

I am a falconer living in NV and have travelled to AK to hunt in the past. I do not understand why there is so much emphasis being placed on non-resident take of raptors. It has been scientifically proven that wild take of raptors has no impact on population levels. These animals are a renewable resource and should be managed like the rest of the indigenous wildlife. Personally, I would like to see a season on eyas goshawks.

Thank you.

Lew Souder



Submitted By
Peter Stavrianoudakis
Submitted On
10/26/2017 7:19:34 AM
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Respectfully Requesting that limits on non-resident take of falcons/raptors be equal to that of resident take of falcons/raptors. The impact would be nominal on these migratory birds of prey. This wildlife resource travels across the US and I believe the equal protection clause includes application The take of US wildlife regardless of the state in which it is taken. I am from California and many of the falcons that reside temporarily in your state, migrate to and across not only California but other states included in the Pacific Flyway. Also many of the peregrines that exist today were captive bred in California and released so that they might reproduce in the wild and nest in the great state of Alaska. A handful of Alaskan falconers have disparaged the Falconry community alleging that the rest of us will abuse any trapping allowed to non-residents. There is nothing to support this but the facts are that a monopoly has been created by those Alaskan falconers that our trapping and eventually breeding falcons that are unaccessable to rest of us. These are US birds that breed in the North but migrate South through the rest of United States.



Submitted By
John Sykes
Submitted On
10/27/2017 9:28:31 PM
Affiliation

I am writing to comment on the proposed regulation changes related to nonresident take for falconry.

PROPOSAL 19 – 5 AAC 92.037. Permits for falconry. Change the nonresident season from Aug 15-Oct 31 to Sept 5-Nov 20. I strongly disagree with logic and the validity of the statements made by Kurt Schmidt. In the past three years non-resident permit applicants have not targeted the same eyeries. Only two birds were trapped near eyeries and they were from different locations. In addition demand has not increased. The number of applicants has gone from 23, to 24, to 18 in 2017. Further I think shifting the season into deep winter could be very dangerous and make access extremely difficult for permit holders to get to where the birds are.

PROPOSAL 20 – 5 AAC 92.037. Permits for falconry. Limit nonresident falconers to take raptors every four or five years as follows. I think 4 or 5 years is excessive. I feel one or two years makes more sense.

PROPOSAL 21 – 5 AAC 92.037. Permits for falconry. Require raptors taken under nonresident capture permits be implanted with microchips

I strongly disagree with this proposal. The currently used federal bird bands are the best method of keeping wild caught birds. Microchips readers are not universal so it is hard to say if a chip implanted in Alaska would be picked up by a given reader in another state.

PROPOSAL 22 – 5 AAC 92.037. Permits for falconry. Allow the take of up to five eyas goshawks by nonresidents

I strongly agree with this proposal. It is based on fact and sound biology! The truth is that taking eyas and passage raptors from the wild for use in falconry has no negative effect on adult populations! Alaska has a massive and healthy breeding population of Goshawks, Gyrfalcons, and Peregrines. I feel that the total non-resident number of permits allocated should be increased from 3 to 5 permits. This increase would definitely have no negative effect on wild Alaskan raptor populations, would generate money through the application process, and would provide Americans in the lower 48 states with an Alaskan adventure they would never forget regardless if they were successful in filling their permit!

Thanks for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

John Sykes



Submitted By
Arnaud Van Wettere DVM
Submitted On
10/27/2017 11:21:54 AM
Affiliation

PROPOSAL 18 – 5 AAC 92.037. Permits for falconry. Remove WNV testing requirement.

I support removing this requirement. I'm a veterinary pathologist with clinical and research experience with West Nile virus and don't see any scientific justification for this requirement. A negative PCR test does not ensure a bird is free of West Nile. A positive antibody test indicate that the bird was exposed to the virus, but does not show if the bird is currently infected. Falconry birds are not how WNV will enter Alaska. Migratory bird will bring the virus as you well know (see your own website).

PROPOSAL 19 – 5 AAC 92.037. Permits for falconry. Change the nonresident season from Aug 15-Oct 31 to Sept 5-Nov 20.

I don't object to this change, though I wonder how true the comment is that "A majority of the nonresident permit applicants are raptor breeders and/or their affiliates and are targeting certain localities and very specific genetic stock". I really doubt this statement is supported by facts. Anyhow, I do agree that changing the dates will still provide nonresidents a reasonable opportunity to take a passage bird.

PROPOSAL 20 – 5 AAC 92.037. Permits for falconry. Limit nonresident falconers to take raptors every four or five years as follows

Four or years is too long. Alaska does not allow a person who successfully fills a drawing permit for a big game animal to re-apply for that same hunt the following year. I support being able to apply every year. So few permits are allocated that the chances to get a permits 2 or 3 time in a row are dismal. If this is not possible, every two years should be long enough for nonresident raptor take.

PROPOSAL 21 – 5 AAC 92.037. Permits for falconry. Require raptors taken under nonresident capture permits be implanted with microchips

I strongly disagree with this proposal. The federal bird band does what is needed in terms of tracking, and unlike microchips, is readily recognized by state wildlife agencies across the US. It is important to note that there is currently no uniformity across microchip readers, so the chip reader one agency is using might not even recognize the chip in a falcon whose chip was implanted by an Alaskan veterinarian. Thus, microchips are actually quite likely to undermine reasonable efforts to document track a legally acquired raptor. Very few veterinarians, and even more in Alaska than other place in the USA, are trained and familiar with microchip implantation in birds. While subcutaneous implantation can be done awake, the more secure intramuscular implantation requires general anesthesia. Extremely few veterinarian in Alaska are equipped and familiar with bird anesthesia. Finally, the argument that chips protect against nefarious actors is obviously false. Anything that can be implanted can also be removed and implanted again. The gyrfalcon that was taken in Alaska and found in the middle east did not get in the middle east by legal pathways. Implanting microchip won't stop people who want to illegally trap and export birds.

PROPOSAL 22 – 5 AAC 92.037. Permits for falconry. Allow the take of up to five eyas goshawks by nonresidents

I strongly support this proposal, and urge the wildlife board to extend this consideration to two other highly prized species whose populations also can readily sustain increased levels of take: peregrine falcons and gyrfalcons. The benefits to the resource and to the state that are outlined for increased take of goshawks would extend to increased harvest of these species as well.



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10/26/2017 9:53:46 AM
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I am in support of non resident take of raptors for falconry or science. Just like game soecies, management of thes birds should include non residents. Take of raptors has no impact on the current populations.



Submitted By
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Submitted On
10/2/2017 10:27:50 AM
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There is no biological justification for denying non-resident take. At 3 birds a year non-resident falconers are having ZERO impact on native populations or group genetics. Many of the lower 48 states now offer less restrictive non-resident takes for falconry birds, and some differ by species. Offering 3 permits a year for the wide variety of birds available in AK is ridiculous! There are harlans ssp. red tails, peregrines, gyrs, goshawks, etc. Limiting 3 permits for all those species, and then constricting that even more is self-serving and not at all what American Falconry is actually about.

If you feel you have to be specific to protect a specific species from over-harvesting, then restrict that one species, but open up the take more overall. Don't push back the dates for no logical reason and make it harder for falconers to obtain early birds or particular species that might be dispersing already by September (peregrines).

Requiring microchips is ridiculous when AK falconers are looking at removing the requirement of the WNV vaccine...so they can cut costs but increase costs for non-residents? What proof is there that anyone is spending the tons of money to go to AK to trap a bird, and then sending it elsewhere? This is blatant disrespect towards the falconry community at large and the regulations that we operate within.

I agree with the allowing of 5 eyass gos permits, and I think the permits overall should be increased, to allow for those looking to trap birds other than the coveted gyrfalcons. Not every falconer is a breeder wanting white gyrs.



Submitted By
Bruce
Submitted On
10/27/2017 9:56:54 AM
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Proposal 19; On NR Take, no biological reason to limit take, Gyrfalcon probably # 1 target, 2500 breeding pairs in state, probably 70% of young die in first year. Prey numbers are the main determiner of population. If the applicant has 2+ years of experience. This would give guides with an airplane something to do after spring bear season.

Proposal 20; 4-5 year gap between attempted take, really no biological reason, if it's a clerical problem increase take, again 2,500 breeding pair dependent on prey populations not incidental take.

Proposal #22; If the applicant has 2+ years experience there is no biological reason not to take eyes goshawks in any numbers. I live in Chitina and see goshawks EVERY SINGLE DAY while walking my dogs, or driving to Glennallen and back. Think of Goshawks as you do Lynx, both are dependent on prey populations, there are lots of hares so we see many Lynx and Goshawks, when prey populations go down the Lynx will travel to find prey or starve and the Goshawks will do the same with "pulses" recorded as far south as the Rocky Mts about every 10 years or so. The hare numbers will eventually build up and Lynx and Goshawk will follow with a buildup in numbers.

With the large number of Harris Hawks being raised in the lower 48 the cost is less than a trip to AK to attempt to catch a Goshawk, Harris Hawks are much easier to handle than Goshawks and are as versital at catching different prey types, and Harris Hawks are less likely to die from fungal infections than are wild caught Goshawks. Times change and so has falconry.

The USFS in NM found 100 Goshawk nests in 100 sq. miles. Think of how large the boreal forest is and how many Goshawks are there. There are about 7,000 falconers in the USA, you could give every one a Goshawk and there would be no effect on the population in AK.