

**WEST VIRGINIA  
SECRETARY OF STATE  
BETTY IRELAND  
ADMINISTRATIVE LAW DIVISION**

Form #4

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OFFICE WEST VIRGINIA  
SECRETARY OF STATE

**NOTICE OF RULE MODIFICATION OF A PROPOSED RULE**

AGENCY: BOC, DNR, Wildlife Resources Section TITLE NUMBER: 58

CITE AUTHORITY: 20-1-7(30)

AMENDMENT TO AN EXISTING RULE: YES  NO

IF YES, SERIES NUMBER OF RULE BEING AMENDED: 65

TITLE OF RULE BEING AMENDED: Falconry

IF NO, SERIES NUMBER OF RULE BEING PROPOSED: \_\_\_\_\_

TITLE OF RULE BEING PROPOSED: \_\_\_\_\_

THE ABOVE PROPOSED LEGISLATIVE RULES, FOLLOWING REVIEW BY THE LEGISLATIVE RULE MAKING REVIEW COMMITTEE, IS HEREBY MODIFIED AS A RESULT OF REVIEW AND COMMENT BY THE LEGISLATIVE RULE MAKING REVIEW COMMITTEE. THE ATTACHED MODIFICATIONS ARE FILED WITH THE SECRETARY OF STATE.

*Brian Helmick*

Authorized Signature

**TITLE 58  
LEGISLATIVE RULE  
DIVISION OF NATURAL RESOURCES**

**SERIES 65  
FALCONRY**

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**§58-65-1. General.**

1.1. Scope and Purpose. -- This legislative rule establishes standards to govern the possession, training, and use of raptors for the purpose of hunting in West Virginia.

1.2. Authority. -- West Virginia Code §20-1-7(30)

1.3. Filing Date. --

1.4. Effective Date. --

**§58-65-2. Definitions.**

2.1. "Director" means the Director of the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources.

2.2. "Division" means the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources.

2.3. "Falconry" means the sport of taking quarry by means of a trained raptor.

2.4. "Raptor" means a live migratory bird of the Order Falconiformes or the Order Strigiformes, other than a bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*).

**§58-65-3. Permit Requirements.**

3.1. A West Virginia falconry permit is required before any person may take, possess, transport, sell, purchase, barter, or offer to sell, purchase or barter raptors for falconry purposes or practice falconry in the state of West Virginia.

3.2. Permittees may not take, possess, transport, sell, purchase, barter, or transfer any raptor for falconry purposes except under authority of a Federal falconry permit which is issued in conjunction with the state permit and in accordance with appropriate State and Federal rules and regulations.

3.3. The Director may issue falconry permits to applicants who meet the requirements and otherwise comply with the provisions of this rule.

3.4. Applicants shall complete and submit an application on forms provided by the Division.

3.5. Permits are valid from January 1 to December 31 of each year. Permits are renewable, but may not be transferred to any other person. The Director may revoke or deny permits for cause or for violation of any of the provisions of the permit or Subsection 11.1 of this rule.

3.6. The fees for permits are as follows:

3.6.1. An applicant who applies for a permit, who does not currently possess a permit issued by the Division in one of the three classes set forth in Section 4 of this rule, shall pay an initial \$250 application and issuance fee for any class permit;

3.6.2. The annual renewal fee for any class permit is \$100. Any lapse in renewal of more than thirty (30) days subjects the applicant to the same \$250 fee as an initial applicant;

3.6.3. An applicant, who currently possess a permit issued by the Division in one of the classes set forth in Section 4 of this rule, who applies for a permit in one of the other classes shall not pay an application and issuance fee; and

3.6.4. A nonresident falconer that possess a valid falconry permit from another state that meets federal falconry standards and is listed in appropriate federal regulations is not required to pay an initial \$250 application and issuance fee, but shall pay an initial \$100 fee the first year and the renewal fee set forth in subdivision 3.6.2 in subsequent years.

3.7. Hunting License Requirements.

3.7.1. In addition to a falconry permit, permittees shall possess a valid hunting license and any other applicable stamps or licenses that are required by law.

3.7.2. When hunting waterfowl with a raptor, the permittee shall hold a valid federal and state waterfowl stamp.

3.8. Seasons and bag limits.

3.8.1. Falconers may only hunt during seasons established by the Director.

3.8.2. Falconers shall abide by all bag limits established by the Director.

#### **§58-65-4. Classes of Permits.**

4.1. Apprentice class.

4.1.1. An applicant for a permit shall be at least fourteen (14) years old.

4.1.2. A permittee shall be sponsored by a holder of a valid West Virginia General or Master Falconry Permit or a valid General or Master Falconry Permit from another state meeting Federal falconry standards and listed in appropriate Federal regulations for the first two years in which an apprentice permit is held, regardless of the age of the permittee. A sponsor may not have more than three apprentices at any one time;

4.1.3. A permittee shall not possess more than one raptor and may not obtain more than one raptor for replacement during any 12-month period.

4.1.4. A permittee shall possess only an American kestrel (*Falco sparverius*) or a red-tailed hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*), which must be taken from the wild.

#### 4.2. General Class.

4.2.1. An applicant for a permit shall be at least eighteen (18) years old.

4.2.2. An applicant for a permit shall have at least two (2) years experience in the practice of falconry at the apprentice class level.

4.2.3. A permittee may not possess more than two raptors and may not obtain more than two raptors for replacement birds during any 12-month period.

4.2.4. A permittee may not take, transport, or possess any golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*), or any species listed as threatened or endangered in appropriate Federal regulations.

#### 4.3. Master Class.

4.3.1. An applicant for a permit shall have at least five (5) years experience in the practice of falconry at the general class level.

4.3.2. A permittee may not possess more than three raptors, and may not obtain more than two raptors for replacement birds during any 12-month period.

4.3.3. A permittee may not take any species listed as threatened or endangered in appropriate Federal regulations, but may transport or possess those species in accordance with the federal regulations and with authorization in writing by the Director.

4.3.4. A permittee may not take, transport, or possess any golden eagle or any raptor not indigenous to this State for falconry purposes, unless authorized in writing by the Director.

#### **§58-65-5. Examination.**

5.1. Applicants for a falconry permit shall answer correctly at least 80 percent of the questions on a supervised examination relating to basic biology, care and handling of raptors, literature, laws, rules, regulations and other appropriate subject matter before the Division will issue a falconry permit. The examination will be provided and administered by the Division.

5.2. Division employees representing the Director shall inspect and certify raptor housing and other equipment prior to issuing a permit to an applicant. Facilities and equipment must meet the standards listed in Subsection 6.1 of this rule.

**§58-65-6. Facilities and Equipment.**

6.1. Before a falconry permit is issued, the applicant's raptor housing facilities and falconry equipment shall be inspected and certified by a representative of the Wildlife Resources Section of the Division as meeting the following standards:

6.1.1. Facilities.

6.1.1.a. The primary consideration for raptor housing facilities, whether indoors (mews) or outdoors (weathering area), is protection from the environment, predators, or undue disturbance. The applicant shall have the following facilities, except that depending upon climatic conditions, the issuing authority may require only one of the following facilities:

6.1.1.b. Indoor facilities (mews) which are large enough to allow easy access for caring for the raptors housed in the facility. If more than one raptor is to be kept in the mews, the raptors shall be tethered or separated by partitions and the area for each bird shall be large enough to allow the bird to fully extend its wings. There shall be at least one window, protected on the inside by vertical bars, spaced narrower than the width of the bird's body, and a secure door that can be easily closed. The floor of the mews shall permit easy cleaning and shall be well drained. Adequate perches shall be provided; or

6.1.1.c. Outdoor facilities (weathering area) which are fenced and covered with netting or wire, or roofed to protect the birds from disturbance and attack by predators except that perches more than 6 ½ feet high need not be covered or roofed. The enclosed area shall be large enough to insure the birds cannot strike the fence when flying from the perch. Protection from excessive sun, wind, and inclement weather shall be provided for each bird. Adequate perches shall be provided.

6.1.2. The following equipment shall be possessed by the applicant before he or she will be issued a permit:

6.1.2.a. Jesses -- An applicant shall possess at least 1 pair of Alymeri jesses or jesses of similar type, constructed of pliable, high-quality leather or suitable synthetic material to be

used when any raptor is flown free. Traditional 1-piece jesses may be used on raptors when they are not being flown;

6.1.2.b. Leashes and swivels -- An applicant shall possess at least 1 flexible, weather-resistant leash and 1 strong swivel of acceptable falconry design;

6.1.2.c. Weighing device -- An applicant shall possess a reliable scale or balance suitable for weighing the raptors held and graduated to increments of not more than ½ ounce (15 grams);

6.1.2.d. Bath container -- An applicant shall possess at least 1 suitable container, 2 to 6 inches deep and wider than the length of the raptor, for drinking and bathing for each raptor; and

6.1.2.e. Outdoor perches -- An applicant shall possess at least 1 weathering area perch of an acceptable design for each raptor.

#### 6.1.3. Maintenance.

6.1.3.a. All facilities and equipment shall meet or exceed the standards listed in Subsections 6.1.1 and 6.1.2 of this rule at all times.

#### 6.1.4. Transportation and temporary holding.

6.1.4.a. A raptor possessed under authority of a West Virginia falconry permit may be temporarily held by a person other than the permittee only if that person is otherwise authorized to possess raptors, and then only if the raptor is accompanied at all times by the properly completed Federal form 3-186A (Migratory Bird Acquisition/Disposition Report) designating the permittee as the possessor of record and by a signed, dated statement from the permittee authorizing the temporary possession.

6.1.4.b. Raptors may be transported or held for a period not to exceed thirty (30) days in a temporary facility, if it is equipped with a perch and is protected from extreme temperatures and excessive disturbance.

6.1.4.c. Raptors legally held under a valid West Virginia falconers permit may be transported to other states for meets, trials, and hunting and may be returned to West Virginia by the permittee without having to obtain an importation permit. Nothing in this rule exempts the falconer from having to obtain the necessary permits or licenses before transporting any raptor into another state.

#### **§58-65-7. Nonresident Permits.**

7.1. Nonresident falconers shall possess both a West Virginia falconry permit and the appropriate nonresident hunting licenses to hunt with a raptor in West Virginia.

7.2. Nonresident falconers are not subject to the examination and facilities and equipment conditions outlined in Sections 5 and 6 of this rule, but must show proof of possession of a valid permit from another State that meets Federal falconry standards and is listed in appropriate Federal regulations.

7.3. Nonresident falconers shall obtain an importation permit as required by West Virginia Code §20-2-13, prior to bringing raptors into West Virginia.

**§58-65-8. Reporting.**

8.1. The permittee may not take, purchase, receive, or otherwise acquire, sell, barter, transfer, or otherwise dispose of any raptor unless he or she submits a Federal form 3-186A (Migratory Bird Acquisition/Disposition Report), completed and filed in accordance with the instructions on the form, to the Division office within five (5) calendar days of any transaction.

8.2. A permittee may not possess a raptor, unless the permittee has a properly completed Federal form 3-186A (Migratory Bird Acquisition/Disposition Report) for each bird possessed.

**§58-65-9. Marking.**

9.1. The Division shall conduct an inventory of all raptors held within the State, except those held for scientific or zoological purposes.

9.2. Any raptor taken, possessed or transported for falconry purposes, except a captive bred raptor lawfully marked by a numbered, seamless band issued by the Division or the US Fish and Wildlife Service, shall be banded with a permanent, non-reusable numbered band issued by the Division or the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

9.3. Raptors removed from the wild shall not be banded with a seamless numbered band.

9.4. A permittee shall report the loss or removal of any band to the issuing office within five (5) working days of the loss. The lost band shall be replaced by a permanent, non-reusable numbered band supplied by the Division or by the US Fish and Wildlife Service. The permittee shall file a Federal form 3-186A (Migratory Bird Acquisition/Disposition Report) in accordance with the instructions on the form reporting the loss of the band and the rebanding.

9.5. Alteration, counterfeiting or defacing of a marker is prohibited except that a permittee may remove the rear tab on markers and may smooth an imperfect surface provided the integrity of the marker and numbering are not affected.

**§58-65-10. Restrictions.**

**10.1. Taking Restrictions.**

10.1.1. It is illegal to take at any time any golden eagle or any species of raptor listed as threatened or endangered in appropriate State or Federal rules or regulations.

10.1.2. Only resident falconers may take raptors from the wild for the purposes of falconry.

10.1.3. Resident falconers may only take American kestrels (*Falco sparverius*) and red-tailed hawks (*Buteo jamaicensis*) from the wild for the purpose of falconry.

10.1.4. Resident falconers who desire to take either of the two species listed in Subdivision 10.1.3 of this Section shall obtain a scientific collecting permit from the Director. Any permit for collecting birds from the wild shall include, as a provision of collection, the written permission of the landowner, including State and Federal agencies, from which the birds would be taken.

10.1.5. Immature raptors of the species listed in Subdivision 10.1.3 of this Section which are not yet capable of flight (eyases) may only be taken by a General or Master Falconer during the period of May 1 to June 15, and no more than two eyases may be taken by the same permittee during the specified period.

10.1.6. First-year (passage) birds may be taken only during the period of September 1 to November 30.

10.1.7. A marked or banded raptor may be retrapped at any time.

10.1.8. Only American Kestrels (*Falco sparverius*) may be taken when over one year old for falconry. Any raptor listed as other than threatened or endangered species listed by state or federal laws, rules or regulations, taken under the authority of a depredation or special purpose permit issued by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service may be used for falconry by General and Master class falconers.

**10.2. Other Restrictions and Provisions.**

10.2.1. Any person who possesses a lawfully acquired raptor before the enactment of this rule and who fails to meet the permit requirements of this rule shall be allowed to retain the raptors, provided he or she meets all the housing requirements listed in Subdivision 6.1.1 of this rule and provided further that the raptor is not used for falconry purposes by the holder. Any person possessing raptors under the authority of this section shall also comply with the provisions of the Division's rule, Miscellaneous Permits and Licenses 58 CSR 64-2.1.3. These birds shall be

identified with markers supplied by the Director and cannot be replaced if death, loss, release, or escape occurs.

10.2.2. A person who possesses raptors before the enactment of this rule, in excess of the number allowed under his or her class of permit, shall be allowed to retain the extra raptors. These birds shall be identified with markers supplied by the Director and no replacement shall occur, nor may an additional raptor be obtained, until the number in possession is at least one less than the total number authorized by the class of permit held by the permittee.

10.2.3. A falconer shall remove and surrender to the Division any markers from an intentionally released bird which is indigenous to the state. A standard Federal bird band shall be attached to these birds by a Division or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service bird bander prior to release.

10.2.4. No non-indigenous birds may be released in this state.

10.2.5. Another person may care for the birds of a permittee, for a period not to exceed thirty (30) days. The raptor shall be accompanied at all times by a properly completed Federal form 3-186A (Migratory Bird Acquisition/Disposition Report) designating the person caring for the raptor as the possessor of record and by a signed, dated statement from the permittee authorizing the temporary possession.

10.2.6. Feathers that are molted or those feathers from birds held in captivity that die, may be retained and exchanged by a permittee only for imping purposes.

10.2.7. A permittee may not sell, purchase, barter, or offer to sell, purchase or barter any raptor unless the raptor is marked on the metatarsus by a seamless, numbered band supplied by the Division or US Fish and Wildlife Service.

10.2.8. A permittee may not propagate raptors without prior acquisition of a valid raptor propagation permit issued by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and written authorization from the Director.

#### **§58-65-11. Revocation of Permit.**

11.1. The Director may revoke a falconry permit under the authority granted by West Virginia Code §20-2-38. The Director shall send notice to the permittee by certified mail which specifies the reason for the revocation, which may include, but is not limited to, the following reasons:

11.1.1. Improper care for a raptor;

11.1.2. A raptor becomes a public nuisance;

11.1.3. A violation of West Virginia game laws or rules;

11.1.4. Non-compliance with the terms or conditions of permit; or

11.1.5. Revocation of the permittee's Federal falconry permit.