

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Take of Raptors from the Wild for use in Falconry and Raptor Propagation

Concurrent with proposed changes in the regulations governing falconry and raptor propagation in the United States, we considered three alternatives in preparing an Environmental Assessment of the effects of take of raptors from the wild for use in falconry and in raptor propagation. The alternatives considered were the following.

1. Take limits for falconry would not be established. Neither the dual federal/state permitting system for falconry nor the permitting system for raptor propagation would be changed. This is the no-action alternative.
2. Establish national take levels of concern for take of raptor species, based on the published data for, and biology of, each species; no change in falconry or captive propagation permitting. Under this alternative, we would base allowed take on published data and evaluations of the effect of take of falconry and raptor propagation. Harvest of juvenile raptors from the wild would be limited to levels that would not harm wild populations. Neither the dual federal/state permitting system for falconry nor the permitting system for raptor propagation would be changed.
3. Establish national take levels of concern for take of raptor species based on the published data for, and biology of, each species; eliminate federal permitting for falconry by delegating such authority to the states within the boundaries of a clear federal framework; no change in the captive propagation regulations that would impact take of raptors from the wild. This is the preferred alternative. We would base allowed take on published data and evaluations of the effect of take for falconry and raptor propagation. Harvest of juvenile raptors would be limited to levels that would not harm wild populations. The current permitting for raptor propagation would be maintained.

Having reviewed comments from the public and from federal and state agencies on the draft Environmental Assessment, we prepared a Final Environmental Assessment, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act. Our preferred action is application of Alternative 3. The Service has modeled the effects of take for falconry and for propagation, and has determined that in most cases the take is a small fraction of conservative numbers for take that will ensure that the populations remain healthy.

We believe that the conservative take under the preferred alternative we propose will not be discernible in raptor populations. However, the preferred alternative will require periodic evaluations of populations of raptors taken for falconry.

We also believe that effects of this action on wildlife habitats would be very small. We found no likely environmental impacts to air or water quality, to other wildlife populations, or to any other component of the environment.

Based on my review of the enclosed Environmental Assessment and other supporting documentation, I have determined that the proposed take of raptors for use in falconry and in raptor propagation under the conditions outlined above is not a major Federal action that would significantly affect the quality of the human environment within the meaning of Section 102 (2) (C) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969. Accordingly, preparation of an environmental impact statement on the proposed action is not required.

Dated: 

Signed: **Kenneth Stansell**
Acting Director, Fish and Wildlife Service

Reference: Final Environmental Assessment: Take of Raptors from the Wild Under the Falconry and the Raptor Propagation Regulations