Traveling with Eagle Parts and Feathers

A Native Tribal Member’s Guide to Traveling Internationally with Religious and Cultural Regalia

Eagle parts and feathers hold a sacred place in Native American cultural and religious practice. Because of our tribal trust responsibility and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s (Service) commitment to adhering to federal law that recognizes long-standing tribal use of eagle parts and feathers, Native Americans may lawfully conduct several activities, which are federally prohibited for others.

This guide applies only to members of federally recognized Indian tribes under 25 U.S.C. 5131 and their lawfully possessed eagle items transported for bona fide religious and cultural purposes. Items can include bald and golden eagles, eagle mounts, parts, feathers, nests, dead eagle eggs, and items made from these materials.

What laws regulate my religious items?

Bald eagles (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) and golden eagles (*Aquila chrysaetos*) enjoy special protection in the United States. Statutory protection of Bald and Golden eagles include the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act. These statutes and their accompanying regulations prohibit anyone, without a permit, to take, possess, import, export, transport, sell, purchase, barter; or offer for sale, purchase, or barter, the parts, nests, or eggs of these eagles.

Additionally, bald and golden eagles receive international protection under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). This treaty helps regulate and control trade through a system of permits. Both the bald and golden eagle are listed under Appendix II of CITES, which requires a permit from the country of export to move internationally.

How can I travel overseas with my religious items?

A CITES permit is required to travel internationally with your religious items containing eagle parts and feathers. You may apply for this permit using form 3-200-70. Note your travel dates and location(s) and plan to apply at least 60 days prior to your travel date. To receive a permit, your travel must include bona fide tribal religious or cultural purposes, you must provide evidence that your items are personally owned and lawfully possessed, and you must leave and return to the U.S. with the same eagle items. If you plan to travel with religious or cultural items containing other federally regulated species, you may also include these items within the same application for review. Please note that there may be additional domestic regulations in the destination country. Contact the foreign country in advance to be sure you are able to comply with all regulations.

Once authorized, your export permit will be valid for 6 months. Upon export with your issued permit, you must additionally declare all wildlife items to the Service by filling out Declaration Form 3-177 and contacting the designated wildlife port from which you will be exiting the country. Under 50 CFR 23.22, travel outside the U.S. with your items may be up to 180 days. Upon return to the U.S., you must receive a re-export certificate from the exporting country’s CITES Management Authority and you must declare your items upon return. Visit the Service’s National Eagle Repository guidance page for additional information.
How can I travel to Canada or Mexico with my religious items?

A permit is not required when traveling to Canada or Mexico for religious purposes, given you return to the United States with the same eagle items. Please be aware that you must declare all wildlife items to the Service by filling out Declaration Form 3-177 at a border crossing or U.S. airport.

May I travel internationally with live eagles?

No. Live bald or golden eagles or live eagle eggs may not be taken outside the United States.

Additional Information:

Please see our Possession of Eagle Feathers and Parts fact sheet and the following application forms for eagle take and possession permits.

Eagle possession permit / order form: 3-200-15a
Eagle take permit: 3-200-77
Eagle aviary permit: 3-200-78

For further information and additional resources regarding acquisition of bald and golden eagle feathers or parts, please contact:

National Eagle Repository
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Rocky Mountain Arsenal
6550 Gateway Road, RMA, Bldg 128
Commerce City, Colorado 80022

Email: repository@fws.gov

https://www.fws.gov/eaglerepository/

For further information regarding international travel with your bald and golden eagle feathers and parts for Indian religious purposes, please contact:

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Division of Management Authority
5275 Leesburg Pike, MS:1A
Falls Church, Virginia 22041

Email: managementauthority@fws.gov