



# Migratory Bird Rehabilitation Permits

## *Authorizing the Care of Sick and Injured Migratory Birds for Return to the Wild*

### Migratory Bird Management

#### Mission

*To conserve migratory bird populations and their habitats for future generations, through careful monitoring and effective management.*



#### **What is migratory bird rehabilitation?**

Migratory bird rehabilitation is the practice of caring for sick, injured, or orphaned migratory birds with the goal of releasing them back to the wild.

#### **Why is a Federal permit required to rehabilitate migratory birds?**

Under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA), no one may take, possess, import, export, transport, sell, purchase, barter, or offer for sale, purchase, or barter; any migratory bird, or the parts, nests or eggs of such a bird except under the terms of a valid permit or as otherwise exempted by regulation.

#### **Which birds are considered "migratory birds" for purposes of this rule?**

"Migratory birds" in this context means all birds protected by the MBTA. The birds protected under the MBTA are those species that are covered by one or more of four treaties that the United States signed with Canada, Mexico, Russia, and Japan. The majority of these species include populations whose migrations take them to one or more of these other countries, as well as the United States. Most, but not all, of the species that are native to the U.S. are protected by the MBTA. The complete list of species covered by the MBTA is set forth in regulations at 50 CFR 10.13.

#### **Can someone without a permit help a sick, injured, or orphaned migratory bird?**

Any person who finds a sick, injured, or orphaned migratory bird may, without a permit, take possession of the bird in order to immediately transport it to a permitted rehabilitator. If you find a sick, injured, or orphaned migratory bird, call your local humane society, or county or municipal wildlife agency to find the nearest permitted migratory bird rehabilitator who can take and treat the bird. While you are locating a rehabilitator, keep the bird in a box in a warm, dark, and quiet spot. Do not disturb it or offer it food.

#### **What activities does the Federal migratory bird permit authorize?**

The permittee is authorized to take from the wild or receive from another person sick, injured, or orphaned migratory birds and to possess them while providing rehabilitative care for them for up to 180 days (without additional authorization). Permittees may: transport the birds for release into suitable habitats, take them to a veterinarian or another permitted rehabilitator, or if necessary, euthanize them. In cases where birds can substantially recover but would likely not survive in the wild, the permittee may obtain authorization to transfer the bird to another person authorized to possess migratory birds.

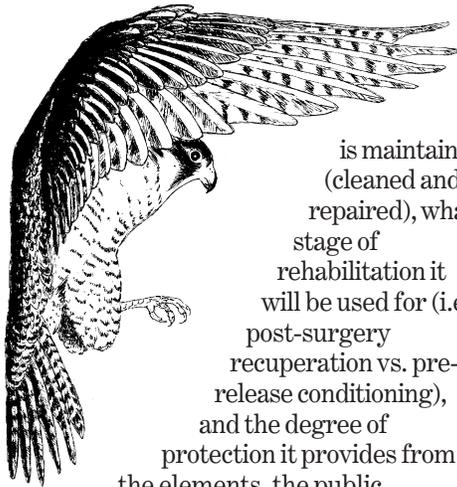
#### **Can rehabilitators use the birds in their care in educational programs?**

No, birds held under a rehabilitation permit may not be displayed to the public (unless barriers and/or video cameras are used to eliminate noise and visual exposure). The purpose of the rehabilitation permit is to rehabilitate birds for release to the wild. Birds undergoing rehabilitative care that are exposed to the public may experience stress that impedes their recovery. Also, birds may become habituated to humans, compromising their successful reestablishment in the wild.

With authorization from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) migratory bird permit office, nonreleasable birds may be transferred to an educational use permit allowing them to be used for conservation education.

#### **What are the basic permit conditions for migratory bird rehabilitation?**

*Facilities.* Migratory bird rehabilitators must use enclosures that are suitable for the species of birds they treat. Whether an enclosure is suitable will depend on a variety of factors, including spatial dimensions, construction materials, how it



is maintained (cleaned and repaired), what stage of rehabilitation it will be used for (i.e., post-surgery recuperation vs. pre-release conditioning), and the degree of protection it provides from the elements, the public, predators and domestic pets. For guidance on appropriate housing for migratory birds undergoing rehabilitation, consult *Minimum Standards for Wildlife Rehabilitation*, published jointly by the International Wildlife Rehabilitation Council (<http://www.iwrc-online.org/>) and the National Wildlife Rehabilitators Association (<http://www.nwrawildlife.org/home.asp>).

**Euthanasia.** For humane reasons, the permit regulation requires migratory bird rehabilitators to euthanize birds with certain grave injuries that are likely to cause birds to suffer recurrent stress or pain, unless the permit office grants an exception based on a veterinarian's certification that 1) the bird is not likely to experience the typical problems, and 2) the certifying veterinarian agrees to provide medical care for the bird for the remainder of its life.

**Subpermittees.** A subpermittee is someone other than the permitted rehabilitator who is listed under the permit and helps care for the birds held under the permit. Any person who will be performing activities that require permit authorization *in the absence of the permittee* or a subpermittee must be listed under the permit as a subpermittee or have his or her own permit. Subpermittees must be 18 years of age or older. However, minors may assist with hands-on care of migratory birds under the supervision of the permitted rehabilitator or a subpermittee.

**Qualifications.** In order to qualify for a migratory bird rehabilitation permit, the applicant must be at least 18 years of age and have at least 100 hours of hands-on experience rehabilitating birds (or comparable experience). Typically, the applicant gains the required experience by working as a subpermittee for a permitted migratory bird rehabilitator.

The Service may place restrictions on the types of species (i.e., raptors or waterbirds) a rehabilitator is authorized to care for, based on the experience and facilities of the rehabilitator.

Additional conditions apply to migratory bird rehabilitation permits, as specified in the regulations at 50 CFR 13 and 50 CFR 21.31.

**Does this permit authorize rehabilitation of migratory birds that are federally listed as threatened or endangered species?**

This permit authorizes rehabilitation of federally listed threatened or endangered migratory bird species, with special conditions. No separate permit is needed to grant authorization under the Endangered Species Act.

**Applying for a Migratory Bird Rehabilitation Permit**

*What form do I use to apply for a migratory bird permit?*

You must complete a Service Form 3-200-10b. Along with other information, the application will ask you to describe your experience rehabilitating migratory birds and provide the following: the name of the veterinarian who will be assisting you, a letter from a permitted rehabilitator who has knowledge of your qualifications, and photographs and diagrams of your facilities.

*Where can I get the application form?*

Migratory bird rehabilitation permits are issued by the Regional Migratory Bird Permit Offices. Contact your Regional Migratory Bird Permit Office to obtain this form, or get it off the Internet at: <http://forms.fws.gov/default.cfm>.

*Where do I mail my application?*

Send your completed application to the Regional Migratory Bird Permit Office that covers your state of residence.

*Is there an application fee associated with obtaining a migratory bird rehabilitation permit?*

Yes, the Service charges a permit application fee to help offset the costs of processing the application and monitoring permitted activities.

*Do I need any other permits?*

Many states require a state permit to rehabilitate wildlife. Contact your state wildlife agency for information about laws and regulations applicable to rehabilitating wildlife in your state.

**For more information: Contact the Regional Migratory Bird Permit Office that covers the State where you live.**

**Regional U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Migratory Bird Permit Offices**

Region 1 (CA, HI, ID, NV, OR, WA)  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Migratory Bird Permit Office  
911 N.E. 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Portland, OR 97232-4181  
Tel. (503) 872-2715

Region 2 (AZ, NM, OK, TX)  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Migratory Bird Permit Office  
P.O. Box 709  
Albuquerque, NM 87103  
Tel. (505) 248-7882

Region 3 (IA, IL, IN, MN, MO, MI, OH, WI)  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Migratory Bird Permit Office  
One Federal Drive  
Fort Snelling, MN 55111  
Tel. (612) 713-5436

Region 4 (AR, FL, GA, KY, LA, MS, NC, PR, SC, TN)  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Migratory Bird Permit Office  
P.O. Box 49208  
Atlanta, GA 30359  
Tel. (404) 679-7070

Region 5 (CT, DC, DE, ME, MD, MA, NH, NJ, NY, PA, RI, VA, VT, WV)  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Migratory Bird Permit Office  
P.O. Box 779  
Hadley, MA 01035-0779  
Tel. (413) 253-8643

Region 6 (CO, KS, MT, ND, NE, SD, UT, WY)  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Migratory Bird Permit Office  
P.O. Box 25486  
DFC (60154)  
Denver, CO 80225-0486  
Tel. (303) 236-8171

Region 7 (AK)  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Migratory Bird Permit Office  
1011 E. Tudor Road  
Anchorage, AK 99503  
Tel. (907) 786-3693

**See the Service's Permits website at**  
<http://permits.fws.gov/>.