



FLORIDA FISH AND WILDLIFE CONSERVATION COMMISSION
DIVISION OF LAW ENFORCEMENT
FALCONRY INFORMATION AND CHECKLIST
P.O. Box 6150, Tallahassee, FL 32314-6150



April 14, 2014

Dear Falconry Community:

State regulations have been enacted that require a falconry permit to be issued by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) to possess raptors for falconry purposes. This information package with check lists is designed to provide information and assist you in the application process for a falconry permit.

On November 7, 2008, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) relinquished permitting authority to states, tribes and U.S. territories. The FWC passed a proposed falconry rule on February 14, 2013. These changes were certified by USFWS and became effective January 1, 2014. These new regulations found in Rule 68A-9.005, Florida Administrative Code, may be viewed on-line at <https://www.flrules.org/>

There are several steps that must be completed by an applicant before a permit is issued.

- (1) Study and become familiar with the various species occurring in Florida, as well as basic biology, care and training of raptors for falconry. The bibliography of study materials for the falconry exam may be viewed on-line at <http://www.myfwc.com/license/captive-wildlife/#falconry>.
- (2) Aspiring falconers must construct a fenced area with the proper perches, shelter and bath arrangements (weathering area).
- (3) Assemble handling equipment. The following equipment must be prepared and in readiness: jesses, leashes and swivels, bath container, outdoor perches, weighing device, and gauntlet glove.
- (4) Assure a good food supply. Local ordinances prohibit shooting within the boundaries of most cities. The applicant should not plan to obtain food for raptors by shooting small animals or birds within or near a city.

All applicants must take and pass the falconry exam with a score of 80% or higher and have their raptor facility inspected and approved prior to possessing a bird for falconry purposes. No falconry permit shall be issued to any person failing to pass the written examination.



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Examinations will be supervised by FWC representatives at each regional office. The regional commander will schedule all appointments, and may be reached by telephone from 9a.m. to 4:30p.m., weekdays. No notes, books, or other aids may be used while taking the examination. The test will deal with raptor biology, natural history, care in captivity, identification, falconry techniques, terms and the applicable laws and regulations. Please contact the appropriate Division of Law Enforcement regional office (see attached reference) to schedule a falconry exam.

After the examination is completed, it will be forwarded to the Tallahassee Office for grading. You will receive your exam results by mail. You may submit your completed application and supporting documentation after receiving notification that you have passed the falconry exam. If a passing score is obtained and upon receipt of your completed application package, a FWC representative will be sent to inspect and approve your facilities and equipment. If a passing score is not obtained, you make retake the examination after 30 days.

Eligibility requirements for apprentice, general or master class falconry permit is as follows:

- (1) **Apprentice:** Applicants must be at least 14 years of age in order to be eligible for a permit. A parent or legal guardian must sign the application and be responsible for the activities of an applicant under the age of 18. Applicants for the apprentice class must be sponsored by an experienced general or master class falconer, with at least two years of experience at the general class. A letter from your Sponsor must be submitted with your application for a falconry permit.
- (2) **General:** Applicant must be at least 18 years of age and shall have a minimum of two years of experience in the practice of falconry with 4 months each year of maintaining, training, flying, and hunting raptors. The general class applicant must also provide a document from a general or master class falconer, preferably their sponsor, stating that the applicant has practiced falconry at the apprentice level or equivalent for at least 2 years to include maintaining, training, flying and hunting raptors at least 4 months each year.
- (3) **Master:** The master class applicant must have at least five years of experience in the practice of falconry at the general class or equivalent, with 4 months each year of maintaining, training, flying, and hunting raptors. The master class applicant who wants to possess a golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*), white tailed eagle (*Haliaeetus albicilla*) or Stellar's sea eagle (*Haliaeetus pelagicus*) must provide documentation of experience in the care, feeding, husbandry, handling and/or flying eagles, goshawks, ferruginous hawks, Eurasian eagle owls, and/or great horned owls. Such applicant must also provide references from no less than two individuals having personal knowledge of the applicants stated experience.



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Before a permit is issued, the applicant's mews and equipment will be inspected and approved by FWC personnel. The purpose of the inspection will be to establish that the facilities are adequate for housing and handling the raptor, which the applicant intends to hold in captivity.

We appreciate your interest in falconry. Please call our Captive Wildlife office at (850) 488-6253 or write if you have any further questions.



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Apprentice:

- ___ Passed Falconry Exam (notification letter attached);
- ___ 14 years of age or older;
- ___ Signature of parent or legal guardian on application (for applicants under the age of 18); and
- ___ Required letter from sponsor

Sponsor Name: _____ Sponsor Rank: _____

General:

- ___ Passed Falconry Exam (notification letter attached as applicable);
 - ___ 18 years of age or older;
 - ___ Documentation to show at least two (2) years of experience in the practice of falconry at the Apprentice level, including maintaining, training, flying and hunting raptors for at least four (4) months in each year; and
 - ___ Required letter from General or Master falconer (preferably from sponsor)
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Master:

- ___ Passed Falconry Exam (notification letter attached as applicable);
- ___ 18 years of age or older; and
- ___ Documentation to show at least five (5) years experience in the practice of falconry at the General level, including maintaining, training, flying and hunting raptors for at least four (4) months in each year

Authorization for Eagles (golden eagles, white-tailed eagles, or Stellar's sea eagle)

___ One year of substantial practical experience (to consist of no less than 1,000 hours) in the care, feeding, husbandry, and/or flying large raptors of the following species:

- Eagles (all species);
- Goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*);
- Ferruginous hawk (*Buteo regalis*);
- Eurasian eagle owl (*Bubo bubo*); and/or
- Great horned owl (*Bubo virginianus*)

___ Description of specific experience acquired, including the species of raptors handled

___ Dates and times the experience was obtained and specific location(s) where acquired

___ References from not less than two (2) individuals having personal knowledge of your stated experience



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Facilities: Applicant must meet one or multiple of the following standards:

_____ Outdoor (weathering) area

- Fenced and covered with netting, wire, or roof
- Large enough to ensure bird cannot strike the fence when flying from a perch
- Adequate perches and protection from excessive sun, wind, and inclement weather for each bird

_____ Indoor (Mew)

- Large enough to provide easy access for caring for the raptors
- Compatible raptors may be housed together untethered
- Incompatible raptors tethered or separated by partition
- Suitable perch for each raptor
- Untethered birds - mew large enough to permit flight
- Tethered birds - mew large enough to permit bird to fully extend its wings or bate without damaging its feathers or contacting other birds in the mew
- At least one window protected by vertical bars, wooden or plastic lattice, or heavy duty netting
- Secure door that can be easily closed
- Flooring that is well drained and permits easy cleaning

_____ Residence

- Suitable perch (must be tethered)
- Access to outdoor facility with suitable perch, water and protection from predators or weathered outdoors under direct supervision

Equipment:

_____ Jesses (1 pair Aylmeri jesses or similar type)

_____ Leash

_____ Swivel (snap type swivels such as harness snaps are not adequate)

_____ Bath container (2 – 6 inches deep and wider than the length of the raptor)

_____ Outdoor perch for each raptor

_____ Weighing device (a scale graduated to increments of not more than ½ ounce)