

A Guide to Dealing with Aggressive Hawks

General information

Birds of prey, also called raptors, include hawks, eagles, falcons and owls. Each spring and summer, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) receives reports of raptors diving at people. These incidents, which are usually caused by hawks, have happened in both urban and suburban areas. Most of these events occur during the nesting season and near an active nest where there are chicks or eggs. The raptors dive at people who come too close to the nest. The birds view those people as threats to the nest and the babies. In many cases, the birds dive at people but don't make contact. However, there have been injuries from these birds when they do make contact. Reports show that the birds may dive at people as far as 150 feet away from their nests.



Legal status

All Florida raptors are protected under the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act and under Florida law. This means the birds themselves, their nests, and their eggs are protected by federal and state law. However, permits can be given to remove nests or, in severe cases, to remove the birds themselves.

What can be done without a permit?

- Avoid the area near the nest, if possible. If you must go through the area, move quickly but carry an open umbrella and don't run..
- Temporarily put up a tarp or canopy tent in that area to obstruct the birds' view of people.
- Put on a sturdy hat and then draw a large pair of "eyes" that you can attach to the back of the hat. Birds may be less likely to dive if they think they're being watched.
- Sometimes you may be able to use an air horn to scare birds that start to dive.

Who do I contact for a permit?

FWC biologists can help with some of these issues. Property owners always have the option of applying for permits to remove an empty/inactive nest or an active nest. If the nest is empty, the FWC can issue a permit. If it is an active nest, with eggs or chicks in the nest, then property owners need permits from both FWC and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). In severe cases, permits may be issued by USFWS to directly remove birds, nests, and young. Call your local FWC regional office for more information.

Decisions for permits are made on a case-by-case basis by FWC's Protected Species Permitting Staff, who work with the USFWS if the nest has eggs or chicks.

Stay safe when the birds are protecting their families.

(See reverse side for nest and/or bird removal permit application and contact information)

Inactive Nest Permit:

For an **inactive** nest removal permit, apply for a FL Fish and Wildlife (FWC) on-line permit:

<https://public.myfwc.com/CrossDOI/PermitSystem/>.

No fee for this application. Please contact the Permit Office at (850) 921-5990 if you do not have access to the internet or have permit questions.

Active Nest Permit:

For an **active** nest removal permit, you must apply for the FWC permit (above) and a USFWS permit. Download, fill out, and print a Migratory Bird Depredation Permit form from the USFWS Web site:

www.fws.gov/forms/3-200-13.pdf.

Mail the original form and the check for the permit processing fee to the Region 4 Migratory Bird Permitting Office at P.O. Box 49208, Atlanta, GA 30359. Fax a copy of the permit application to USDA Wildlife Services at (352) 377-5559. Contact the USDA Wildlife Services (352-377-5556) if you do not have access to the internet or have permit questions.

Contact your Regional FWC Office:

FLORIDA FISH AND WILDLIFE CONSERVATION COMMISSION HEADQUARTERS AND REGIONAL OFFICES

