

# DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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## FALCONRY REGULATIONS SET

New regulations requiring Federal permits for falconers and setting standards for falconry--the ancient sport of taking quarry with trained birds of prey--were announced today by Lynn A. Greenwalt, Director of Interior's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The regulations, published in the Federal Register on January 15:

- require that persons entering the sport have a basic knowledge of raptor identification, biology, regulations, care, and training;
- establish three classes of falconry permits depending upon the individual's level of competence: apprentice, general, and master classes;
- set housing and marking requirements for raptors;
- identify species which can be used for the sport and set limits on the number of birds which can be removed from the wild (no endangered species can be used);
- establish minimum standards to be used by the States for issuing their falconry permits.

Federal regulation of falconry is required by a March 1972 convention between the United States and Mexico which extends Federal protection to virtually all species of North American birds traditionally used for falconry. None can be possessed without a Federal permit. Some of the more common include the red-tailed hawk, prairie falcon, cooper's hawk, goshawk, kestrel, and Harris hawk.

Falconry has been practiced for over 4,000 years and is increasing in popularity worldwide. An estimated 1,500 Americans actively engage in the sport, and the number is growing.

The sport of falconry is not allowed in some States. Where it is allowed, State regulations must comport with the minimum requirements stated in the Federal regulations.

The regulations attracted almost 16,000 comments from individuals and organizations in response to two notices of proposed rulemaking in July 1973 and April 1974. No other proposed rulemaking by the Service ever has drawn greater public interest.

The new rules become effective February 17, 1976.