



**KENTUCKY FALCONRY REGULATIONS  
FACTS SHEET  
EFFECTIVE April 6, 2018**

This fact sheet was designed as a quick reference sheet for falconers to find guidelines on KY's falconry regulations. Falconry information and links to both Kentucky and federal falconry regulations can be found on our Department website at [www.fw.ky.gov/Wildlife/Pages/Falconry-and-Raptor-Propagation.aspx](http://www.fw.ky.gov/Wildlife/Pages/Falconry-and-Raptor-Propagation.aspx). If you have additional regulation questions, please contact the Department at 1-800-858-1549. Please use the following address to submit falconry-related materials: KDFWR/Falconry, 1 Sportsman's Lane, Frankfort, KY 40601.

**1. Classes of Falconry and requirements:**

ISSUE	KENTUCKY REGULATIONS
	<b>Apprentice Class</b>
Age	12 (If 12-17, parent or guardian must cosign application and be responsible for your activities)
Possession limit	1
Species	American kestrel ( <i>Falco Sparverius</i> ), red-tailed hawk ( <i>Buteo jamaicensis</i> ), red-shouldered hawk ( <i>Buteo Lineatus</i> ), or Harris's hawk ( <i>Parabuteo unicinctus</i> )
Source	Wild or captive-bred; no imprints; cannot take nestlings from the wild
Take from the wild	Up to 2 annually (passage birds only)
Duration before upgrade	At least 2 years practicing falconry with <b>wild</b> raptors (including at least 4 months each year)
	<b>General Class</b>
Age	16 (If 16 or 17, parent or guardian must cosign application and be responsible for your activities)
Possession limit	3
Species	A great horned owl ( <i>Bubo virginianus</i> ) and any member of the Order Falconiformes, except the golden eagle ( <i>Aquila chrysaetos</i> ), bald eagle ( <i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i> ), white-tailed eagle ( <i>Haliaeetus albicilla</i> ), and Stellar's sea eagle ( <i>Haliaeetus pelagicus</i> )
Source	Wild or captive-bred
Take from the wild	Up to 2 annually
Duration before upgrade	At least 5 years practicing falconry at general class (with an average of 4 months a year, in at least 4 of the last 5 years)
	<b>Master Class</b>
Possession limit	5 wild raptors, 3 of which may be eagles (golden, white-tailed, or Stellar's sea eagle); unlimited captive-bred raptors (excluding eagles) if used for falconry.
Species	A great horned owl and any member of the Order Falconiformes, except the bald eagle
Source	Wild or captive-bred
Take from the wild	Up to 2 annually

**2. Facilities:**

- a. A falconry applicant must have his or her facilities inspected and approved by a conservation officer prior to obtaining a falconry permit. This applies even to renewals and upgrades.
- b. A falconer who relocates his or her facility must notify the Department within 5 business days and have the new facility inspected and approved within 30 days.
- c. A facility cannot be inspected without the presence of the permit holder.

**3. Seasons for taking raptors:**

<b>SPECIES</b>	<b>SEASON FOR TAKING RAPTORS</b>
	<b>Passage Birds</b>
Great-horned owl	September 1 through October 31 (general and master class only)
All other allowable species	September 1 through January 31
	<b>Mature Birds (general and master class only)</b>
Great-horned owl	September 1 through October 31
American kestrel	September 1 through January 31
	<b>Eyasses (general and master class only)</b>
All allowable species	January 1 through July 31

**4. Take of sharp-shinned hawk eyasses:**

- a. Only 1 eyass may be taken by a falconer per year.
- b. At least 2 eyasses shall be left in a nest after a take.
- c. A Falconry Take Location Report form must be submitted to the Department within 5 days of possession (the form may be downloaded from the Department website or by contacting the Department).
- d. Up to 15 eyasses may be taken in any given calendar year (5 for nonresidents; 10 for residents). The falconer is responsible for contacting the Department before the take to ensure the annual quota has not already been met.

**5. Take of raptors by nonresidents:**

- a. Nonresidents are allowed to take birds from KY only if their state allows the same for KY residents.
- b. Nonresidents may take 1 raptor per calendar year.
- c. A request to take a raptor shall be made at least 15 days prior to the take.
- d. A Falconry Take Location Report form shall be submitted within 5 days of taking a bird.

**6. Possession of eagles by a master falconer:**

- a. The master falconer must first obtain approval from the Department to possess a golden eagle, white-tailed eagle, or Stellar’s sea eagle. Contact the Department for a list of requirements.
- b. Upon approval, a master falconer may possess up to 3 eagles in any combination and may take up to 2 golden eagles from the wild from a livestock depredation area.

**7. Peregrine falcons:**

- a. A peregrine may not be trapped in Kentucky for falconry.

**8. Banding and telemetry:**

- a. Only species as required under the federal regulations will need to be banded. These include Harris’s hawks, goshawks, gyrfalcons, peregrine falcons, and all captive-bred birds.
- b. Bands shall be requested from the Department at least 15 days prior to acquisition of a bird. The Department will send the band to the falconer once he/she is in possession of the bird.
- c. If trapping in another state other than KY, it is the responsibility of the falconer to ensure that he/she is following all banding regulations within the state he/she is trapping.
- d. Bands for captive-bred birds under a propagation permit will still need to be obtained from the propagator’s regional US Fish and Wildlife Service office.
- e. When flown free, a hybrid must have at least 2 attached radio transmitters.

**9. Release of birds and hacking:**

- a. A non-native raptor, hybrid raptor, or captive-bred raptor that is native to Kentucky shall not be released into the wild.

- b. All leg bands shall be removed prior to release into the wild.
- c. Hacking is allowed by a general or master class falconer provided the falconer notifies the Department in advance and provides information on the species and origin of the bird and the location and dates of hacking.

**10. Falconry Exam:**

- a. A first time apprentice falconer and new residents to the United States must pass an exam administered by the Department prior to obtaining a falconry permit.
- b. A score of 80% or higher is required to pass the exam.
- c. Only one exam may be taken a day, and an applicant may not take more than three exams in any 12 month period.
- d. Applications must be submitted within 12 months of passing the exam.

**11. Sponsors:**

- a. A sponsor cannot have more than 3 apprentices at any given time
- b. A sponsor must be at least 18 years of age and possess a general or master class falconry permit with at least 2 years experience at the general class.
- c. A sponsor shall provide the Department with the necessary documentation for apprentice applications and apprentice upgrades to general class as listed under Section 4 of 301 KAR 2:195.
- d. A sponsor shall provide direct supervision to the apprentice while trapping wild raptors.
- e. A sponsor shall inspect and evaluate the apprentice's facility and bird a minimum of one time every 12 months.
- f. A sponsor withdrawing sponsorship must notify the Department within 5 days and provide the apprentice with a letter stating length of their sponsorship. The apprentice will have 30 days to obtain a new sponsor.

**12. Reporting:**

- a. All raptors acquired, transferred, released, lost, rebanded, microchipped, stolen, or disposed of must be reported within 5 days by entering the required information in the electronic database at <http://permits.fws.gov/186A> or by submitting a paper form 3-186A to the Department. Paper forms may be downloaded from our website, or contact the Department to have one mailed to you.
- b. If using the electronic database, make sure to print a copy once you have entered your data. All copies of 3-186A forms should be retained for a minimum of 5 years.
- c. A Falconry Take Location Report form must be submitted to the Department within 5 days of possession for a raptor taken by a nonresident and for a sharp-shinned hawk eyass taken by a KY resident.
- d. First time General class applicants must include a signed Kentucky Apprentice Falconer Activity Report with the application.
- e. First time Master class applicants must submit a signed Kentucky General Falconer Upgrade Report along with the application.

**13. Master Class Permit Lapse**

- a. Master class permittees who allow their falconry permit to lapse for a period greater than 5 years shall comply with application requirements established in 301 KAR 2:195 Section 1.
- b. Permittees will be reinstated at the general class level, and shall actively practice falconry for an average of 4 months per year, in at least two of the last three years prior to a master class upgrade.
- c. A person applying for master class reinstatement shall submit a Kentucky General Class Upgrade Report, and proof of previous certification, in addition to the application.

**14. Propagation:**

- a. A falconry bird can be transferred to a propagation permit if the bird has been used in falconry for at least 2 years (1 year for sharp-shinned hawks, Cooper's hawks, merlins, and American kestrels).
- b. The person propagating must possess a valid federal propagation permit and a Kentucky captive wildlife permit.

- c. If a falconry bird is being used for propagation fewer than 8 months in a year, the bird does not need to be transferred to a propagation permit. The falconer must still possess the necessary propagation permits.

**15. Other Activities:**

- a. A falconer may use a raptor in conservation education programs provided that regulations in 50 C.F.R. Part 21.29 (f) are followed.
- b. A falconer may receive payment for use of falconry birds in abatement if the falconer possesses a federal abatement permit, holds a Kentucky Commercial Nuisance Wildlife Control permit, and follows all regulations in 50 C.F.R. Part 21.29 (f).

**16. Miscellaneous:**

- a. A raptor taken from the wild for falconry will always be considered a “wild” bird.
- b. If a falconry bird catches prey outside the hunting season, the bird may be allowed to feed on the animal but the animal may not be taken into possession.
- c. A falconer is responsible for the costs of care and rehabilitation of any bird injured during trapping efforts.