

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

National Eagle Repository

Denver, Colorado





Questions and Answers About the National Eagle Repository

For hundreds of years, Native Americans have used eagle feathers for religious and cultural purposes, including healing, marriage, and naming ceremonies. In recognition of the significance of these feathers to Native Americans, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service established the National Eagle Repository in the early 1970's to provide Native Americans with the feathers of golden and bald eagles needed for religious purposes.

Can Native Americans collect their own eagle feathers?

No. As a result of years of habitat loss from urbanization, exposure to chemicals used in agriculture and animal husbandry, and poaching, populations of bald eagles, the national symbol, and golden eagles have been reduced in numbers. In an effort to protect these birds, the United States Congress passed the Bald Eagle Protection Act in 1940, and later amended the Act in 1962 to include protection for golden eagles. This Act prohibits take, transport, sale, barter, trade, import and export, and possession of eagles, making it illegal for anyone to collect eagles and eagle parts without a permit.

How does the National Eagle Repository get the eagles?

The National Eagle Repository serves as a collection point for dead eagles. Most of the dead golden and bald eagles received by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) have been salvaged by State and Federal wildlife personnel. Many of these birds have died as a result of electrocution, vehicle collisions, unlawful shooting and trapping, or from natural causes.

The eagles are shipped to the National Eagle Repository at the Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge in Denver, Colorado. Each bird is assigned a number for tracking and accountability purposes, and information about each bird is entered into a database. The condition of each eagle and their feathers is noted, and the species and age is recorded. If part of the bird or its feathers are missing, damaged, or broken, FWS staff may add replacement parts from another bird to make it complete. (The recipient is notified when this is the case prior to shipping). The bird is then stored in a freezer until it is ready to ship, usually within 3-5 days.

When eagles are received at the National Eagle Repository, condition of each eagle and their feathers is noted, and the species and age is recorded.



Who can obtain an eagle from the Repository?

Only enrolled members of a Federally recognized tribe can obtain a permit from the FWS, authorizing them to receive and possess eagle feathers from the Repository for religious purposes.

How can I obtain an eagle?

The following must be presented when applying for an eagle possession permit:

- A completed application obtained from your nearest FWS Regional Office.
- Certification of tribal enrollment from the Bureau of Indian Affairs.
- Certification from a religious leader that the feathers will be used for religious purposes.

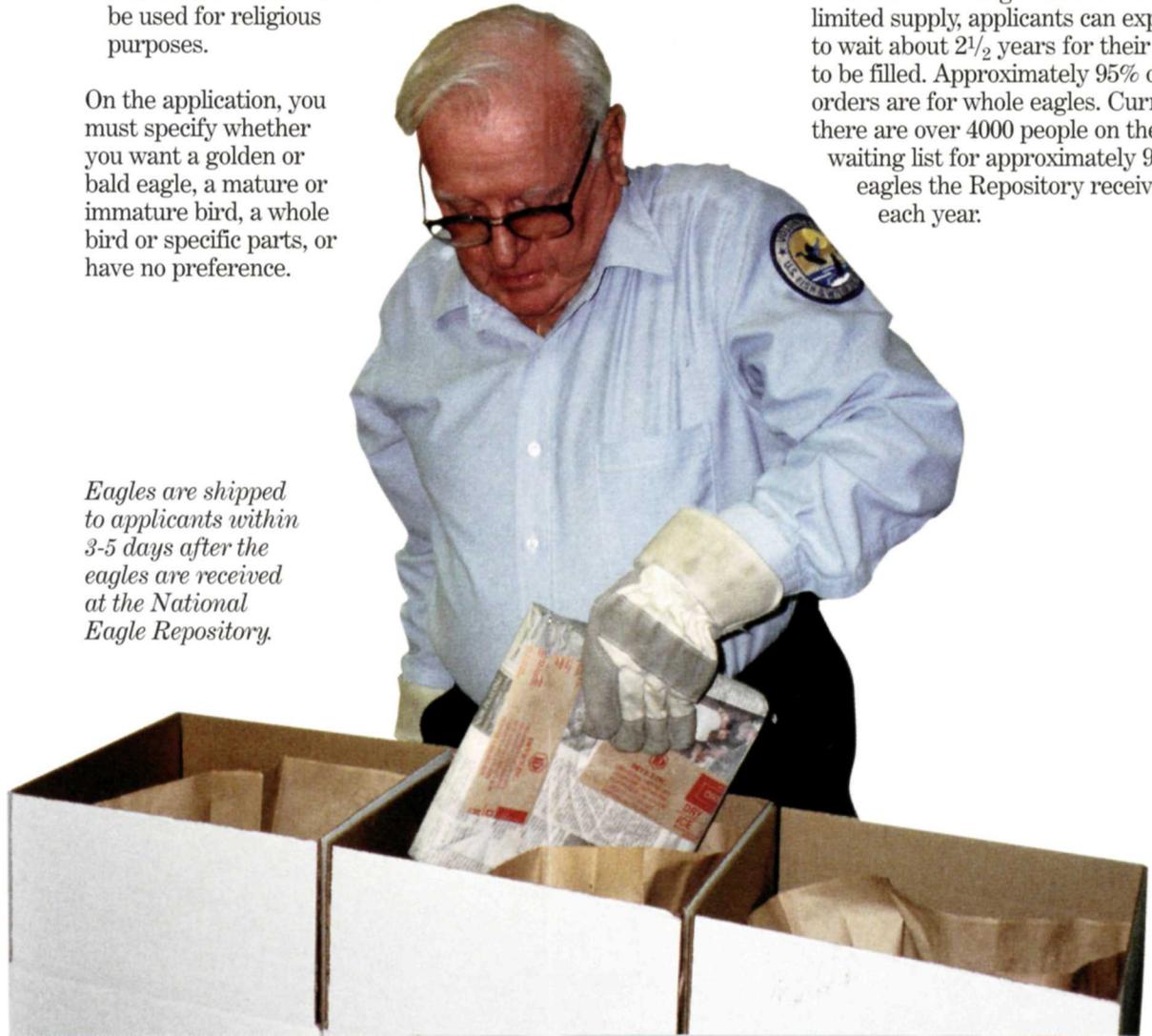
On the application, you must specify whether you want a golden or bald eagle, a mature or immature bird, a whole bird or specific parts, or have no preference.

How long is the wait to obtain an eagle?

You **must** provide a **current** telephone number so the Repository staff can contact you by telephone when your order is ready to ship. **Any changes in your address and/or telephone number must be submitted by you to your local FWS Regional Office to keep your file updated.**

Requests for eagles are filled on a first-come, first-served basis. Eagles are typically kept at the Repository just long enough to allow FWS personnel to contact the next applicant on the waiting list, usually 3-5 days. Because of the large demand and the limited supply, applicants can expect to wait about 2½ years for their order to be filled. Approximately 95% of the orders are for whole eagles. Currently, there are over 4000 people on the waiting list for approximately 900 eagles the Repository receives each year.

Eagles are shipped to applicants within 3-5 days after the eagles are received at the National Eagle Repository.



May I apply for more than one eagle?

Again, due to the large demand and the limited supply, each applicant can apply for only one whole eagle or specific parts equivalent to one bird (i.e. two wings, one tail, two talons) at a time. Once your request has been filled, you may reapply to receive another eagle.

May I sell objects made from the eagles feathers?

No. Feathers or parts of bald or golden eagles and other migratory birds may NOT be sold, purchased, bartered, or traded. They may, however, be handed down to family members, from generation to generation, or from one Native American to another for religious purposes. Native Americans CAN NOT give eagle feathers or parts to non-Native Americans as a gift.

Can eagle feathers and parts be imported or exported?

No. Currently, the Bald Eagle Protection Act strictly prohibits the import or export of eagle feathers and parts; however, efforts are currently underway to allow Native Americans to import or export eagle feathers and parts for religious purposes.

How does the National Eagle Repository benefit wildlife?

The salvage efforts of the FWS provides a legal means for Native Americans to acquire eagle feathers for religious purposes. By providing feathers to Native Americans, the pressure to take birds from the wild is reduced, thereby protecting eagle populations.

Immature golden eagle tail feathers



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

*For more information or to
obtain an application, contact
the nearest U.S. Fish and Wildlife
Service Office listed below:*



Region 1

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Migratory Bird Permit Office/ARW
Eastside Federal Complex
911 N.E. 11th Avenue
Portland, Oregon 97232
(503) 872-2715

Region 2

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Migratory Bird Permit Office
Room 5504
PO. Box 1306
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87103
(505) 248-7882

Region 3

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Migratory Bird Permit Office
1 Federal Drive, Box 45
Ft. Snelling, Minnesota 55111
(612) 725-3775

Region 4

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Permit Section
1875 Century Boulevard
Atlanta, Georgia 30345
(404) 679-7051

Region 5

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Migratory Bird Permit Office
300 Westgate Center Drive
Hadley, Massachusetts 01035
(413) 253-8641

Region 6

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Migratory Bird Permit Office
PO. Box 25486, DFC (60130)
Denver, Colorado 80225
(303) 236-8145, ext. 616

Region 7

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Migratory Bird Permit Office
1011 E. Tutor Road, Room 155
Anchorage, Alaska 99501
(907) 786-3311



National Eagle and Wildlife
Property Repository
Building 619
Rocky Mountain Arsenal
Commerce City, CO 80022
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