

**WILDLIFE AND COUNTRYSIDE ACT 1981 - SECTION 7
CLOSE-RINGING OF CAPTIVE BRED SCHEDULE 4 BIRDS**

A GUIDE FOR KEEPERS IN ENGLAND

IMPORTANT REMINDER TO ALL KEEPERS OF SCHEDULE 4 BIRDS

Administration of the bird registration legislation is a devolved responsibility and Animal Health is responsible only for the registration of birds kept in England. However, Animal Health also registers birds kept in Scotland and Wales from its office in Bristol on behalf of the Scottish Executive and Welsh Assembly Government at their request.

Legislation changes in recent years mean that ringing requirements differ depending on whether birds are kept in England, Scotland or Wales. This guide is only for keepers in England. Copies of the guidance issued to keepers in Scotland and Wales are available from the Wildlife Licensing & Registration Service office on request.

This guide is for anyone living in England who is intending to captive breed any species, or any hybrid of a species, listed in Schedule 4 to the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 during the 2007 breeding season. Please read this guide carefully and keep it in a safe place for reference. Please note that it is not intended to be an authoritative interpretation of the legal position and you should seek your own independent legal advice on detailed points of law. Any enquiries about the content of the guide should, in the first instance, be directed to your Case Officer.

This guide does not give advice on applying for Article 10 certificates as this is a separate issue

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1. LEGAL REQUIREMENT TO FIT CLOSED RINGS

Regulations in force under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 require Schedule 4 birds bred in captivity in England to be fitted with a uniquely numbered closed ring issued by Animal Health.

2. RECOMMENDED CLOSED RING SIZES AND RINGING TIMES

The following is a list of the ring sizes recommended for Schedule 4 birds. Rings will normally be issued in accordance with this list. It is accepted, however, that some birds produce chicks for which the recommended ring sizes would be unsuitable and a smaller or larger ring may be appropriate. In such cases, the keeper should give the reason for not requesting the recommended size. Hybrid chicks may be issued with additional rings of differing sizes depending on the parent species combination.

BIRD OF PREY SPECIES	MALE SIZE RING	FEMALE SIZE RING
BARBARY FALCON	V	W
GOLDEN EAGLE	ZA	ZA
GOSHAWK	V	W
GYR FALCON	W	X
HEN HARRIER	R	U
HOBBY	R	S
HONEY BUZZARD	V	V
MARSH HARRIER	U	U
MERLIN	P	R
MONTAGU'S HARRIER	S	S
PEREGRINE FALCON	V	W
RED KITE	W	W
MAURITIUS KESTREL	R	S

OTHER SCHEDULE 4 SPECIES**SAME SIZE FOR MALE & FEMALE**

BUNTING, CIRL	E
BUNTING, LAPLAND	E
BUNTING, SNOW	G
CHOUGH	R
CROSSBILL	J or JJ
FIELDFARE	M
FIRECREST	A
ORIOLE, GOLDEN	M
REDSTART, BLACK	C
REDWING	K
SERIN	B
SHORELARK	D
SHRIKE, RED BACKED	J
TIT, BEARDED	E
TIT, CRESTED	C
WARBLER, CETTI'S	D
WARBLER, DARTFORD	B
WARBLER, MARSH	C
WARBLER, SAVI'S	C
WOODLARK	E
WRYNECK	G

Please note that we do not issue rings for birds which do not appear in Schedule 4 to the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981, even if they are listed on Annex A to the EC Regulations. Close-ringing of chicks normally takes place between the 4th and 13th day following hatching, depending on the species. All chicks in the same clutch should be ringed on the same day or shortly afterwards. It is the keeper's responsibility to ensure that close rings are fitted at such a time as to ensure that is done in the most humane and effective way possible. Close rings fitted at the correct time will be a snug fit when passed over the bird's foot. Undue force should be avoided and it may be helpful to apply a lubricating gel or soap to ease fitting.

3. HOW TO REQUEST CLOSE RINGS

A request for rings can be made to your Case Officer by telephone, e-mail, or by posting or faxing a completed 'close ring request' form. A form is included with this guidance and further copies of the form are available from this office. You may use photocopies if you wish. The address to send requests to is:

Bird Registration Team
Wildlife Licensing & Registration Service
1/17 Temple Quay House
2 The Square
Temple Quay
Bristol
BS1 6EB

We hope that most keepers will find it easier to telephone their requests, as this is a quicker and more efficient method. It also provides a guarantee that requests you make are actually received.

A separate request should be made for each clutch of eggs **as soon as the completed clutch has been laid**, unless you are already certain that all the eggs are infertile. It is up to you to make sure that requests are made in good time.

When making a telephone request you will be asked for the following details:

- Your name and bird registration ID number;
- Your phone number;
- Species and ring numbers of both the parent birds (for artificially inseminated females this means all the possible male parents);
- Parent birds' Article 10 Certificate numbers (only applies to some bird of prey species);
- Number of eggs in the clutch;
- Date last egg was laid;
- Article 10 number for any semen straws used in producing the clutch (only applies to some bird of prey species);
- Your address (if you tell us you have moved since last contacting us);
- If you require rings of a different size from those recommended in this guide.

- If you require any Article 10 certificate application forms for the chicks you hope to produce (only applies to some bird of prey species).

Case officer contact details

Keeper surname	Case officer	Telephone number	Email address
A & B	Martine Purchase	01173728293	martine.purchase@animalhealth.gsi.gov.uk
C & S	Francine Nicholls	0117372 8297	francine.nicholls@animalhealth.gsi.gov.uk
D to F	Julie Berry	0117 372 6095	julie.berry@animalhealth.gsi.gov.uk
G & H	Sarah Hill	0117 372 8649	sarah.hill@animalhealth.gsi.gov.uk
K to N	Martin Saddington	01173728120	martin.saddington@animalhealth.gsi.gov.uk
O to R	Joan McDonald	01173728777	joan.mcdonald@animalhealth.gsi.gov.uk
I,J,T to Z	Christine Rodgers	01173728619	christine.rodgers@animalhealth.gsi.gov.uk
Team Leader	Pete Barrett	0117 372 6098	pete.barrett@animalhealth.gsi.gov.uk

If your Case Officer is not available, someone else will be able to take down the details you provide. Once this information is received the appropriate closed rings will normally be dispatched within 48 hours. However, rings requested late on a Friday afternoon will not be dispatched until the following Monday.

Whichever method you use to request rings, the aim is to ensure that they get to you in time for chicks to be correctly ringed. **You should contact us by telephone if there is any delay in receiving rings you have requested, especially if you make requests by any other method than by phone.** To avoid delay in the issue of rings, please inform us of any special arrangements which you may have for the breeding season, especially where chicks are to be kept at a different address.

‘Fast Track’ ring issuing service

For the last few breeding seasons a number of breeders who breed a large amount of birds and make many ring requests have been offered a ‘fast track’ ring issuing service whereby they receive all their rings at the beginning of the breeding season. This has been a pilot and is due at the end of this breeding season to be reviewed.

4. WITNESS OF RINGING BY AN ANIMAL HEALTH WILDLIFE INSPECTOR

As we have done in previous years, we will continue to send a percentage of ring packages via an Animal Health Wildlife Inspector so that the ringing of the chicks can be witnessed. If your rings are among those chosen, an Inspector will contact you to arrange a convenient time to witness the ringing. Inspectors are not able to assist with the close ringing of birds. If an assistant is required you should make your own arrangements.

5. APPLICATIONS TO REGISTER CHICKS

Each batch of rings is sent with an “Application to declare ringing and register Schedule 4 birds” form. These are often referred to simply as ‘Declaration of ringing’ forms or ‘D.O.Rs’. As soon as rings have been fitted to a clutch of chicks you should complete and return the registration application form enclosed with the rings.

When completing the application form(s) please make sure that you do the following:

- Each ring number printed on the form has three tick boxes next to it for you to indicate whether the ring has been fitted, lost, or is being returned. You should make sure that one, and only one, of the boxes is ticked for each ring;
- If you are returning rings and you have ticked the boxes on the form accordingly, please check that they are all present before sending.
- Rings are often issued in pairs or in threes. In such cases, at your discretion, both or all the rings may be fitted to the same bird and those later found to be inappropriately sized, removed. It is important that the rings are fitted in the groupings indicated on the form. In instances where rings are fitted to a clutch outside of their groupings by mistake you should indicate this clearly on the form. Failure to do this may result in registration documents that do not match with rings actually fitted to the birds they are issued for.
- Ensure that you state a full hatch date (dd/mm/yy) for each chick that a ring is fitted to and state the sex, if known.
- Ensure that you state where birds are to be kept if different from your home address.
- Each application form has a declaration section for you to sign and date. Any unsigned and/or undated application forms will be returned to you for your signature and the birds they relate to will remain unregistered until the correctly signed and dated form is re-submitted.
- Please note that it is no longer possible to register new birds (or any other Schedule 4 birds) into ‘joint keepership’.

6. REGISTRATION FEES FOR NEW BIRDS

Please do not send cash. All cheques and postal orders should be made payable to "Animal Health", and should be crossed "NOT NEGOTIABLE". Please retain the counterfoils for your own records. The correct fee and documentation should be sent to the **Bird Registration Section, Zone 1/17, Temple Quay House, 2 The Square, Bristol, BS1 6EB.**

Please ensure that cheques have been correctly filled in and note that we are unable to accept incomplete or post dated cheques. Incorrectly completed cheques will be returned to the sender and birds will remain unregistered until a valid payment is received.

Fees for bird of prey species

	Non-Club members	Recognised Club members	Zoo Federation members
Registration of new birds	£20 for every bird	£14 for every bird	£14 for every bird

The monitored species are: Golden Eagle, Merlin, Gyr Falcon, Peregrine Falcon, Barbary Falcon, Hobby, Goshawk and hybrids of these species. Other species may be monitored from time to time; keepers will be notified of any changes before the breeding season each year.

The registration fee for other Schedule 4 species is £6 per bird

7. ISSUE OF REGISTRATION DOCUMENTS & APPLICATION TURNAROUND TIMES

A registration document for each ringed bird will be issued on receipt of a correctly completed application form and correct registration fee. When you apply to register a bird we will aim to process 90% of all fully completed applications within seven working days. We will process the rest within 15 working days.

During the period from April 2005 to the end of December 2005 we issued over 4300 registration documents, of which 91% were issued within the target time. This compares with slightly less issued for the same period during the previous year, when 95.5% were issued within target time.

8. POSSESSION AND USE OF RINGS

- All rings remain the property of Animal Health and should be returned if not used. You should return any unused rings immediately and refrain from keeping them until the end of the breeding season.
- Please do not fit rings to clutches that they were not issued for. If you think you need to do so in an emergency you should inform your case officer immediately.
- It is the responsibility of the keeper to ensure that Schedule 4 birds are ringed as required. Whilst we will do everything we can to send out rings in response to urgent requests, we cannot accept responsibility for rings arriving too late to be fitted to chicks if the request is received while the eggs are hatching or have already hatched.
- We are aware that to promote successful breeding, parent birds are sometimes moved away from their registered keeper's premises. Please note that close rings are always issued to the person who will have possession of the eggs when they hatch, even if that person is not the registered keeper of either parent bird.
- Occasionally, rings either arrive too late to be fitted to chicks or have to be removed soon after fitting for the sake of a bird's welfare. If this happens you should return the rings along with the registration application and registration fees, and enclose a covering letter explaining the circumstances. We will then arrange for a Wildlife Inspector to deliver and fit either Animal Health split or Swiss rings, depending on the species, as an alternative.

9. POSSESSION, MOVEMENT AND REGISTRATION OF CHICKS AND EGGS

The following guidance relates to the registration of very young chicks that are in a breeder's possession, but are to be either passed back to the original owner or passed on for imprinting. It does not relate to the sale or commercial use of birds, for which separate guidance is available.

How long can a breeder keep chicks before registering them?

There is no period of grace. The Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 says:

"If any person keeps or has in his possession or under his control any bird included in Schedule 4 which has not been registered and ringed or marked in accordance with regulations made by the Secretary of State, he shall be guilty of an offence and be liable to a special penalty".

Birds should be registered by the person in possession of them immediately after they have been close ringed.

So a breeder has to register all birds he has bred before passing them on to a new keeper?

Not necessarily. It does depend on how long the breeder intends to keep the bird before passing it on. It also depends on whether the bird has already been close ringed.

But how can it depend on how long the breeder keeps a bird if there is no period of grace?

There are practicalities to consider. Animal Health cannot insist that a breeder (or any other keeper) keeps a bird in his possession for at least the period of time it takes to process a registration application. Neither can Animal Health register a bird to someone who no longer has it in their possession. There is little point in a breeder applying to register a bird only to immediately cancel the application because the bird has been passed on to someone else. However, any breeder who retains a bird for a period of time during which he could reasonably have completed the registration process would be committing an offence if he failed to apply. A bird is regarded to be ready to be registered as soon as it is ringed.

Why does it depend on whether a bird has been close ringed?

The time between hatching and close ringing is usually less than two weeks (depending on the species). Animal Health accepts that there is no practical or necessary mechanism by which breeders could apply to register birds before they are close ringed. Chicks that are too young to be close ringed are therefore too young to be registered and can be moved freely to other keepers. As soon as a bird is close ringed the paragraph above applies.

What about eggs that are incubated and hatched by someone other than the breeder?

The same principles apply. The incubating keeper can freely pass the unringed birds back to the breeder. However, if they are ringed before they are passed back he would be committing an offence by not registering them if he could reasonably have been expected to complete the registration process during the time they remained in his possession.

Is there a general licence covering this?

Yes there is a general licence issued by Natural England which covers the incubating of registrable birds.

What about chicks that are not able to be close ringed because their legs are too big?

This could happen if a keeper waits too long to fit rings, does not order or receive them in time, or they are fitted and later found to have come off. Such birds need to be registered under alternative markings (Swiss rings/split rings), or under unringed licence numbers, and keepers should apply to do this immediately. Birds that are old enough to have been close ringed are regarded as registrable, regardless of whether close ringing has actually taken place.

What are the controls on the general movement of eggs?

There is nothing to stop a breeder from passing eggs to any other keeper. Live birds need to be registered - eggs do not.

If a breeder wants to pass young unringed chicks or eggs to other keepers, who should apply for the close rings?

The breeder should apply for the rings as soon as the clutch is complete. Breeders should never wait until chicks have actually hatched before requesting rings as Animal Health may not be able to issue them in time. Animal Health always sends rings to the person who will have the eggs in their possession at the time of hatching, as this is all they can do to try to ensure that chicks and rings are in the same place at the optimum ringing time. Breeders are therefore asked if the rings they request are to be sent to them or to someone else. It is the responsibility of all keepers concerned to ensure that rings are available when chicks are ready to be ringed. Breeders who pass rings on should ensure that they also pass on the accompanying Declaration of Ringing form.

10. DELAYS IN REGISTERING SCHEDULE 4 BIRDS

There have been a number of instances of keepers and breeders delaying the registration of adult birds and chicks. Please remember it is the responsibility of the person who has a Schedule 4 bird in his possession or under his control to ensure that it is correctly registered, regardless of whether that person is the owner of the bird or of the parent birds.

You should not wait until the end of the breeding season in order to submit all your registration applications together. As keepers you need to be clear of the possible risks involved if you are ever challenged by a police officer and found to be possession of unregistered Schedule 4 listed birds, regardless of the reason.

Offences under Section 7 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, carry a maximum penalty of a £5,000 fine and/or a term of imprisonment of up to 6 months. Any conviction would also result in the unregistered bird being forfeited to court, and you would be banned from the possession or control of Schedule 4 birds for a period of five years, which would, in effect, mean that you would be required to dispose of any Schedule 4 birds that remain in your possession.

11. YOU AND YOUR RIGHTS

The Data Protection Acts

The Data Protection Act 1998 came into effect on 1 March 2000. Its purpose is to prevent the misuse of personal data held on computers and to make sure that every organisation holding and using personal information does so to proper standards and abides by these standards.

The Bird Registration and Article 10 Section is registered as a Data User and has an entry in the National Data Protection Register. The Act therefore has a very important, and clearly defined, restrictive effect on the way the Department deals with enquiries from the public, the Police, and other third parties.

Under the new Act, members of the public whose data is recorded will be entitled to receive the following information:

- A description of the data being processed
- A copy of the data, normally as a paper copy in understandable form
- A description of the purposes for which it is being processed
- A description of any potential recipients of their data
- Any information about the source of the data (except in certain circumstances)

An explanation of the logic involved in any processes in which a decision affecting them, is made by fully automated means.

Data Protection Act statement

Information gathered during the rings request and registration processes will be used for the purposes of registering birds under Section 7 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. It may also be used for the purposes of monitoring compliance with the provisions of EC Regulations 338/97 and 1808/01 and the investigation of infringements; and for this purpose, such information may be passed to HM Customs & Excise under the provisions of Article 14 of Regulation 338/97. Animal Health may also pass information to the Police and the National Criminal Intelligence Service (NCIS) for the purposes of gathering and analysing intelligence on possible wildlife crimes. Information (including personal data) may also be released on request, including under the Environmental Information Regulations, the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information and the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Your name and address will also be added to our mailing list, and will be used solely by Animal Health for the purposes of sending you relevant advice and information. It is a condition of making an application for rings and for registering birds that you agree to Animal Health passing on information to the aforementioned organisations.