

# Birds of Prey – What you need to know

Wildlife Licensing and Registration Service

*Supporting sustainable trade through customer focused licensing services*



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### Introduction

This guide tells you what you need to do if you keep, or are thinking about keeping, a bird of prey in the UK. There are two areas of law you need to be aware of; The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES).

### What do I need to do to comply with the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981?

All wild birds in the UK are protected by law. The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 makes it an offence to kill, injure or take any wild bird, or egg from the wild. Birds listed on Schedule 4 to the Act must be uniquely marked and registered if kept in captivity. This includes both wild and captive bred birds. Please ask us for a list of birds on Schedule 4 or visit our website at [www.defra.gov.uk/animalhealth/cites/birdregistration/sched4.htm](http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalhealth/cites/birdregistration/sched4.htm)

Section 7 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act says that any bird listed on Schedule 4 to the Act which is kept in captivity must be registered with the Secretary of State – in practice this is us. The Scottish Government and the Welsh Assembly have asked us to act as their agents to administer bird registration in Scotland and Wales, so we maintain a register on their behalf as well as a register of birds kept by keepers in England.



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For birds listed on Schedule 4, if you are the person looking after it on a day-to-day basis, you must register the bird in your name. Please contact us for information on how to do this or see our website [www.defra.gov.uk/animalhealth/cites/birdregistration/index.htm](http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalhealth/cites/birdregistration/index.htm)

Once registered you should keep your registration document safe and notify us promptly of any changes e.g. if the bird is moved to another address, dies, or is lost.

### Marking

Birds listed on Schedule 4 need to be uniquely marked. Acceptable marking may vary depending on whether you live in England, Scotland or Wales. Further information can be found in information sheet 2 on our website [www.defra.gov.uk/animalhealth/cites/birdregistration/guidance](http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalhealth/cites/birdregistration/guidance)

### What do I need to do to comply with CITES?

The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) is an international agreement controlling trade in endangered species. In the European Union (EU), CITES is implemented by regulations which set out the rules for the import, export, and commercial use of the listed species. In the regulations species are listed in one of four annexes depending on the degree to which they are protected. Annex A lists the most endangered whilst

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Annex D lists the least endangered. Many birds of prey are listed on CITES Annex A. Please ask us for a list of birds on Annex A or visit our website at [www.defra.gov.uk/animalhealth/cites/guidance/annexbirds.htm](http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalhealth/cites/guidance/annexbirds.htm)

CITES restricts trade in endangered species, including many species of bird of prey. It also covers anything that comes from them. This can include eggs, feathers, blood and semen.

### Import and (re) export permits

The movement of CITES specimens between EU member states does not require CITES import or export permits. However, you will need an **import permit** if you want to bring a bird into the UK from a non-EU country, for example, if you bring a bird from the USA to the UK. If you wish to import a bird you need to apply to the country you are exporting it from for an export permit, and to us for an import permit.



Similarly if you want to take or send your bird outside the EU you will need to apply to us for a **(re) export permit** and an import permit from the Management Authority for CITES in the country of destination, if the law in that country requires it.

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### Commercial use of Annex A birds within the EU

If you want to use a bird commercially which is listed on Annex A you must get a certificate from us. We call this an **Article 10 Certificate**. It allows you to use the specimen commercially, providing you keep to any conditions on the certificate. Any certificate issued will have conditions of use for some, or all, commercial purposes depending on the individual specimen.

### What is commercial use?

“Commercial use” can mean many things, not just selling something. Offering to buy, buying, keeping for sale, offering for sale, transporting for sale, selling, exchanging, breeding for sale and displaying specimens to the public, may all be treated as commercial use whether or not direct payment is involved. You should check with us at the contact number at the end of this leaflet if you do not know whether what you intend to do with your specimen will be regarded as “commercial”. We will be happy to advise you.

There are 2 types of Article 10 certificate:

- **Specimen Specific Certificates** are valid for the first and all following commercial uses. They can only be issued for birds that are permanently marked in the way the EC Regulations state. The certificate must be passed on with the bird. For this reason the address of the ‘holder’ will be left blank. Future owners do not need to apply for a new certificate in their own name.
- **Transaction Certificates** are valid only for the person named in box 1 where their address will appear. A new certificate is required by any new owner if they want to make commercial use of the bird.

### Charges

Please see our website for details of the charges for applications.

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### Offences

It is an offence under the Control of Trade in Endangered Species (Enforcement) Regulations 1997 (as amended) (COTES) to use an Annex A specimen for any commercial purpose without a valid Article 10 Certificate. The maximum penalty for such an offence is a fine of up to £5,000 and/or a term of imprisonment of up to 5 years.

Import and (re) export offences are normally dealt with under the Customs and Excise Management Act 1979 (CEMA). The maximum penalty for these offences may be an unlimited fine and/or a term of imprisonment of up to 7 years.

### What else should I know before I get my bird?

Over the years, we have worked closely with the Hawk Board (the representative body for UK falconers and bird of prey keepers) to help inform bird of prey keepers about the law and any changes to it. The Hawk Board has suggested that you consider the following before taking on a bird of prey:



- Falconry cannot be learnt from books. Many have been published on the subject, not all helpful for the beginner. You should read an authoritative and well-known author on the subject to get an early understanding of what is involved.
- Do a hands-on falconry course lasting at least one week.

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- Join a Hawk Board affiliated club and make contact with other falconers who will provide valuable advice and help.
- Spend at least one full season with a falconer before buying a bird of prey. This way you will understand what is involved in owning and caring for a bird of prey before making the commitment.
- The initial costs of suitable housing, falconry equipment, additional transport and food can be substantial and will be greater than the cost of the Bird of Prey itself. Newcomers must take this into account if they are to properly look after the Bird of Prey.
- It is not recommended that anyone under the age of sixteen owns a bird of prey without suitable and experienced adult supervision.
- Birds of prey are not pets. They live for many years, require special housing and year round attention, making time away from them (such as family holidays and business trips) very difficult to arrange.
- Birds of prey need feeding a specialised and mixed diet of whole dead animals, such as quail, rabbit, rats, mice and day old chicks. This food source has to be safe and free from toxins. You will need a good and regular supply.
- There is no ready market for second hand birds of prey so your commitment will be long term.
- Not all vets are proficient with birds of prey, so find one in your area who is.

For further advice contact the Hawk Board: Mike Clowes.

Le Moulin De L'age, 86390 Lathus St Remy, France.

Tel/Fax: 0033 54991 7930.

E-mail: [mike.clowes@orange.fr](mailto:mike.clowes@orange.fr)

[www.hawkboard.org.uk](http://www.hawkboard.org.uk)

## Useful contacts

Bird Registration and CITES general enquiries: +44 (0)117 372 8774

Fax: +44 (0)117 372 8206

E-mail address: [wildlife.licensing@animalhealth.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:wildlife.licensing@animalhealth.gsi.gov.uk)

Wildlife Licensing and Registration Service

UK CITES Management Authority

Zone 1/17

Temple Quay House

2 The Square

Temple Quay

Bristol BS1 6EB

[www.defra.gov.uk/animalhealth/cites](http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalhealth/cites)

## Useful website addresses

[www.eu-wildlifetrade.org](http://www.eu-wildlifetrade.org)

[www.cites.org](http://www.cites.org)

The following link will take you directly to a list of Schedule 4 birds:

[www.defra.gov.uk/animalhealth/cites/birdregistration/sched4.htm](http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalhealth/cites/birdregistration/sched4.htm)

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