



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT A FEDERAL MIGRATORY BIRD AND EAGLE SCIENTIFIC COLLECTING PERMIT

A Federal Migratory Bird Scientific Collecting permit can authorize you to collect, transport or possess migratory birds, their parts, nests, or eggs for scientific research or specimen collection (e.g. museum) purposes. The conditions of a Federal Scientific Collecting permit are very specific. You should review Title 50 Parts 10, 13, and 21.23 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR). **You are responsible for reviewing and understanding these regulations before you request and accept a permit.** These regulations can be found on our website at [Migratory Bird Permit Memorandum series](#).

Below is a review of several sections pertinent to a Federal Migratory Bird Scientific Collecting permit.

1. What species require a Migratory Bird Scientific Collecting Permit?

Birds listed in the 50 CFR Part 10 require a Federal migratory bird permit. You can view a list of species in the U.S. and their status under the [Migratory Bird Treaty Act](#).

2. What is the difference between a Scientific Collecting Permit and a Bird Banding Permit?

Bird Banding Lab (BBL) permits are issued by the U.S. Geological Survey, [Bird Banding Lab](#) for the marking, banding, and telemetry of birds. A BBL Permit may also authorize limited blood and feather sampling of birds that are being banded/marked. Any other research on birds requires a Scientific Collecting Permit from the USFWS. This includes sample collection that is more expansive than authorized under the BBL permit, retaining birds for purposes other than banding, or other activities that take or possess birds, eggs, chicks, or nests. Additional USFWS permits may be required for species listed as endangered or threatened.

3. Will my permit be restricted to certain species and numbers of birds?

Yes. Your permit will list the species and numbers of migratory birds, samples, and specimens you are authorized to collect and possess for scientific research purposes. Therefore, your application must include information on the species, numbers, and type of specimen for each year that you intend to collect and/or possess.

4. May I conduct research with Bald Eagles or Golden Eagles?

You may use this application to request authorization to collect samples from live or dead eagles for scientific purposes. *Only zoological parks, scientific societies and museums that are open to the general public* and are either established, maintained, and operated as a governmental service or are privately endowed and organized but not operated for profit are eligible for a permit to collect Bald Eagles or Golden Eagles for scientific purposes. (50 CFR 22.21 and 10.12). You will be required to submit documentation verifying that you meet this requirement. Depending on the activities you propose, we may issue separate permits for migratory bird and eagle collection.

5. Will I be able to salvage dead birds and abandoned nests and eggs under this permit?

Yes. If you wish to opportunistically salvage dead birds, parts, abandoned nests, and non-viable eggs in addition to your research, you can request salvage authority in your application.

6. Can I transfer migratory birds I collect under this permit to someone else?

Live birds as well as specimens, parts, and samples may be donated to any persons authorized by permit or regulation to acquire and possess them. If specimens, parts, and samples of migratory birds (except Bald Eagles and Golden Eagles and endangered and threatened species) are unsuitable for donation, they should be promptly be destroyed by burial or incineration.

7. Can I conduct research on Federal, State, Tribal or other public or private property?

This permit does not authorize you to conduct activities on Federal, State, Tribal, or other public or private property other than your own without additional prior written permits or permission from the landowner.

8. Can I conduct research on Birds of Conservation Concern (BCC) species?

Yes. However, take of these species require additional justification and take authorizations may be limited. The Service maintains a list of federal Birds of Conservation Concern (BCC) that are federally protected bird species that are not federally

threatened or endangered but warrant additional conservation action. These species represent the conservation priority for migratory birds. The current list of Birds of Conservation Concern and Bird Conservation Regions (BCR) can be viewed at [Birds of Conservation Concern 2021](#).

9. Can I collect threatened or endangered species under a Scientific Collecting Permit?

No. In most cases, you will need additional permits to collect birds protected under the Endangered Species Act. The appropriate Ecological Services "Lead Region" for each species can be found at: [Endangered Species](#).

10. Do I have to use non-toxic ammunition when using a firearm to collect migratory birds?

Yes. We require the use of non-toxic ammunition when using firearms. You may request the use of lead shot and provide a justification in the methods section of your application. For example, you may request the use of lead shot when non-toxic shot is not produced in the small sizes needed to preserve the integrity of the specimen.

11. Can I collect migratory game birds?

Yes. Collection of migratory game birds may be authorized on your scientific collecting permit. If you collect migratory game birds during open hunting seasons, you must comply with all applicable Federal and State hunting regulations unless your permit authorizes otherwise. If you need to collect migratory game birds during the hunting season in numbers or by a method not authorized by the hunting regulations, or if you need to collect migratory game birds outside the hunting season, you must request this in your application.

12. Do I need to tag the migratory birds I collect?

Yes. Your permit will require that you tag each bird you collect or salvage. Each tag must include the following information: (a) date and location of collection, and (b) name of person who collected the specimen. The permit number under which the specimen was collected or salvaged must be recorded in the permanent accession records.

13. Can I import or export migratory birds under this permit?

Yes. If you intend to import or export specimens for scientific or educational purposes, you may request that this authorization be included on your scientific collecting permit. Your application must describe the types of specimens you intend to import or export, to and from whom you expect to ship, and the ports you expect to use. All wildlife shipments must enter and exit the United States through a wildlife port designated in 50 CFR 14.12 unless you have a separate exception to designated port permit issued under 50 CFR Part 14. Be aware that migratory birds that are also protected under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), the Endangered Species Act, or the Wild Bird Conservation Act may require additional permits. Bald and golden eagles may not be imported or exported.

14. Do my subpermittees need to be listed on my permit?

No. You are not required to list subpermittees in your application or on your permit. Your subpermittees must have a copy of your permit and written permission from you to conduct the authorized activities. We recommend a letter, on letterhead, with the individual's name and contact information, date(s) authorized, and activities authorized (including species, number, and method). As the primary permittee, you are legally responsible for ensuring that your subpermittees, are properly trained and adhere to the terms of your permit. Anyone authorized to conduct permitted activities in your absence must be at least 18 years old. Persons under 18 may assist you in conducting your activities, but you or one of your designated subpermittees over the age of 18 must be present and maintain direct control of them at all times.

15. Do I need a State permit to collect migratory birds?

Your Federal permit is not valid unless you are also in compliance with State requirements. This means that if your State requires you to have a State scientific collecting permit, you must hold a valid State permit in order for your Federal permit to be valid. It is your responsibility to make sure you comply with State permit requirements.

16. Will I be required to keep records of my activities?

Yes. You must maintain accurate records of operations on a calendar-year basis. Your records should reflect the species collected, date collected, location (county and state) where birds were collected, numbers collected and disposition of all birds, including salvaged specimens. Such records shall be legibly written or reproducible in English and shall be maintained for five years from the date of expiration of the permit. (50 CFR 13.46)

17. Will I be required to submit an annual report of activities?

Yes. You will receive an annual report from your Regional Migratory Bird Permit Office. Reports also can be found on our website at: [Migratory Bird Permit Types and Forms](#). This report must be completed and submitted to your issuing office by January 31 of the year following the activity. You must submit a "no activity" report if you had no activity.

18. How do I transfer my permit to a new location?

Any address change or other circumstances that affect your permit must be reported to your Regional Migratory Bird Permit Office in writing within 10 days so your permit can be amended. (See 50 CFR 13.23)

19. Will anyone inspect my records or scientific collecting activities?

By accepting a Federal Scientific Collecting permit, you authorize an agent of the Service to enter your premises at any reasonable hour to inspect the wildlife you hold, your books or records. (See 50 CFR 13.47)

20. How do I renew my permit?

If you wish to renew your permit, you must submit a renewal application to your Regional Migratory Bird Permit Office at least 30 days prior to the expiration of your permit and include a copy of your current State permit, if one is required. If we receive your renewal request at least 30 days prior to the expiration of your permit, your permit will remain valid beyond the expiration date for the activity authorized on your permit until a decision on your renewal is made. If we receive your renewal request fewer than 30 days prior to expiration of your permit and we are not able to process your request before the expiration date, your permit will expire and you will no longer be authorized to conduct your activity. If you allow your permit to expire before requesting renewal, you may be required to submit a new application. (See 50 CFR 13.11(c) and 13.22))

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