

Guidance for Veterinarian Certification of Condition that Renders Migratory Bird/Eagle as Non-Releasable

The U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) appreciates your care and concern for our nation's migratory bird resource, as well as your working relationship with federally permitted rehabilitators and educators. To help determine what is humane and healthful for each individual bird, we rely on your Veterinarian Certification that identifies the specific reasons and conditions that renders a bird non-releasable. Please provide the following information on your clinic/veterinary letterhead with an original signature using the template on page 2 or you may provide the same information outlined below in your own format.

Needed information for determining life in captivity is appropriate:

1. The name of the rehabilitator, and, if applicable, the name of their organization, you are examining the bird for and the date of the exam.
2. Bird identification information: Sex, age, species, and internal identifier (i.e., Band or case number).
3. A statement describing why the bird is suitable for life in captivity and nonreleasable, to include a description of the injury, behavior, and the bird's temperament; if imprinted, who made the determination and under what behavioral processes was the bird evaluated.
4. Verification that the bird does not fall within required euthanasia criteria listed in 50 CFR §21.31(e)(4)(iii): *(iii) You must euthanize any bird that cannot feed itself, perch upright, or ambulate without inflicting additional injuries to itself where medical and/or rehabilitative care will not reverse such conditions.*

OR, if the bird's conditions meet euthanasia criteria below, you must submit an explanation of how the bird is not expected to experience chronic injuries/ailments that typically occur with those injuries (see 50 CFR §21.31(e)(4)(iii)(A)): *You must euthanize any bird that is completely blind, and any bird that has sustained injuries that would require amputation of a leg, a foot, or a wing at the elbow or above (humero-ulnar joint) rather than performing such surgery.*

5. If you are the examining veterinarian and the bird is being transferred out of your care, provide the name of the veterinarian or animal care professional you consulted with at the recipient facility.
6. Examining Veterinarian must sign letter certifying non-releasable status of the bird.

All regulations governing Federal Rehabilitation permits, as well as the Service Fact Sheet on Rehabilitation Permits are available at [Migratory Bird Permit Types and Forms](#) web page. You may also contact your Regional Migratory Bird Permit Office found at [Migratory Bird Contact Us](#) web page if you have any questions.

Resources regarding managing migratory birds in captivity:

- Raptors in Captivity: Guidelines to Care and Management by Lori Arent, The Raptor Center.
- Minimum Standards for Wildlife Rehabilitation, Miller, E. A. editor, NWRA/IWRC cooperative project.
- Wildlife in Education: A Guide for the Care and Use of Program Animals; G. Buhl, J. Schlieps, and L. Smith editors, National Wildlife Rehabilitators Association, St. Cloud, MN.
- Additional resources: National Wildlife Rehabilitators Association <https://www.nrawildlife.org/>
International Wildlife Rehabilitation Council <https://theiwrc.org/>

Template

Veterinarian Certification of Condition that Renders Migratory Bird/Eagle as Non-Releasable

Put on veterinary letterhead with current contact information

To: U.S. Fish & Wildlife, Migratory Bird Permit Office

From: _____ **Phone:** _____

Subject: Veterinarian Certification of Condition that Renders Migratory Bird/Eagle as Non-Releasable

1. I, _____ physically examined _____ on _____
for _____

Bird must be examined within 30 days of proposed transfer.

2. I have considered the following factors and determined that the bird has the following condition(s):

Yes	No	Condition
		1) Blind in both eyes
		2) Unable to eat, drink, and/or move on its own
		3) Injury compromises balance; unable to perch upright
		4) Amputated leg or foot
		5) Amputated wing at or above the elbow (humero-ulnar joint)
		6) Eyes are dull, not-alert, have discharge, reduced vision, and/or blind in one eye
		7) Exhibiting damage to feathers, feet, and/or wrists
		8) Likely to experience chronic pain from the injury (such as a joint injury)
		9) Altered behavior (uncontrolled head movements, seizures, imprinted, etc.)
		10) Bird's injuries/conditions upon admission were pre-existing

NOTE: Items 1-5 MUST include a written recommendation that the bird should be kept alive, including:

- (a) an analysis of why the bird is not expected to experience long-term complications in captivity that are associated with the above described injuries and/or ailments, and
 - (b) a commitment to provide medical care for the bird for the duration of its life; or if the bird will be transferring out of your care, you must provide the name of the veterinarian you consulted with at the recipient facility to ensure bird's continued health and welfare:
3. I am providing the following statement describing the injury that renders the bird nonreleasable and suitable for life in captivity:

Certifying Signature of Examining Veterinarian

Date