

# Wildlife Animal Care Committee Class Protocol #001

Wildlife Research Permits or Collection Licences

adopted 20 February, 2001, updated March , 2002

## Class Activity: Raptor Collection for Falconry

### Specific Activity

Live capture of raptors for captive falconry purposes

### Objectives

Safe and harmless collection of wild raptors for training, hunting, or domestic reproduction

### Applicable Personnel

A collection licence for removing birds from the wild for falconry purposes may be issued only to a person holding a valid recreational or commercial falconry permit who can capture the bird efficiently and humanely. [*Alberta Wildlife Act 1997*, wildlife regulation Sec. 46]

### Species

Falconry bird as defined in the *Alberta Wildlife Act 1997*, wildlife regulation Sec. 3(r)

### Applicable Geographic Range

Provincial

### Methods

#### Capture and Transport

##### 1) Unfledged Juvenile Birds

- This involves taking young birds directly from the nest site.
- At least one nestling must be left with the parent birds in order to maintain integrity of the nesting area.
- Visits should be scheduled in order to avoid temperatures and/or precipitation that could threaten nestlings unprotected while parents are off the nest.

- Time spent at the nest site is minimized so as to avoid unnecessary stress to unprotected nestlings. This will also limit the negative response from parent birds and reduce the possibility that collected nestlings learn fear of humans.
- Transport collected nestling(s) in a darkened aerated closed container (box, basket, fabric bag). The interior of the container should be relatively soft and smooth in order to minimize the risk of damage to the nestling(s). There should be no projections into the interior that could puncture or lacerate the nestling(s).
- During transportation, keep noise and disturbance to a minimum.

## **2) Adult Birds and Fledged Juveniles**

- Involves luring birds into a situation where they are captured in a net, toe-snare, or box trap.
- **Nets**
  - Place the net in a location where the raptor will fly into it OR where the net can be cast over the bird.
  - This type of capture must be attended at all times by someone familiar and prepared to properly retrieve any captured bird.
- **Toe-snares**
  - Small monofilament nooses are secured to a structure made of wire mesh or leather or to a lure or perch.
  - The raptor is caught when it lands or strikes the structure and its feet become entangled in the nooses.
  - A live lure animal may be used. This type of trap must be attended at all times by someone familiar and prepared to properly retrieve any captured bird.
- **Box traps**
  - Use of a Swedish Goshawk trap is recommended.
  - **Swedish Goshawk Trap**
    - Consists of a compartment that contains a lower lure cage and a separate upper section that captures and holds the raptor.
    - A trigger mechanism causes doors to close on the top.
    - This is a passive trap that is checked at least every 4 hours by someone familiar and prepared to properly retrieve any captured bird.
- A hood or non-translucent cover is placed on the bird's head immediately upon capture and approach by humans.
- Captured birds are transported in comfortable body wrap or a container that will prevent struggling, self-inflicted injury, or damage to feathers. Noise and disturbance during transport should be kept to a minimum.

- Various lures may be used to draw in raptors intended to capture. These may include live individuals of natural prey species such as small rodents, house sparrows, European starlings, rock doves (pigeons). Although there will be some inherent stress of these individuals, this should be minimized through limited direct exposure to the raptor. Lure animals must be watered and fed daily in the traps and removed in situations of inclement weather, including stress due to temperature or precipitation.
- Generally lure animals should be presented in such a manner that they are not physically harmed by the raptor. In situations where the lure animal is struck but not killed instantaneously by the raptor, the lure animal should be killed by stunning, decapitation, or cervical dislocation ASAP.
- Captured birds should be transported as soon as possible to premises permitted by a valid Environment and Sustainable Resource Development recreational or commercial falconry permit.

## **Procedures**

This handling protocol is appropriate for the following activities: collection of live falconry birds under authority of a Fish and Wildlife Division Collection Licence.

## **References**

Based on descriptions provided by Dr. M. Persons - all other falconry activities must conform with appropriate standards and guidelines as per the *Alberta Wildlife Act* and its Regulations.