

PROPOSAL 109

5 AAC 92.037(h). Permits for falconry.

Modify the microchip requirements for live raptors exported from Alaska by nonresidents as follows:

Current regulation: 5 AAC 92.037(h) all live raptors exported from the state, including propagated birds, must be microchipped.

Proposed regulation: 5 AAC 92.037(h) all wild caught live gyrfalcons exported from the state by a nonresident must be microchipped and the microchip must be registered with an internationally recognized microchip registry such as (Petlink). Proof of microchip registration must be submitted to the department within 90 days after export. Failure to provide proof of registration to the department makes the individual ineligible to receive a future permit under 5 AAC 92.037(g).

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Microchip requirements for raptors exported from the State of Alaska.

Current regulations require that all raptors including propagated birds must have a microchip implanted prior to being exported from the State of Alaska. This regulation was enacted by the Board of Game at its last Statewide Regulations meeting dealing with “permits for falconry” issues as a result of a proposal submitted by the Alaska Falconers Association (AFA). The proposal language and intent and was significantly changed by the Board of Game (board) to be more inclusive. There was testimony presented to the board for the reasoning behind the request by AFA for the need to microchip large falcons that are taken under a nonresident capture permit and exported from the state.

The current regulation does not require that the microchip be entered into an international registry. AFA believes that this important requirement was overlooked at the time and is requesting a “house cleaning” measure to provide a means for tracking the microchip once it is deployed.

During deliberations, the board expanded the original intent of the proposal from, “microchip requirements for the export of large falcons (Peregrine falcons and Gyrfalcons) taken by nonresident permit holders, to all raptors exported from the state by both nonresident and resident falconers. This expansion also included raptors exported by breeders under a propagation permit.

The current regulation is overburdensome and should be amended to only include the highly valuable wild caught Gyrfalcons exported from the state by a nonresident under a permit issued by the department. Alaska raptors that are commonly used for falconry (except Gyrfalcons) are readily available to falconers in the continental United States, and propagation birds are highly regulated under the federal system, AFA feels that the board should remove all species of raptors from the microchip requirement except wild caught Gyrfalcons exported by a non-resident under this section.

AFA is also requesting that the microchip be registered with an internationally recognized microchip registry such as “Petlink” within 90 days of the take of the Gyrfalcon. Failure to provide proof of registration to the department within the time frame listed above will make the permit holder ineligible to apply for a future permit under this section.

Since the inception of the nonresident capture permit regulation in 2014 which allowed up to five permits for passage raptors, ADF&G issued three permits per year for the first three years and five permits per year for the last two years. Nonresidents have taken a total of eleven birds under this program. Ten Gyrfalcons and one Northern Goshawk have been captured and exported from the State of Alaska. In the past two years since the inception of the current regulation, six exported birds (all Gyrfalcons) have been microchipped. Gyrfalcons are still the bird of choice for both falconers and breeders who participate in the nonresident take program. Gyrfalcons continue to have a stable low density population in Alaska. Gyrfalcons are highly valued raptors and due diligence would dictate that wild birds that are taken from Alaska should be protected in a way that helps maintain the bird in its wild status. Microchipping this species aides significantly in this protection. Current regulation dictates that a wild caught raptor is always wild and can never be legally sold.

If a microchipped wild Alaska sourced bird is recovered, it will provide a valuable tool for law enforcement for their investigative efforts. If an Alaska sourced bird is lost or stolen, the microchip would be an invaluable tool in returning the recovered bird to its owner.

In the exotic bird industry, valuable species such as parrots, macaws, cockatoos, toucans and mynahs are microchipped to prove ownership and stem illegal trade. These birds are chipped by breeders and when acquired from the wild. Gyrfalcons are the same size or in many cases larger and more robust than most of these species of exotic birds.

AFA also considered the possibility of requiring a DNA test instead of the microchip. Although this test would conclusively prove identity of an individual bird, this option was put aside, because there is no central registry for DNA sampling and if a bird was recovered by law enforcement or was lost and recovered by a non-owner, the bird and owner could not be readily identified.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Falconers Association (EG-F20-003)
