



Falconry in New York State

How to Become a Licensed Falconer

Falconry is the Sport of hunting small game specifically with trained falcons, hawks, eagles, and owls (collectively known as raptors). The sport of falconry has a rich history throughout the world, and the basic components have changed little over time: a dedicated and knowledgeable falconer, and a healthy well-trained raptor working together as a hunting team.

Falconry is a sport that demands both time and money. A person thinking about becoming a falconer must understand that the falconer is responsible for meeting the day-to-day needs of his or her raptor including feeding, housing, exercising, and ensuring that the bird has appropriate veterinary care. Falconry is a constant learning experience. You must spend time with your raptor, learning about, and eventually bonding with the bird. You must learn what constitutes safe and secure housing, and how to build and maintain these facilities. You must also learn how to hunt with your raptor. Finally, you must learn that the welfare of the bird, and the future of the sport of falconry, is your responsibility.

Falconry is regulated by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). These two agencies have a cooperative working relationship that assigns DEC the primary responsibility for licensing people to become falconers.

Falconry Licenses in New York State

DEC issues three levels of falconry licenses, including:

Apprentice - the entry-level license. The applicant must serve two years as an Apprentice falconer under the guidance of a General or Master Falconer. An Apprentice Falconer can only possess either a red-tailed hawk or an American kestrel.

General – the next-level license. An Apprentice Falconer, who has served at least two years, and has been recommended for advancement by his or her sponsor (General or Master Falconer), may be licensed as a General Falconer. A General Falconer may possess other raptors in addition to red-tailed hawks and American kestrels, and maintain up to two raptors for hunting.

Master – the highest-level falconer license issued by DEC. To become a Master Falconer a General Falconer must serve at least five years as a General Falconer, be recommended for advancement by three Master Falconers and by the New York State Falconry Advisory Board. A Master Falconer may maintain up to three raptors for hunting, including captive-bred Peregrine falcons.

Requirements for Becoming an Apprentice Falconer

To become an Apprentice Falconer, the applicant **MUST**:

- Receive a score of 80% or higher on a written examination, the New York State Falconry Examination, administered by the DEC.

- Obtain required equipment for the falconer and the bird (a leather glove, leash, jesses, outdoor and indoor perches and lures, etc)
- Construct DEC-approved housing facilities for raptors.
- Possess a valid New York State Hunting License to hunt small game.
- Arrange for a General, or Master Falconer to serve as a sponsor.
- **NOT** have been convicted of a violation of any Federal or State wildlife law or regulation within the previous five years.

How to Obtain a Falconry License in New York State

DEC, with the New York State Falconry Advisory Board, has developed two publications to help applicants obtain an Apprentice Falconry License. They are:

New York State Falconry Guide – provides an overview of the Falconry Program and the procedures for obtaining a Falconry License. The guide lists what to do and what not to do and describes the minimum falcon housing facilities. It also includes prices on the necessary equipment, a suggested reading list and a suggested list of equipment vendors.

New York State Falconry Examination Manual – the New York State Falconry Guide provides information for a person preparing for the required New York State Falconry Examination. In addition, the guide and the exam manual cover an array of falconry related topics from species of raptors, training techniques, equipment, health care, as well as federal and state regulations.

How to Begin

The first step for all applicants is to obtain the New York State Falconry Guide and the New York State Falconry Examination Manual by completing the attached form.

Falconry License Application and Order Form

Please send me:

- Application
- Falconry Guide and Examination Manual
(There is a \$2.00 charge for non-residents)

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/ZipCode: _____

Send Order To:

NYSDEC
Special Licenses Unit
625 Broadway
Albany, NY, 12233-4752