

POLICY NUMBER 650.01

APPLICATION FOR BIRDS OF PREY FOR INDIAN CEREMONIAL USE

LEGISLATIVE REFERENCE

Sections 4 and 6 of The Wildlife Act.

INTENT

To provide a means of distributing Birds of Prey, primarily Eagles, acquired by the Department for Indian Ceremonial use.

BACKGROUND

This policy has been developed, to recognize the value of Birds of Prey to the traditional spiritual ceremonies of the Cree, Dene, Sauteaux, Dakota, Nakota and Lakota cultures in Saskatchewan. Indian people believe the Eagle represents the strongest of spiritual powers and when the bird dies, these spiritual powers remain in the feathers and parts.

As the Department responsible for managing the province's wildlife resources, this policy will provide an opportunity to cooperate with Indian people and to acknowledge their unique relationship with wildlife.

POLICY

The Department will provide the Saskatchewan Indian Cultural Centre with Birds of Prey, who will in turn, provide these birds or their parts to successful applicants.

Dead Eagles that have been turned in to the Department, have been confiscated or are not eligible for mounting permits, because they have been trapped or shot, will be used for the purpose of this policy. The Wildlife Branch will request all Eagles or their parts, including Eagles that have been recovered from zoos, scientific research projects or accidentally killed, be forwarded and held in a central repository in Regina.

This policy is not intended to supersede policy 630-59 and people will continue to be allowed to mount legitimately acquired protected wildlife.

This policy is not to be viewed as a relaxing of enforcement on anyone who kills Birds of Prey illegally.

PROCEDURE

1. Application for Eagles, Eagle parts or other Birds of Prey for use by Indians, will be available at the District Offices or through Indian Band Offices. (Application form appended to policy).
2. All applications for Eagles or other Birds of Prey, are to be sent to the Saskatchewan Indian Cultural Centre in Saskatoon (Address on application form).
3. The Saskatchewan Indian Cultural Centre and the Traditional Council of Elders will review the-applications and decide on who will receive Eagle feathers or parts. The Eagle parts will normally be distributed once each year, depending on the availability of Eagles, during a ceremonial feast (June) sponsored by the Saskatchewan Indian Cultural Centre.

If more requests are received than the number of Eagles available, the following priority system, established by the Saskatchewan Indian Cultural Centre, will be used:

- 1) Exclusive religious, ceremonial or healing rites by Indian Elders and spiritual leaders.
- 2) Individual Indian applicants for special spiritual ceremonies.
- 3) Eagle feathers and plumes for graduates of Indian Schools and Colleges and College/Vocational Schools and Universities in Saskatchewan.
- 4) Indian dance costumes, with preference for veterans. (Other Birds of Prey, hawks, owls, etc. may be used for costumes and are not subject to priorities 1-3).

Consideration will be given, for distribution of feathers and parts at other times, for unusual or exceptional circumstances or ceremonies. Any special request from Indian people, would be considered in consultation with the Saskatchewan Indian Cultural Centre.

4. Eagles will be distributed equally among the five tribal groups, based on the applications. A list of applicants will be maintained and applicants will advance up the list as Eagles become available.

5. The Department will provide all available Birds of Prey to the Saskatchewan Indian Cultural Contra as required.
6. The application form, also serves as a permit, to possess the Birds of Prey or their parts. A Department Official will attend all ceremonies, where Birds of Prey are distributed and sign off on successful applications.

FORMS

Birds of Prey Feather/Body Part Request