

RC010

Mr. Ted Spraker, Chairman
Alaska Board of Game

January 3rd, 2017

Mr. Ted Spraker, Alaska Board of Game members,

The Alaska Falconers Association supports proposal #158, which will eliminate the West Nile Virus testing and immunization requirements for raptors that are imported into the State of Alaska. Current falconry regulations require a raptor that is imported into the State of Alaska be vaccinated against West Nile Virus or have a blood test that produces a negative titer within 30 calendar days prior to the date of import.

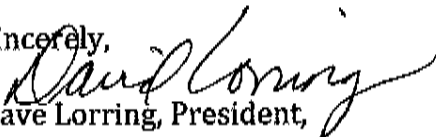
In an Addendum to the Alaska Falconry Manual #9 dated March 29, 2013, (Manual #9 has been adopted into regulation by reference by the Board of Game), the Department stated that it will no longer enforce the West Nile testing or immunization requirements listed in Falconry Manual #9 for importing raptors into the State of Alaska. In this Addendum, the Department outlines reasons that they feel would make it highly unlikely that West Nile Virus could be introduced into Alaska by imported raptors. Even though the Department stated that it will not enforce the requirement to test or vaccinate, the regulation is still in place and falconers feel that they are bound by its requirements.

Due to the reasons outlined in this Addendum and other research into the unlikely possibility that importation of raptors into Alaska will cause virus transmission, the Alaska Falconers Association requests that the Board of Game remove the testing and immunization provision from regulation.

The Alaska Falconers Association, founded in 1979, represents the interests of all Alaska resident falconers.

Thank you for your attention into this matter.

Sincerely,


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STATE OF ALASKA

DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

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ALASKA FALCONRY MANUAL 9

ADDENDUM

Date: March 29, 2013

Re: West Nile Virus and falconry bird import requirements.

Due to findings of recently published research the Department will no longer enforce West Nile virus testing or immunization requirements listed in Falconry Manual 9 for importing falconry birds. Specific findings that influenced this change are that raptors used in falconry do not generally produce a sufficiently high concentration of virus in the blood to pass the disease to mosquitos or lice that could infect other birds and that the virus requires nighttime minimum temperatures above 60 degrees Fahrenheit for extended periods to amplify in mosquito hosts. Therefore, environmental conditions throughout Alaska make it highly unlikely that the disease could be introduced by imported raptors.