

What can I do if I Find an Injured or Dead Eagle? And Can I Have the Remains?

Eagles seek out easy meals to help build their energy reserves. Consequently, eagles will utilize roadsides that supply animals killed by vehicles. However, relying on roadkill increases the risk of collisions between eagles and vehicles.

If you encounter a raptor that appears injured, give it space and observe from a distance. Unless you witnessed the bird being injured, it can be difficult to know if it's truly hurt. Ask yourself if either of these things are happening:

- Is it covering its prey with its wings to avoid other animals stealing their meal?
- Is it on the ground to avoid a fight with a more dominant eagle patrolling its territory?

If you determine that the eagle is indeed injured, you have two options. First, you could contact one of the organizations listed at the end of this article that has the training and knowledge to handle injured eagles. They will want certain information. Location is the most important. The best method would be using a mapping application like Google Maps or something similar to "drop a pin." This can then be shared with the folks coming to help. You will also want to note what side of the road it is on, and how far off the road the eagle is. They will also want to know of any obvious injuries or strange behaviors you observe.

A second option is to capture and transport the injured eagle to a rehabilitation center yourself, which you are allowed to do under federal and state law. This has the advantage of getting the bird aid quicker and reduces the chance that the bird will wander away or be attacked by a predator while waiting for assistance. However, **eagle talons are very sharp and strong**, so great care must be taken not to become a victim yourself as you aid the injured eagle. Also, you cannot keep the eagle for any amount of time, so it must be immediately transported to a licensed rehabilitation center like the Raptor Education Group, in Antigo, WI.

If you are comfortable with handling the eagle yourself follow these steps, as adapted from the Raptor Education Group's website:

1. Make sure you have a large box with the bottom lined with a towel or blanket. The box should be well-ventilated and large enough to allow some movement but not too large that the eagle can injure itself further.
2. Before covering and picking the bird up, be aware of where the talons are. They are very sharp and powerful.
3. Use a lightweight coat or blanket to completely cover the eagle. Once the head is covered the eagle will calm down a little. **BE SURE THOSE TALONS ARE COVERED!**
4. Grab the eagle from behind and make sure the wings are folded against the body in a natural position.
5. Place the eagle in the box and fold the flaps in an interlocking pattern. This will allow air in while preventing the eagle from escaping.
6. Write down or drop a pin of the GPS coordinates where the eagle was found. This will be used when the eagle is released later.
7. Call the Raptor Education Group, Inc. to find an eagle rehabilitation center near you.
8. Deliver the eagle to the rehabilitation center.

If you find a dead eagle, there are federal laws regarding the carcass you must follow which are unique to eagles. In all cases, the remains must be sent to the National Eagle Repository. You are allowed to do this yourself, or you can call an appropriate agency and they will do this. These include the Ho-Chunk DNR, the state DNR, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and an organization like the Raptor Education Group. If you decide to do it yourself, contact the National Eagle Repository and they will give you instructions on how to ship the dead bird. Ho-Chunk DNR can give you guidance on this process. If an eagle is sent to the Repository, there is a process by which tribal members might be able to receive all or part of the eagle back, after it has been processed.

If a tribal member finds a dead eagle, it is possible to receive that specific specimen. However, this is only after the Repository processes it. The tribal member must have previously submitted an *Eagle Parts for Native American Religious Purposes* form. If not, that tribal member may not be able to retain that specific eagle. They can still fill out a form and receive remains from a different eagle.

Any tribal members seeking to obtain whole eagles, eagle remnants, or feathers from the National Eagle Repository must complete Form 3-200-15A *Eagle Parts for Native American Religious Purposes* form. The sooner you do this, the sooner you will receive Eagle parts. First-time applicants must also submit a Certificate of Enrollment verifying membership in a federally recognized tribe. Applications can be submitted electronically or by mailing a hard copy to the repository at the address below. Eagles are distributed on a roughly first come, first served basis. The form and additional information can be found on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's National Eagle Repository webpage. We would suggest that anyone wanting an eagle or eagle parts fill out the form.

List of Contacts

1. Raptor Education Group, Inc.

- a. Has volunteers that can pick up birds
- b. Clinic: (715) 623-4015
- c. N2160 W Rollwood Rd.
Antigo, WI 54409

3. Ho-Chunk Nation DNR

- a. (715) 284-2852
- b. Karen.Green@Ho-Chunk.com

2. National Eagle Repository

- a. (303) 287-2110
- b. repository@fws.gov
- c. 6550 Gateway Road, Bldg. 128,
Commerce City, CO 80022

4. Wildlife Division

- a. (715) 284-2852 ex 11119
- b. James.Swenson@Ho-Chunk.com
- c. Earl.Funmaker@ho-chunk.com