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Alaska Department of Fish and Game

Fax #: 907-465-6094

Re: Non-resident Take of Raptors in Alaska

Dear Sirs:

I have been a practicing falconer for over 45 years. As such, my primary concern with any raptor issues is conservation of the resource to assure continuing viable wild populations. Raptor populations experience first year mortality of over 60%. A reasonable harvest of nestling and first year passage birds will not negatively impact the populations. With the forgoing in mind, I would ask the Alaska Department of Fish and Game to expand the non-resident take of raptors in Alaska and allow the take of nestling raptors by non-residents.

I have read the comments the Board has received to date and I note that many of the resident falconers are concerned about the possible take of gyrfalcons. They seem to be worried that nestling birds will be used for captive breeding purposes. I do not see this as a negative. Infusion of new wild genes into the captive gyr breeding population will improve the viability of captive bred gyrs. In the future if the gyr population fell there would be robust captive birds available for release. This strategy helped the peregrine falcon recover from endangered status.

There also seemed to be concern in the comments about illegal take. Illegal means that the people doing this are breaking the law. Allowing expanded legal take should not increase illegal take. If anything it should reduce it.

I feel take regulations should be based on sound biology. The initial non-resident take rule was for 5 birds which was subsequently administratively reduced to 3 birds. As a minimum I request that the full 5 birds be allowed and nestling birds also be authorized. Ideally, I would request that the non-resident take for both passage and nestling raptors be increased consistent with maintaining a viable wild population.

Alaska currently allows non-resident hunting of its abundant game populations. These regulations are a success, and allow non-residents the chance to experience the hunting adventure of a lifetime. Please consider allowing expanded take of Alaskan passage and nestling raptors by non-residents.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul Mascuch", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Paul Mascuch