

Animal Wellness Action Calls for End to Federal Government Support for Tribal Animal Sacrifice

Hopis and Jemez Pueblo are sacrificing raptors for ceremonial purposes, and our government should never permit any kind of animal sacrifice

WASHINGTON, D.C., DC, UNITED STATES, May 27, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Animal Wellness](#)

[Action](#) and the [Center for a Humane Economy](#) are calling on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Park Service to stop issuing "take" permits that allow for the capture, prolonged torment, and ritual smothering of golden eagles, bald eagles, and red-tailed hawks.

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“Two respected Indian tribes are engaging in animal sacrifice by capturing, tormenting, and killing raptors, and our federal agencies must stop issuing permits for this activity,” said Wayne Pacelle, president of Animal Wellness

Action and the Center for a Humane Economy. “In the 21st century, animal sacrifice is never acceptable, regardless of historical and cultural claims. We’ve shed child sacrifice and dog and cat sacrifice, and now it’s time to stop the ongoing sacrifice of eagles and hawks.” Pacelle wrote about the history of animal sacrifice in his 2010 New York Times best-selling book *The Bond: Our Kinship with Animals, Our Call to Defend Them*.

This week, the two non-profit organizations published an exposé of the tribal animal sacrifice by award-winning nature and outdoors writer Ted Williams revealing that Biden Administration wildlife officials have quietly approved raptor “take” permits for this purpose—abetting this form of animal cruelty at odds with the core values embedded in our federal raptor protection laws.

In 2023, for the first time, the NPS authorized the Jemez Pueblo tribe to take a bald or golden eagle from a national park unit -- the Valles Caldera National Preserve in New Mexico. The decision marked a dramatic departure from a long-standing agency policy forbidding animal take from national park units restricting hunting. The USFWS has also issued similar permits in recent years, including an annual allotment of 40 golden eagles and 50 red-tailed hawks to the Hopi Tribe, and a recurring eight-eagle quota to the Jemez. (A detailed rundown of the “take” permits

is provided in Williams' news story.)

Williams' report documents fledgling raptors taken from their nests; tied to rooftops in the sun for weeks, with eyelids sewn shut, limbs damaged by restraints; and eventually smothered with blankets or cornmeal to "send them to the other world."

"Historical and documented injustices to communities do not provide a license for their descendants to commit unjust actions in our time, no less in units of the National Park Service," Pacelle said. "Culturally significant ceremony and rituals can be properly preserved but modified to be in alignment with norms about the proper treatment of animals and the protection of wildlife."

The Fish and Wildlife Service enforces the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 and the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act of 1940, and both laws are designed to protect eagles and hawks from killing. The National Park Service has never allowed wildlife to be taken for ritualistic sacrifice until NPS Director Charles Sams did so in 2023.

The same Biden Administration officials also authorized the mass killing of barred owls in the Pacific Northwest to reduce social competition with spotted owls. AWA and CHE are also seeking to block that unworkable and inhumane plan with a price tag of \$1.35 billion.

To read the full exposé on eagle sacrifice, go to www.animalwellnessaction.org

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