

12th February 2025

CITES & PAPERWORK – A10's & Schedule 4 Birds

The Independent Bird Register has been in operation for just over 30 years and I have had the pleasure of helping to reunite birds for 13 years come July 2025.

I also provide closed rings to breeders and I have discovered that some 'home breeders' have no idea how to apply for Article 10 certificates, especially Barn Owl breeders and so about 18 months ago, I set up an account with CITES and I now offer a service to apply for A10's on breeders' behalf.

I began to get a lot of other enquiries from people who had 'acquired' birds but had not been provided with A10's. These included those birds that had been found or had been seized due to welfare issues but were with new owners who ran commercial businesses and so required A10's.

It has now become my mission to help keepers obtain the correct paperwork. I am not writing this piece to teach people how to suck eggs but it is surprising just how many falconers do not know the law regarding paperwork.

ARTICLE 10'S

It is a criminal offence to BUY or SELL an Annex A bird – a list can be found on the Government website – without an A10 being in place. This includes hybrids, eg: Golden Eagle x Harris Hawk.

This rule has been an issue for breeders who sell imprinted birds and I do know that some breeders will move birds before the A10's have arrived and then send them on afterwards. This is up to the individual and so I will leave it there!

An A10 is only required if the bird is to be used commercially, whether it be a breeding facility, falconry centre, pest control or a display in a shopping centre where donations are asked for. It even includes birds that are swapped. If some kind of commercial gain is to be made, an A10 is required.

Annex A birds can be gifted but I would always advise that the official gifting letter is used which again can be found on the Government website. I have dealt with cases where a bird has been gifted and then further down the line, an A10 is applied for. CITES will always ask how the applicant acquired the bird and if it has been gifted, they will ask for a copy of the gifting letter. A note written on a piece of paper will not suffice.

Just a quick note on Annex A birds that have been imported.

If an Annex A bird was imported **prior to** Brexit the foreign Article 10 is valid for commercial use in the UK providing all the information on the Article 10 is correct. If the specimen is listed on schedule 4 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act it will need to be registered in line with that legislation, this has nothing to do with CITES.

If an Annex A bird was imported **after** Brexit the foreign Article 10 should be confiscated at the border as it is not valid for commercial use in the UK and the holder of the specimen will need to apply for a UK Article 10 if they wish to use the bird commercially.

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SCHEDULE 4 BIRDS

Birds that appear on the Schedule 4 list – a list can be found on the Government website – must be registered with CITES, by law. The most common birds owned by falconers are Merlins, Peregrines, Goshawks and Golden Eagles.

When a keeper registers a Schedule 4 bird, he/she will receive a blue document in their name. If the bird is to be moved on, the new keeper must register the bird in their name using the bottom section of the document. The old keeper should return the top half of the form to notify CITES that the bird has changed hands. Information about Schedule 4 birds can be found on the Government website.

Merlins and Peregrines do not need to be registered with CITES however, if there is no A10 in place, for example, if the bird has been gifted or just being kept for pleasure, then it will have to be registered. This also includes any wild Schedule 4 bird that is being rehabilitated. Keepers have 14 days to notify CITES that they have a Schedule 4 bird in their possession.

So, to clarify, all specimens listed on Schedule 4 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act need to be registered in line with that legislation regardless of commerciality, the only difference is that Merlin's and Peregrine's can be registered with a **valid UK Article 10** in lieu of a blue bird registration document. All other species on the on Schedule 4 of the Wildlife and Countryside act would need to be registered and would also need a valid Article 10 for commercial use.

CHANGES REGARDING EXPORTING BIRDS

If you are a commercial breeder, you will need to apply to become CITES registered by December 2026. This is a directive by the Secretariat and has nothing to do with CITES.

The registration process can be quite lengthy and so CITES are recommending that applications are submitted as soon as possible to avoid delay.

If you do not register your business by this date, any applications to export will be refused.

Ring numbers will also be standardised to include your CITES registration number and GB.

If breeders need to ask any questions regarding this process, they can send an email to wildlife.licensing@apha.gov.uk

If anyone has any questions about paperwork, please feel free to give me a call – 07896162137

Babs