In the 2011 US Fish and Wildlife Service draft guidance documents, the service indicates that satellite telemetry is an acceptable research tool to use when drafting eagle management and conservation plans for wind energy development. Data gathered from telemetry can help to answer questions about eagle territory size and resource use on the landscape from GPS positions from the satellite transmitter attached to the bird. These GPS locations are more accurate than can be estimated from ground-based surveys. With telemetry, it is possible to track eagles in remote and difficult-to-access terrain without having to deploy field teams on the ground.

Trapping golden eagles and affixing telemetry devices is a difficult task as golden eagles are notoriously smart and wary birds. Very few biologists have the skills necessary to be successful at capturing and marking these birds in the field. Additionally, the USFWS is careful about to whom they issue permits for trapping eagles. It is imperative that those who are trapping have the background, skills and permits necessary to be successful and to not cause harm to the bird. The staff at HawkWatch International are well equipped to support telemetry and trapping efforts for your project.

HWI began a satellite-tracking program in 1999 at migration sites in Nevada and New Mexico, expanding to Washington in 2001. Since 1999, we have placed telemetry equipment on over 100 birds, including over 40 golden eagles, and successfully tracked them through the life of the transmitter. If you are interested in our services, please contact us and we can discuss how we can tailor a telemetry project to your needs.

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