

DoD to get camouflaged bird-sized drones for recon missions

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Credit: Prioria/Wired

(Phys.org) —Last year, the US Army Rapid Equipping Force put out a request for proposal (RFP) for a small drone that would resemble a bird in flight. The government wanted a drone capable of fooling people in the area into believing the drone was a raptor of some sort—at least at a distance, circling on air currents. Now, a company called Prioria, which won the contract has posted a demo video of the drone, and by most measures, it appears to have delivered exactly what the military wanted—a surveillance drone that can evade detection.

To make the drone look more like a bird in flight, the engineers at Prioria gave it flexible wings, a rounded body and a tail that covers the rear propeller. In flight, the drone looks every bit the crow, or hawk, circling overhead. The drone, called the Maveric can soar to heights of 25,000 feet and fly at speeds up to 65 mph. It's also portable, able to be launched by hand or more speedily via a custom cannon. It's quiet too, at altitudes over 100 meters it cannot be heard at all. The camera is on the underbelly and can be rotated in all directions. Sadly, the drone's battery only lasts for about an

hour, but swapping in a new one takes just 30 seconds, though that might give away the location of the operator if the drone is detected when it "lands" by flying into a ground based net.

The DoD hasn't revealed to what purpose the Maveric is to be put, but the RFP specified the army had a "urgent but undisclosed need." Most likely, the military wants to use the faux bird to spy on unsuspecting terrorists as they go about their business, giving the military a decided advantage. That the [drone](#) was built and is meeting delivery time in just six months is notable for such a contract—they usually take years.

The \$4.5 million contract calls for the army to get 36 of the little (2.5 pounds) drones, deliverable sometime next month. The [military personnel](#) that will be operating them have reportedly already started training.

More information: via [Wired](#)

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