

# Bald Eagle

Pygargue à tête blanche  
*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*

Migratory Species



Wingspan: M 175 cm to 210 cm / F 198 cm to 225 cm



The Bald Eagle is easily recognized by the striking white coloration of its head and tail. The rest of its body is chocolate brown. Furthermore, its beak and feet are a brilliant yellow. The Bald Eagle is the emblematic bird for the United States of America. Surprisingly enough, we find far more Bald Eagles in Canada than in the United States!



The female is larger than the male.



The Bald Eagle lives on coastlines, estuaries, lakes and rivers. In Quebec, the largest concentration of Bald Eagles is found on the island of Anticosti.



The Bald Eagle feeds primarily on fish (caught, dead, or even stolen from its cousin the Osprey), certain species of bird, when they are wounded, and carrion (dead animals). The eagle will sometimes hunt small mammals like hares, rats or sea otters.



The Bald Eagle can live 22 years in the wild and up to 48 years in captivity.



Since its diet is fish-based, the nest is typically built in a large coniferous tree near a body of water. The nest can be as much as 4 meters high and 2.75 meters in diameter. The couple is monogamous, meaning that the pair stays together for life. The female typically lays 2 eggs per clutch.



The young take their first flight around 10 to 12 weeks of age. They leave the nest and their parents 4 to 13 weeks later.



Previously, the Bald Eagle was distributed throughout North America. Two major events decimated its population, which is today classified as vulnerable in Quebec. First off, clear-cutting destroyed its habitat, including the large mature trees used for nesting. Then, the use of pesticides such as DDT nearly led to the extinction of the species. Since the use of DDT has been prohibited, numerous strategies have been put into play to rehabilitate the wild Bald Eagle populations.



The Bald Eagle sometimes uses the same nest year after year, but it always builds a new nest atop the old one. Nests occupied yearly can reach up to 6 meters in height and weigh 1 to 2 tons! A nest was once found that had been used by different generations of Bald Eagles over the course of 50 or 60 years!