

# Golden Eagle

Migratory Species

Aigle royal  
*Aquila chrysaetos*



Wingspan: 187 cm to 230 cm



The Golden Eagle is the largest bird of prey in Quebec. Its plumage is dark brown throughout, and adults have golden highlights on the back of the head. Its large wings are rounded at the tips and its tail is lightly banded.



The male and female are similar in colouring. The female is larger than the male.



The Golden Eagle prefers wide open spaces such as mountainous areas with plateaus, bogs and deforested areas, as these make hunting easier.



The diet consists mainly of small rodents, rabbits and hares, but they also eat other birds and the occasional carrion.



The Golden Eagle can live up to 30 years in the wild and up to 46 years in captivity.



The nest is built on a cliff or in a large tree. It varies from 1.0 to 1.5 meters in diameter and 0.5 to 1 meter in height. The female typically lays 2 eggs, and exceptionally 1 or 3. The pair is monogamous, which means it stays together for life.



The young leave the nest about 65 to 70 days after hatching. However, they remain dependent on their parents until they are about 90 to 100 days old.



The Golden Eagle population of Quebec is poorly studied, but is nevertheless classified as a vulnerable species. The bird's habitat is difficult for humans to access, yet a drop in population size has been observed. This decline is attributed to pesticides, poaching, habitat loss, and poorly camouflaged traps in which the eagles get caught.



Despite its impressive size, the Golden Eagle is a very light bird, weighing only 3.6 to 4.5 kilograms (8 to 10 pounds). As with all birds, the eagle's weight is reduced by two key characteristics. Firstly, the structure of feathers makes them much more lightweight than they would be if they had fur like mammals. Second, the large bones of birds are hollow and so they contain much more air than ours, which makes them considerably lighter.