



GOLDEN EAGLE

Phylum *Chordata*, Class *Aves*, Order *Falconiformes*, Family *Accipitridae*, Genus *Aquila*,
Species *Chrysaetos*

The golden eagle is a member of the Booted or True Eagles family. It is seen throughout the northern hemisphere. It lives in mountainous areas but prefers prairies and open terrain. It is a solitary bird which can be found in remote areas. They do not congregate during the winter. Its named golden due to its golden brown plumage.

Status: Golden eagles have been protected in the United States since 1963.

Habitat: General open areas, tundra, grasslands and deserts.

Range: World-wide throughout the Northern hemisphere. Typically associated with the plains of the Western United States and fairly common in Alaska and Western Canada.

Diet: Live mammals such as ground squirrels, marmots, ground hogs, skunks, foxes, rabbits, grouse, crows, pheasants, meadowlarks and snakes. In the winter they will feed on carrion and water fowl.

Size: Length is approximately 3 feet with a wingspan of up to 7 feet.

Weight: Average is 15 pounds.

Life Span: 15-20 years.

Fact File:

Golden eagles did not suffer from the plague of DDT contamination, as Bald Eagles, because their diets consisted mostly of small grass eating mice. However, deliberate poisoning, shooting and trapping of the golden eagle continues today despite laws protecting the eagle.

The golden eagle is often hunted by humans due to the misguided concept that they are a threat to livestock and some people hunt them for their feathers for the black market.

Golden eagles are protected by the United States through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Possession of a body part or even a feather is a felony with a fine of up to \$10,000 or 10 years in prison.

Social Organization and Behavior: It is believed that golden eagles pair for life and defend a selected territory against other golden eagles. Both male and female participate in nest building.

Breeding and Care of Young: Golden eagles mate at about 4 years of age and often stayed paired with the same mate throughout life. They prefer to nest on rocky crags or cliff bases. They will occasionally build a nest in a tree. Females lay 1-3 eggs per year. Most males provide support by bringing food to the female. Both parents are responsible for raising their young. At birth eaglets only weight approximately 3 ounces, and they stay in the nest for approximately 9 weeks before they fledge.

Threats to Survival: Human, habitat destruction.

