



America's Eagles

	
Bald Eagle	Golden Eagle

Although there are sixty species of Eagles in the world, only the golden eagle and bald eagle are native to North America. Most are native to Europe, Asia, and Africa. Eagles are large birds of prey with powerful bodies, keen eyesight, and heavy bills. The world's largest eagle is the Steller's Sea Eagle. It is found in eastern Asia and can weigh more than 15 pounds. As far as eagles go, the North American eagles are average in size. While golden and bald eagles have much in common, they also are distinct in many ways.

Bald Eagle – The majestic bald eagle is America's national symbol. The adult is unmistakable with a white head, neck, and tail, and a brown body. The huge bill is conspicuously yellow. The bald eagle can measure nearly three feet in length and has a wing span of over seven feet.

Bald eagles are nearly always found near large bodies of water such as lakes, rivers, and shorelines. They primarily eat fish, but will also eat ducks, water birds, and even carrion. They sometimes steal fish from ospreys. The bald eagle was recently removed from the endangered species list. The use of pesticides such as DDT in the mid-1900s had severely impacted populations. The bald eagle is again relatively common.

Golden Eagle – The massive golden eagle is entirely brown. Adults have "golden feathers" on their necks. Golden eagles and bald eagles are similar in size and wing span. Immature bald eagles, which lack the white heads and tails of adults, are easily mistaken for golden eagles.

While the bald eagle is exclusive to North America, golden eagles are found in high mountain regions throughout the Northern Hemisphere, including North America, Europe, and Asia. Golden eagles prey upon small mammals such as rabbits and squirrels, and medium-sized and large birds such as ptarmigan, grouse, and ducks. While the golden eagle is relatively common in the mountains of western North America, it is rare in the eastern portion of the continent.

1. Which of the following best describes the bald and golden eagles in terms of size?

- A. The bald eagle is larger
- B. The golden eagle is larger
- C. The two eagles are about the same size
- D. The two eagles are very large compared to other eagles of the world

2. Which of the following is a difference between the two eagles?

- A. size
- B. body color
- C. eyesight
- D. diet

3. Which is true?

- A. Golden eagles live all over the world and bald eagles live in North America.
- B. Bald and golden eagles live only in North America
- C. While golden eagles live throughout the Northern Hemisphere, bald eagles live only in North America
- D. Golden eagles and bald eagles live throughout the northern hemisphere

4. What does “distinct” mean as used in the following sentence?

While golden and bald eagles have much in common, they also are **distinct** in many ways.

- A. Alike
- B. Similar
- C. Unrelated
- D. Different

5. Which of the following would be MOST unusual?

- A. Observing a bald eagle eating a fish near a lake
- B. Observing a golden eagle soaring over the mountains in Europe
- C. Observing a golden eagle eating a fish in the eastern United States
- D. Observing a bald eagle eating carrion near a river.