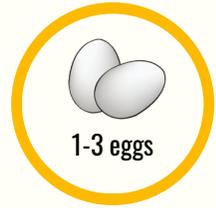
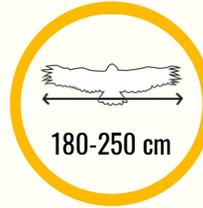




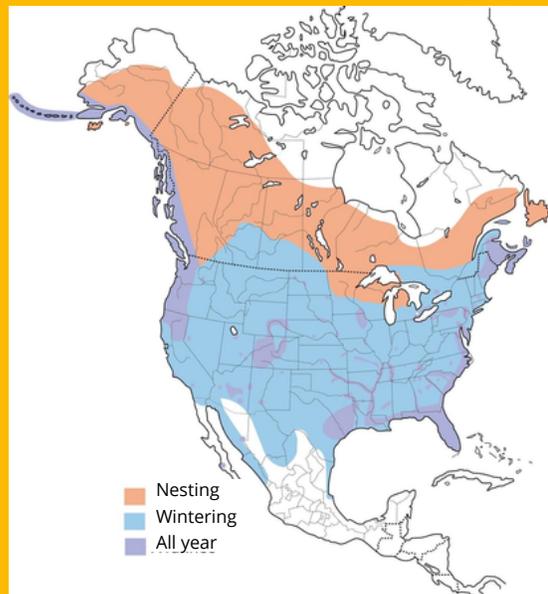
# Bald Eagle

Pygargue à tête blanche, *Haliaeetus leucocephalus*



## IDENTIFICATION

This is the largest of our birds of prey in Quebec. It is easily recognized by the white coloring of its head and tail, but immatures are brown and may be confused with the Golden Eagle. It takes on its characteristic colors (white head and tail, yellow beak and eyes) only around 5 years old. It is the avian emblem of the United States.



## ECOLOGY

### Nutrition

The Bald Eagle feeds mainly on fish (caught, dead or stolen from an osprey), injured wild birds, small mammals and animal carcasses. It sometimes feeds by ingesting a large quantity of food and then fasting for several days or even weeks.

### Breeding

The nest is usually built in a large conifer near a stream and can reach 4 meters in height and 2.75 meters in diameter. The eagle may use the same nest year after year, building a new one on top of the old one. The couple is formed for life. The female generally lays 2 eggs per clutch. The young take their first flight at around 10 to 12 weeks of age. They leave their parents 4 to 13 weeks later.

## DISTRIBUTION

They breed in central Canada, from Alaska to southern Newfoundland, and migrate in autumn to the United States and northern Mexico. In Quebec, the largest concentration of Bald Eagles is on Anticosti Island. It inhabits coasts, estuaries, lakes and rivers. In winter, if the bodies of water where they nest don't freeze over, some individuals can remain there year round.

## STATUS AND POPULATION

Declared a vulnerable species in Quebec in 2003, it has since made a fine comeback, rising from 48 breeding pairs in 1997 to 145 known pairs in 2014. It is now considered secure.<sup>1</sup> The number of individuals sent to UQROP tends to increase every year.

<sup>1</sup> Wild species of Canada report, 2015