



**BUFFALO BILL CENTER OF THE WEST**



## Golden Eagle (L) vs Bald Eagle: *The Quick & Basic Facts*

	Golden Eagle	Bald Eagle
<b>SCIENTIFIC NAME</b>	Aquila chrysaetos	Haliaeetus leucocephalus
<b>BODY LENGTH</b>	30-40 in.	28-38 inc.
<b>WINGSPAN</b>	6.5 – 7.5 ft.	6.5 – 7.5 ft.
<b>WEIGHT</b>	7 – 13 lb.	7 – 14 lb.
<b>RANGE</b>	Found across the Northern Hemisphere (N. America, Europe, parts of Africa & Asia)	Found throughout N. America (Alaska, Canada, U.S., & northern Mexico)
<b>HABITAT</b>	Rugged, open country of plains, mountains, deserts, plateaus—preferably where cliffs and tall forests alternate with open space.	Typically prefer water edges such as coastlines, estuaries, riparian habitats, lakes, and large rivers but can be seen in most types of habitats.
<b>DIET</b>	Mainly rabbits and hares. Eats small to medium-sized mammals like ground squirrels, marmots, foxes, and young deer and antelope as well as reptiles and medium-sized birds. Often feed on carrion, especially in winter.	Mainly fish. Also feeds on waterfowl, prairie dogs, rabbits, and a large amount of carrion. Often seen “bullying” osprey or other birds in order to steal their meals.
<b>NESTING PREFERENCES</b>	Build large stick nests on cliff ledges. Will occasionally nest in trees. Avoids nesting in areas with considerable human activity.	Build massive stick nests in the largest trees available. Not as bothered by human activity.
<b>DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS</b>	Large, overall brown body with golden feathers on back of neck. Feathers found down entire leg to tops of feet. Beak remains black throughout the bird’s life. <b>Immature birds:</b> White “patch” underneath each wing and white section at the base of the tail which gets thinner as the bird matures.	<b>Adult:</b> Large, overall dark brown body with white head and tail. Feathers stop a few inches above the top of the feet. Beak is large & yellow. <b>Immature birds:</b> Dark body overall with mottled white feathers. Head and tail are dark brown. Beak is black. As the immature birds age, their head and tail feathers gradually show more and more white and the beak slowly fades to yellow. Full change to adult plumage takes 5 – 6 years.

***In short, the golden eagle and the bald eagle are two separate species!***