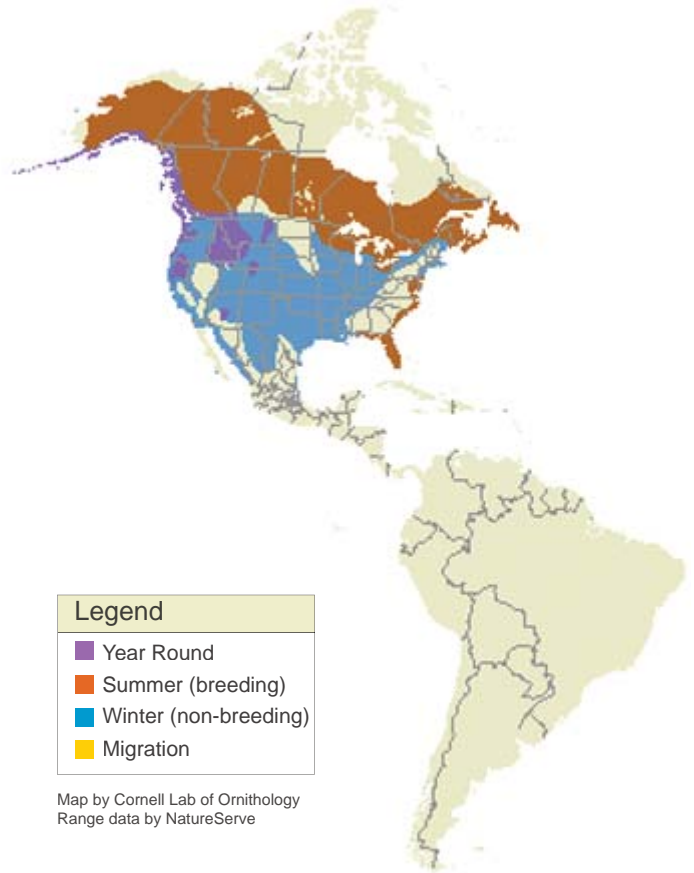


# Bald Eagle

*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*

The Bald Eagle has been the national emblem of the United States since 1782 and a spiritual symbol for native people for far longer than that. These regal birds aren't really bald, but their white-feathered heads gleam in contrast to their chocolate-brown body and wings. Look for them soaring in solitude, chasing other birds for their food, or gathering by the hundreds in winter. Once endangered by hunting and pesticides, Bald Eagles have flourished under protection.



## Keys to Identification

### Size and Shape

The Bald Eagle dwarfs most other raptors, including the Turkey Vulture and Red-tailed Hawk. It has a heavy body, large head, and long, hooked bill. In flight, a Bald Eagle holds its broad wings flat like a board.

### Color Pattern

Adult Bald Eagles have white heads and tails with dark brown bodies and wings. Their legs and bills are bright yellow. Immature birds have mostly dark heads and tails; their brown wings and bodies are mottled with white in varying amounts. Young birds attain adult plumage in about five years.

### Behavior

You'll find Bald Eagles soaring high in the sky, flapping low over treetops with slow wingbeats, or perched in trees or on the ground. Bald Eagles scavenge many meals by harassing other birds or by eating carrion or garbage. They eat mainly fish, but also hunt mammals, gulls, and waterfowl.

### Habitat

Look for Bald Eagles near lakes, reservoirs, rivers, marshes, and coasts. For a chance to see large Bald Eagle congregations, check out wildlife refuges or large bodies of water in winter over much of the continent, or fish processing plants and dumpsters year-round in coastal Alaska and the Pacific Northwest.

## Measurements

### Both Sexes

- Length - 28 - 37.8 inches
- Wingspan - 80.3 inches (6.7 feet)
- Weight - 105.8 - 222.2 ounces (6.6 - 13.9 pounds)