



# Golden Eagle

Bird of the Year

2023



Following a public vote as part of the annual and popular environmental campaign, the Golden Eagle was chosen as the **"Bird of the Year 2023 in Armenia"**.

The aim of the campaign is to draw the public's attention to the protection of birds, conservation of their habitats and to the importance of Armenia's nature in general.

Since ancient times, the Golden

Eagle has been a symbol of courage, strength and honesty, and its images can often be seen on coats of arms and flags.

It is still depicted on the national symbols of many countries, for example, the flag of Kazakhstan and the coat of arms of Armenia, Mexico and Ghana. The ancient Greeks associated the eagle with the supreme deity Zeus for its regal appearance and amazing ability to soar through the air.

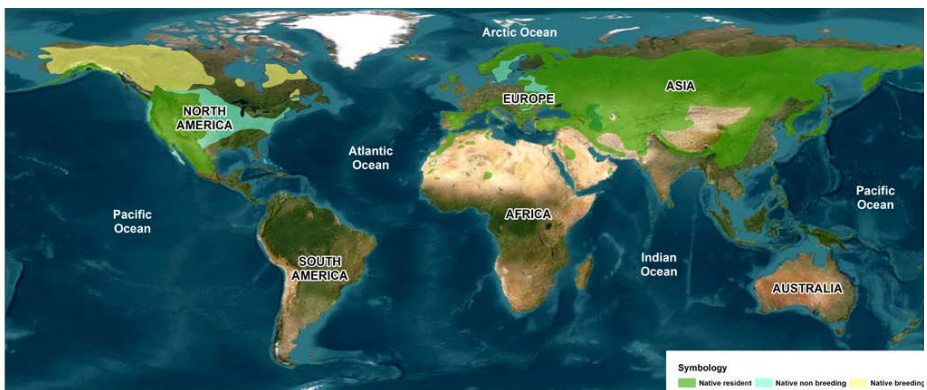


## Habitats and conservation status

The Golden Eagle is a rare bird in its distribution range. It is found in large areas of North America, northwestern Africa and Eurasia, at altitudes up to 4000 metres above sea level. In Eurasia, the most densely populated nesting sites of the species are located in the mountainous regions of the Caucasus, Altai and Urals.

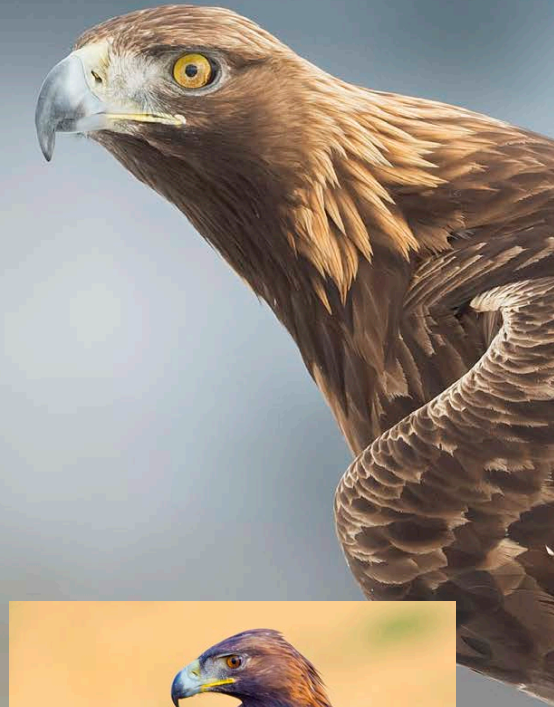
The Golden Eagle is included in the Red List of the International Union for Conservation of Nature

(IUCN) with the status of "Least Threatened" (LC). One of the six subspecies of Golden Eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos homeyeri*) is also found in Armenia, where according to the latest data (Red Book, 2010), only 34-38 breeding pairs live. In order to preserve and increase the number of Golden Eagles, the bird is also registered in the Red Book of the Republic of Armenia, where it is considered a rare, "vulnerable" (VU D1) species.



## Threats

The strict demands of the Golden Eagle regarding environmental conditions and their sensitivity to direct and indirect human disturbance limit the possibilities of the bird's spread and deprive Golden Eagles of their favourite nesting places. Frightened birds may even leave their nest, abandoning their young. Some of the main threats facing these birds are poaching, collecting of eggs and nestlings, poisoned baits, as well as pesticides used in agriculture, which accumulate in the bodies of Golden Eagle's prey species. Lack of environmental education and deep-rooted prejudices related to the fear of potential harm to livestock greatly exacerbate their conservation problems.





## Food and hunting

The Golden Eagle searches for prey by soaring high in the rising currents of warm air. Even amidst bad weather conditions and strong gusts of wind, the eagle easily manages to stay aloft, hovering at a distance close to the slopes. Around the nest site, the Golden Eagle follows rabbits, ground squirrels, ducks and other large and medium-sized mammals and birds. It can often feed on carrion as well. There have been cases when Golden Eagles have attacked foxes, young deer

and mountain goats. This bird's extremely sharp vision allows it to see a rabbit at a distance of up to 2 kilometres. A flexible neck that can bend up to 270 degrees, the ability to quickly determine the size and distance of an object, binocular vision and color perception make the Golden Eagle an excellent hunter. Noticing a potential victim, the bird stoops for its prey, sometimes reaching a speed of up to 320 kilometres per hour.





### **Breeding and migration**

In general, Golden Eagles can be classified as sedentary birds. They build their large nests, up to 2metres in diameter, from twigs, wool and grass on hard-to-reach rocky ledges and large trees. The eagles usually use the same nest, but can have up to 12 nests in one area. They lay 1-2 eggs, after which incubation

The first flight of young Golden Eagles takes place on the 60-70th day of their lives. By then, as a rule, only the single strongest chick survives. During the first few years of life, young eagles move up to 1000 kilometres away from their parental nest.



Within the framework of the "Bird of the Year 2023 - Golden Eagle" campaign, **the branch of German Nature Protection Union (NABU) in the Republic of Armenia** organizes eco-educational courses and open classes in schools and universities for all those interested. The aim of the courses is to inform the audience about the way of life of Golden Eagles, their conservation and threats, as well as to involve participants in the discussion of conservation solutions. More than 900 students from 23 schools of the capital city and different regions of Armenia have already participated in the course.







NABU branch in Armenia is carrying out field studies within the framework of the campaign, the purpose of which is to study, identify and map the nesting sites of Golden Eagles. As part of the research, satellite transmitters are also installed on the Golden Eagle chicks in order to study their movements. This will allow the collection of migration data, identify the main threats to the species in different areas, classify these threats and implement more targeted conservation measures.

Citizens of Armenia also join and support these studies within the

framework of the "Keepers of Golden Eagles" initiative.

"Keepers of Golden Eagles" receive an official certificate and appropriate equipment for observation. They inform the organisation of the location of the Golden Eagle nest they find, monitor the security of the nest throughout the nesting period, and regularly provide their observations of the birds' movements. The main goal of the initiative is to involve residents on the ground in the conservation of the species, thus making environmental protection.



As part of the “Bird of the Year” annual environmental campaign, the association regularly organises and carries out birdwatching events, during which all those who want to participate in the campaign have the opportunity to see



both the bird of the year and different birds of prey. During the campaign, the specialists of the organisation discuss with the participants the characteristics of birds of prey and their specific conservation issues.







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