

Annual Wintering Golden Eagle Survey of the Bluffs and Coulee Region of the Upper Mississippi River Watershed

Data Collection Guidelines and Protocol

The goal of the survey is to have everyone out on the same day. If you have been assigned a route, you are responsible for collecting data on that route. If for some reason (i.e. weather extremes, health, family etc.) you are not able to run the route on the appointed date, please complete the route as close to that day as possible and return the data (*and let us know WHEN you surveyed*).

Please fill out the data sheets and return to me either by snail mail or e-mail as soon after the survey has been completed as you can. I have several media outlets interested in the data and I want to get it to them as fresh as possible.

- Invite as many observers along with you to complete the route as you would like. *The more eyes there are the better* the chance of finding this oft times elusive raptor.
- Ideal amount of time to spend is 3-4 hours searching your route area. A sunrise start is not advised, as I witness most movement from 10:00 to 3:30. Starting around 9am or later is just fine.
- The goal of the survey is to document the Golden Eagles presence in our area, not necessarily to cover as much ground as we can cover in one day. So drive slowly, especially in likely Golden Eagle habitat or were they have been sighted before, spend extra time in this area as they are creatures of habit, often choosing the same roosting trees year after year. If you miss them in a valley the first time and there is time, come back to that spot again.
- Observe other wildlife – for example – Note the presence of wild turkeys. If you see Turkeys running for the woods, look up, as it is a pretty good bet that a Golden Eagle is approaching!!
- Please take the time to record some of the **other raptors** you may spot during the day. When observing Bald Eagles, please note whether they are Adults or non-adults. Also if you are able to see a red-tailed hawk's tail, please note whether they are adults or juveniles. Please see the data sheet to see what other data to collect.
- **Note whether the golden eagles are immature (I) or non-immature (NI).** In this survey, Immatures (I) are birds that have white patches in the wing (possibly both ventrally and dorsally) and a boldly contrasting black and white tail. Non-immature (NI) are birds then that lack these features.