

Potential adult eagle mates are attracted to each other based on coloration. Adult coloration is also a special message indicating the privilege of inhabiting a territory.

Meanwhile, the young eagles with their mottled, darker colorations more easily blend into the background and thus are camouflaged and protected from potential predators or food thieves.

Color differences also imply social status within eagle groups. Col-

oration in most animals provides visual signals that may influence the behavior of other animals especially within the same species. Important messages are passed from one individual to another through these differences. The subtle messages between the youthful Bald Eagles as they mature may never fully be understood, but the issue leaves open a realm of possibilities for future study.

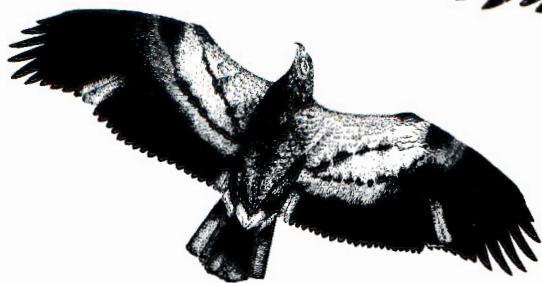
Armed with your knowledge, why not take a trip to the Mississippi River

in January or February to observe Bald Eagles? I particularly enjoy watching eagles at Fulton Dam just south of Savanna. When you observe Bald Eagles this winter, practice aging the immatures and then note and record the interesting behaviors of these giants in the sky. 🦅

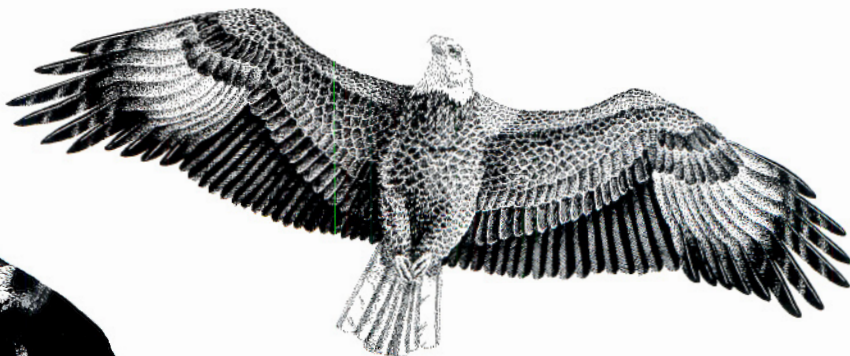
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Eagle Identification Key

- 1A Head and tail white, body dark.....go to 2.
- 1B Head and tail other than described above..... go to 3.
- 2A Head and tail pure white, body darkAdult.
- 2B Head and tail dirty white (some dark feathers present), body dark.....Transition, 4th year.
- 3A Head, body, and tail generally dark, very little white in feathers 1st year.
- 3B Head and body has some to much white, especially in belly areago to 4.
- 4A Head has brown hood, belly; wing coverts very white2nd year.
- 4B Head and breast brown; some white on belly; wing coverts with a scattering of dark in white3rd year.



First-year Bald Eagle. Drawing by Brian K. Willis.



Adult Bald Eagle. Drawing by Brian K. Willis.