

Iolar Fíréan Golden Eagle



Did you know?

The eyesight of the Golden Eagle is 8 times better than human eyesight.

Birds of Prey are birds that eat or prey upon other birds, animals, fish or even insects. Therefore birds of prey are carnivores. Birds of prey have powerful talons with sharp claws for grasping their prey, a sharp hooked beak for tearing at flesh and large eyes giving excellent vision. Most birds of prey hunt during the day, birds of prey that hunt during the night are called Owls.

Since the last Ice Age in Ireland, 10,000 years ago, Golden Eagles have been near or at the head of the food chain in Ireland. In the past Ireland had two different types of eagles. Golden Eagles were found especially among our mountains and White-tailed Eagles were common along our coasts and big loughs. Golden Eagles became extinct in Ireland in 1912, as a result of changes to the landscape and persecution such as shooting, poisoning and egg collecting.

BASIC FACTS ABOUT Golden Eagles:

- ◊ The Irish name for Golden Eagle is IOLAR FÍRÉAN.
- ◊ Whenever possible, they like to SOAR and GLIDE.
- ◊ They became extinct in Ireland in 1912.
- ◊ Their nest is called an EYRIE.
- ◊ They can live 20-30 years.
- ◊ Golden Eagles lay 2 eggs.
- ◊ They incubate their eggs for 6 weeks.
- ◊ Their toes are called TALONS.
- ◊ They catch and eat rabbits, hares, crows, duck, gulls etc.
- ◊ They have a 2 metre wingspan.
- ◊ They also eat carrion (meat from dead animals).
- ◊ The eagle in ancient Egyptian picture writing (hieroglyphs) developed into the letter A.
- ◊ Golden Eagles are found throughout the northern hemisphere, from Japan to Russia, across Europe and in North America.
- ◊ Ireland is the only country known to have lost its Golden Eagle population in recent times.



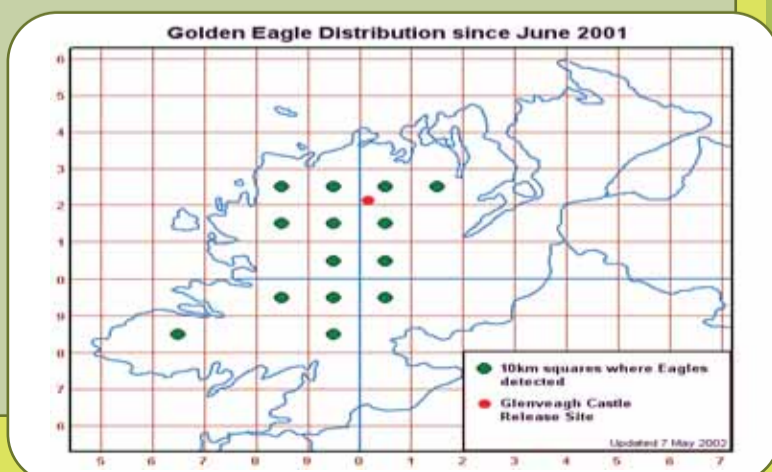
The Reintroduction of the Golden Eagle into Ireland
Ireland has at least 6 extinct bird of prey species. The reintroduction of the Golden Eagle to Ireland began in 2001, in an effort to help restore the Golden Eagle to Irish skies once more. The project involves bringing young eaglets from Scotland and releasing them in Glenveagh National Park, County Donegal. It is hoped to release 60-75 birds in Glenveagh NP over a five-year period. As in all wild eagle populations, it is expected that only a third of the released birds will survive till they are mature enough to breed at four or five years of age. Therefore hopefully 6-8 pairs of Golden Eagles may be breeding in Donegal by 2010. Each released bird will be fitted with a wing tag and a small radio transmitter in order to monitor their movements.

Soaring and gliding Golden Eagles in hills of Donegal are unlikely to be confused with many birds apart from the increasing Buzzard population, which are more associated with woodland and farmland. Golden Eagles have a two metre wingspan and are usually seen from mountain roads or when hill walking. Adult eagles are mostly dark brown with a golden /yellowish brown nape and head. Young eagles have white patches in their tail, underwing and upperwing that decreases with age until they are 4-5.

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If you would like to find out more about Irish birds of prey or the Golden Eagle project, why not look at:
www.goldeneagle.ie



An exciting Golden Eagle schools pack, in English or Irish, can be found and downloaded from the web page in the Information Centre section under Information for Schools.

Visit the ENFO website at www.enfo.ie

Golden Eagle *Polar Fíreán*



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