

126 Golden Eagle

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Golden Eagle. Adult (12-XI).

GOLDEN EAGLE (*Aquila chrysaetos*)**IDENTIFICATION**

76-89 cm. **Adult** with dark brown plumage; golden colour on head and nape; tail with transversal bands. **Juveniles** with white base on primaries and secondaries; white tail with dark terminal band.



Golden Eagle. Adult. Pattern of head and tail.

SIMILAR SPECIES

This species is unmistakable.

SEXING

In **adult** birds, size is an useful characteristic for extreme birds: **male** with wing shorter than 595 mm; **female** with wing longer than 630 mm.

AGEING

6 age groups can be recognized (**CAUTION**: there are individual factors (different metabolism, food availability, date of birth, e.g.) causing that moult in a so big birds no always fit exactly the annual cycle described here):

Juvenile with fresh flight feathers of a single generation; brown lesser coverts; inner primaries and secondaries narrow and pointed; from below, base of primaries and secondaries white with blackish distal part (**CAUTION**: no all specimens show this characteristic); tail always white without greyish mottling and with a dark terminal band; underparts and underwing coverts dark brown; dark brown iris.

2nd year autumn/3rd year spring with a mix of worn retained **juvenile** and fresh moulted lesser and median coverts; most or all the greater coverts worn and bleached; three to five inner primaries moulted; none to three secondaries moulted, broad and rounded, contrasting with the worn and pointed **juvenile** retained; usually moulted the central pair of tail feathers, the new feathers still with **juvenile** appearance; **juvenile** underparts with some fresh buff feather; dark brown iris.

3rd year autumn/4th year spring with **juvenile** lesser and median coverts almost all replaced by darker feathers; greater coverts with admixed fresh and old feathers related with changed or retained secondaries; only outermost primaries still **juvenile**; secondaries with three ages, the fresh feathers with greyish base and dark tip; underparts paler on breast; lesser and median underwing coverts buff contrasting with darker greater underwing coverts; most of tail feathers have been moulted but the new ones have **juvenile** pattern, pale with terminal dark band; iris brown, paler than the pupil.

4th year autumn/5th year spring with worn lesser and median coverts; fresh central greater coverts; some very worn **juvenile** median secondaries and outer primaries may be retained but sometimes all **juvenile** feathers are moulted; tail with **juvenile** pattern, whitish with dark terminal band, although some 3rd generation feather may show **adult**-type barred.

5th year autumn/6th year spring with fresh lesser and median coverts; worn central greater coverts; flight feathers with three generations or four in birds with all secondaries moulted without **juvenile** feathers; if white patches on underwing then confined to base of some primaries and secondaries, generally barred; black and white tail feathers, with dark barred in terminal band.

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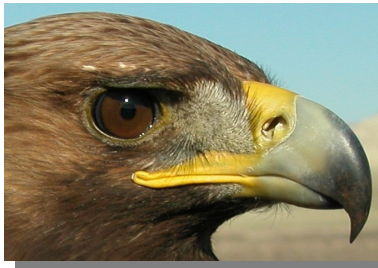
Adult with flight feathers with broad subterminal band and grey barred; greater and primary coverts with grey base and dark tip; without white patches on underwing and tail; amber or pale brown iris. **CAUTION:** some adults have white patches on underwing and tail during several moults.



Golden Eagle. Ageing. Pattern of primaries: top adult; bottom juvenile.



Golden Eagle. Ageing. Colour of iris: top adult; bottom juvenile.



Golden Eagle. Ageing. Pattern of tail feathers: left adult; right juvenile.



Golden Eagle. Ageing. Pattern of tops of secondaries: top adult; bottom juvenile.

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MOULT

Complete **postbreeding** moult, usually spending two years in change all body and flight feathers; moult period is between March and October. **Postjuvenile** moult lasts four to five years until all flight feathers are changed; part of body feathers, three to four inner primaries, none to 3 secondaries, some tertials and 2 or 3 tail feathers are moulted in **2nd year**; half of secondaries, tail feathers and median primaries are moulted in **3rd year**; outermost primaries and rest of secondaries are moulted in **4th year**, although outermost primary and some median secondaries may be retained; moult period is between April and November.



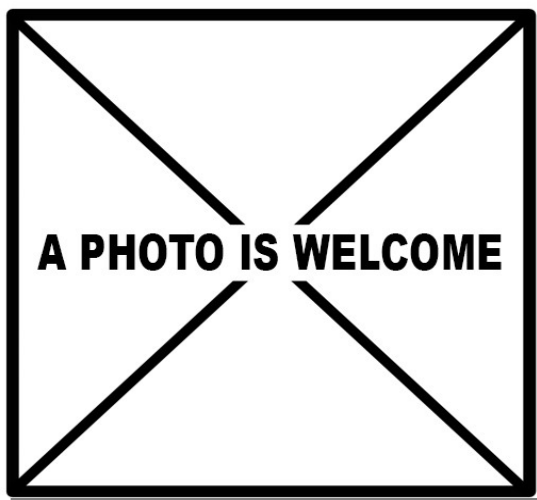
Golden Eagle. 4th year autumn (28-XII).

PHENOLOGY

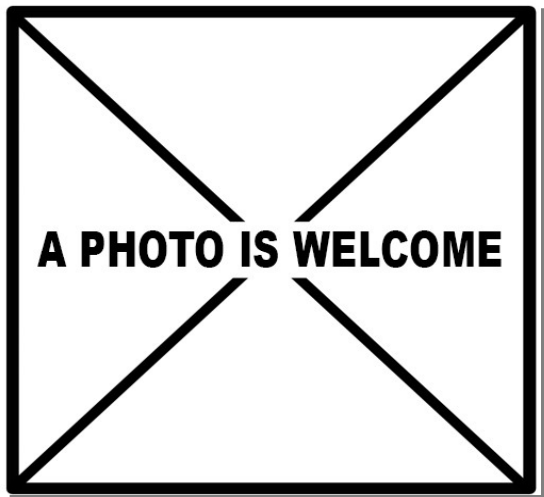
I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	XI	XII

STATUS IN ARAGON

Resident. Widely distributed throughout the Region, absent only from areas without right places to nest.



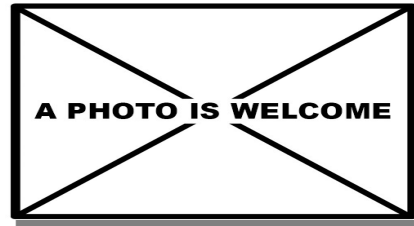
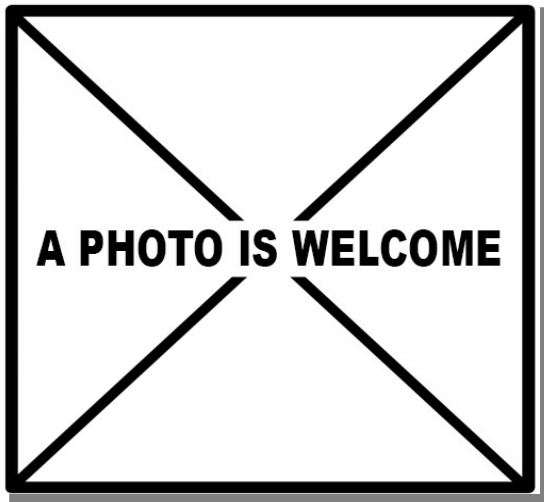
Golden Eagle. 3rd year autumn ().



Golden Eagle. 5th year autumn ()

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Golden Eagle. 5th year autumn: head pattern and iris colour ().

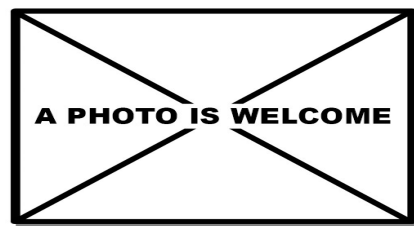


Golden Eagle. 4th year autumn: head pattern and iris colour (28-XII).

Golden Eagle. 2nd year autumn ().



Golden Eagle. 3rd year autumn: head pattern and iris colour ().

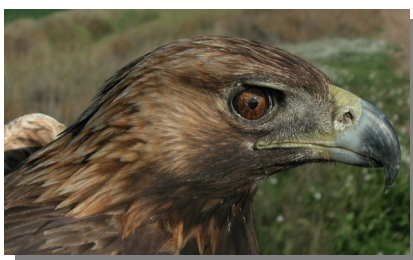


Golden Eagle. 2nd year autumn: head pattern and iris colour ().

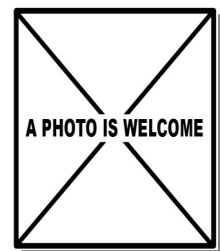
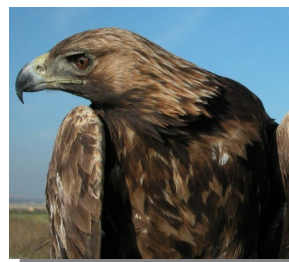
Golden Eagle. Juvenile (14-II).



Golden Eagle. Juvenile: head pattern and iris colour (14-II).



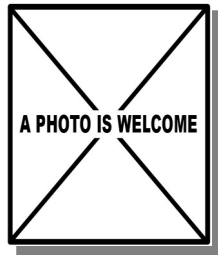
Golden Eagle. Adult: head pattern and iris colour (12-XI).



Golden Eagle. Breast pattern: left adult (12-XI); right 5th year autumn ().

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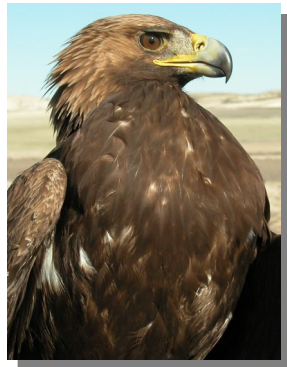
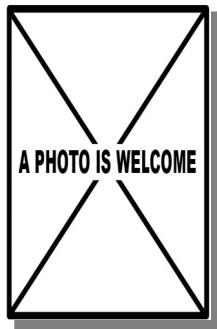
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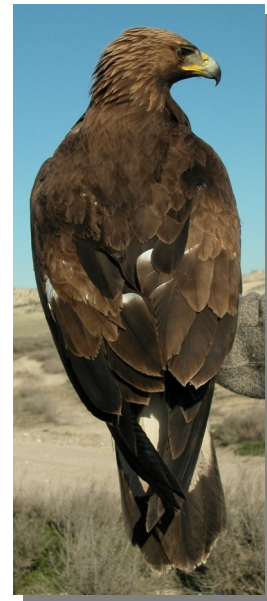
Golden Eagle. Breast pattern: left 4th year autumn (28-XII); right 3rd year autumn ()



Golden Eagle. Upperpart pattern: left 4th year autumn (28-XII); right 3rd year autumn ()



Golden Eagle. Breast pattern: left 2nd year autumn (); right juvenile (14-II)



Golden Eagle. Upperpart pattern: left 2nd year autumn (); right juvenile (14-II)



Golden Eagle. Upperpart pattern: left adult (12-XI); right 5th year autumn ()

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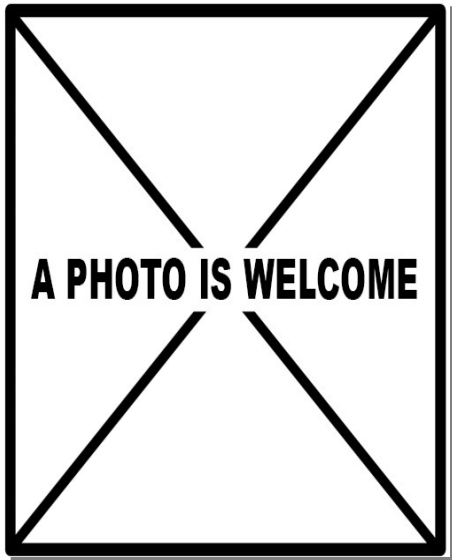
Golden Eagle. Adult. Male: tail pattern with white patches (09-II).



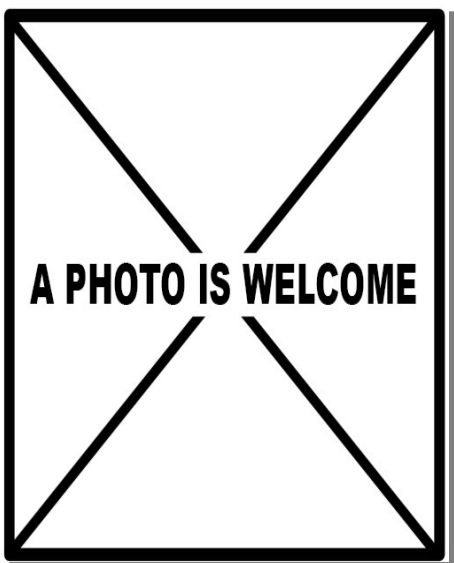
Golden Eagle. 4th year autumn: tail pattern (1 adult feather, 2 subadult feather) (28-XII).



Golden Eagle. Adult. Female: tail pattern (12-XI).



Golden Eagle. 3rd year autumn: tail pattern ().



Golden Eagle. 5th year autumn: tail pattern ().



Golden Eagle. 2nd year autumn: tail pattern (1 juvenile feather, 2 2nd year feather) (23-XII).

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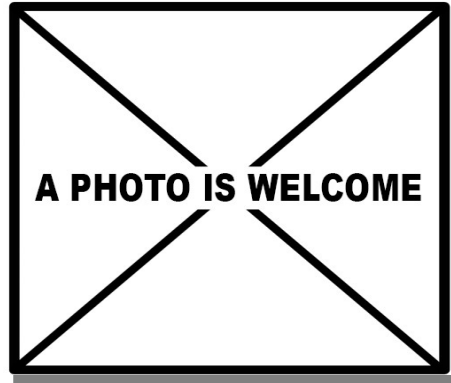
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Golden Eagle. Juvenile: tail pattern (14-II).



Golden Eagle. 4th year autumn: pattern of primary coverts (28-XII).



Golden Eagle. 3rd year autumn: pattern of primary coverts ().



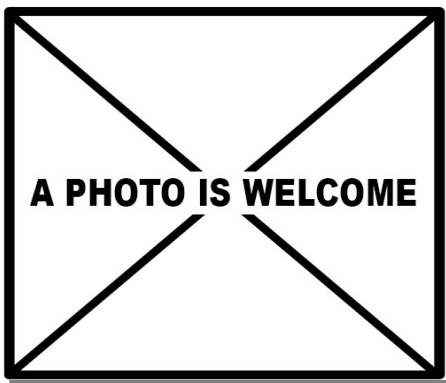
Golden Eagle. Adult. Male: pattern of primary coverts (09-II).



Golden Eagle. Adult. Female: pattern of primary coverts (12-XI).



Golden Eagle. 2nd year autumn: pattern of primary coverts (23-XII).



Golden Eagle. 5th year autumn: pattern of primary coverts ().



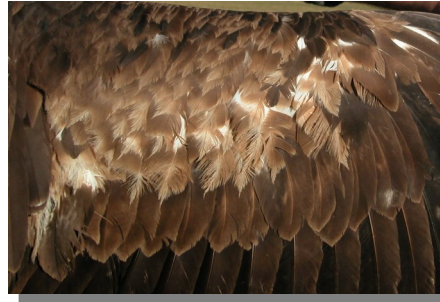
Golden Eagle. Juvenile: pattern of primary coverts (14-II).

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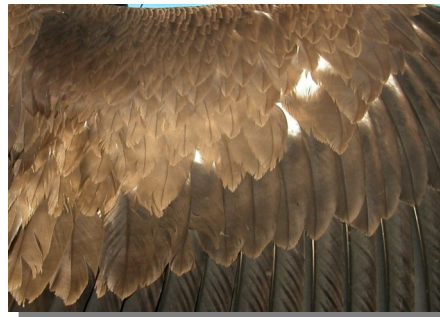
Golden Eagle. Adult. Male: pattern of wing coverts (09-II).



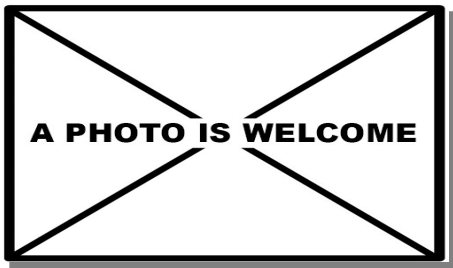
Golden Eagle. 2nd year autumn: pattern of wing coverts (23-XII).



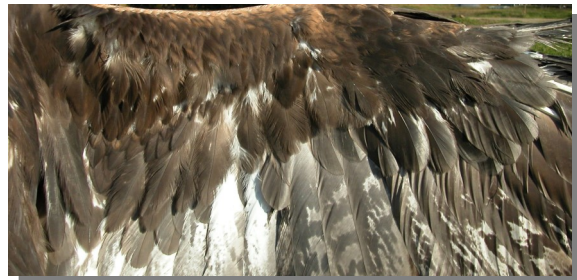
Golden Eagle. Adult. Female: pattern of wing coverts (12-XI).



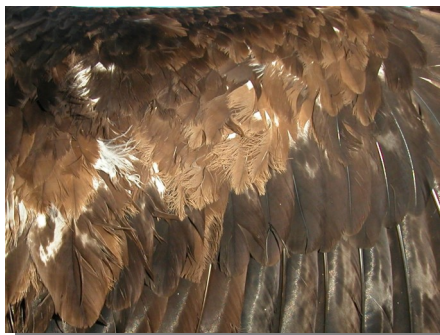
Golden Eagle. Juvenile: pattern of wing coverts (14-II).



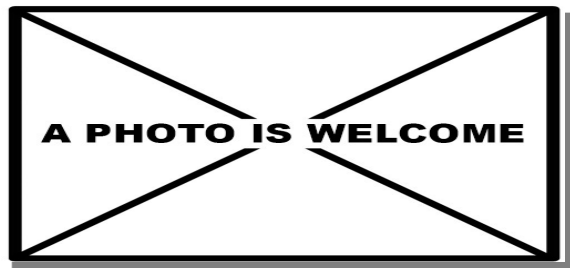
Golden Eagle. 5th year autumn: pattern of wing coverts ().



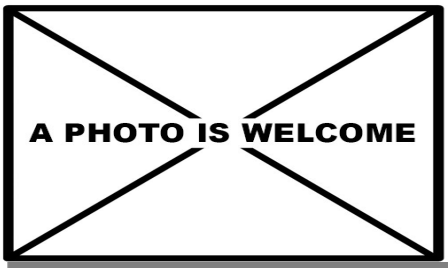
Golden Eagle. Adult: pattern of underwing coverts (07-XII).



Golden Eagle. 4th year autumn: pattern of primary coverts (28-XII).



Golden Eagle. 5th year autumn: pattern of underwing coverts ().



Golden Eagle. 3rd year autumn: pattern of wing coverts ().

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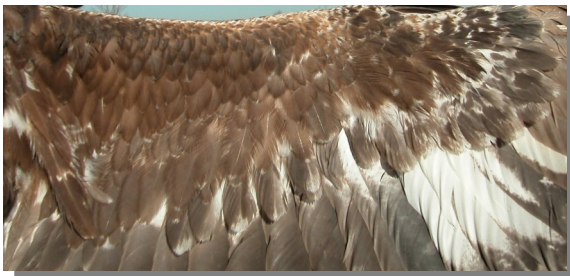
Golden Eagle. 4th year autumn: pattern of underwing coverts (28-XII).



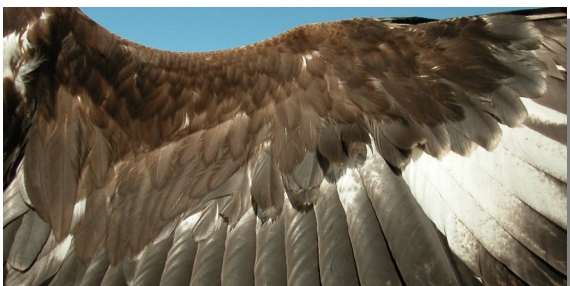
Golden Eagle. 3rd year autumn: pattern of underwing coverts ().



Golden Eagle. Adult. Male: pattern of primaries (09-II).



Golden Eagle. 2nd year autumn: pattern of underwing coverts (23-XII).



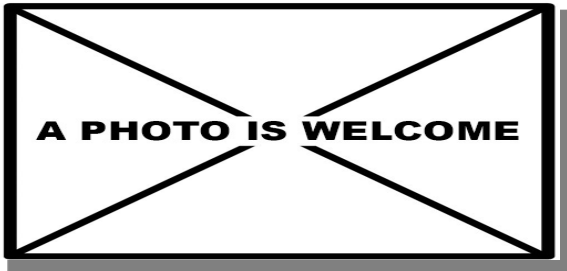
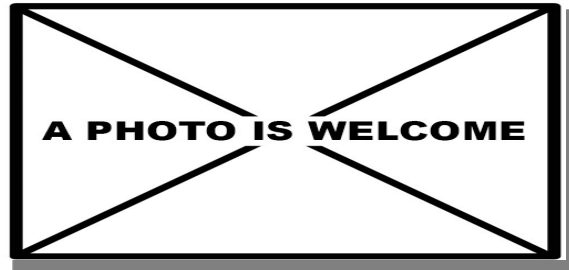
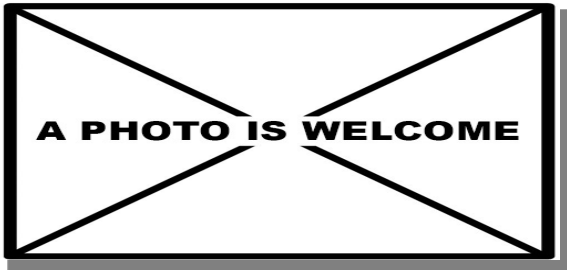
Golden Eagle. Juvenile: pattern of underwing coverts (14-II).



Golden Eagle. Adult. Female: pattern of primaries (12-XI).

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Golden Eagle. 5th year autumn: pattern of primaries ().

Golden Eagle. 3rd year autumn: pattern of primaries ().



Golden Eagle. 4th year autumn: pattern of primaries (1 adult feather, 2 subadult feather) (28-XII).

Golden Eagle. 2nd year autumn: pattern of primaries (1 juvenile feather; 2 2nd year feather) (23-XII).

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Golden Eagle. Juvenile: pattern of primaries with large white patch (14-II).

Golden Eagle. Adult. Male: pattern of secondaries 09-II).

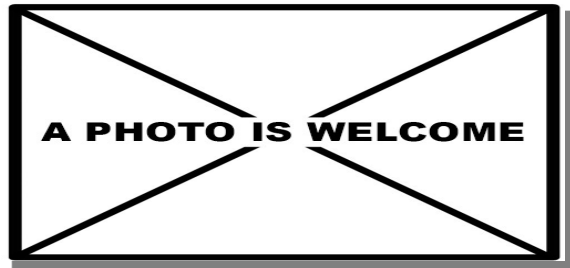
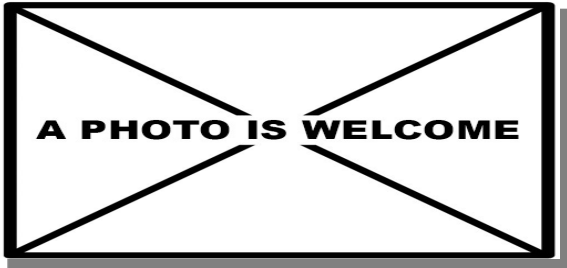
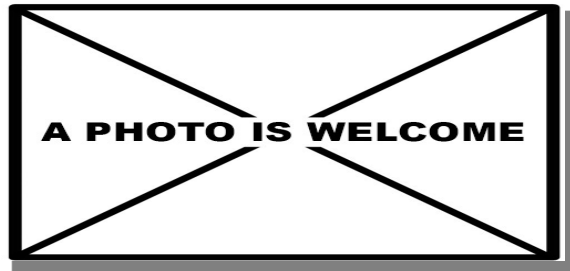


Golden Eagle. Juvenile: pattern of primaries with small white patch (14-II).

Golden Eagle. Adult. Female: pattern of secondaries (12-XI).

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Golden Eagle. 5th year autumn: pattern of secondaries ().

Golden Eagle. 3rd year autumn: pattern of secondaries ().



Golden Eagle. 4th year autumn: pattern of secondaries (1 juvenile feather, 2 postjuvenile feather) (28-XII).

Golden Eagle. 2nd year autumn: pattern of secondaries (23-XII).

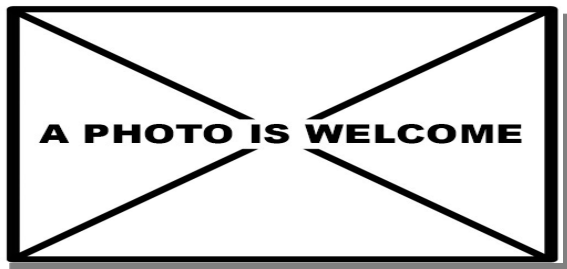
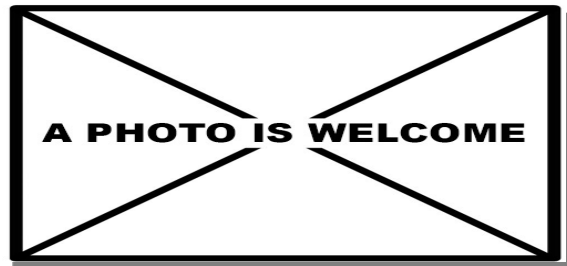
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Golden Eagle. Adult. Female: pattern of wing (12-XI).

Golden Eagle. Juvenile: pattern of secondaries (14-II).

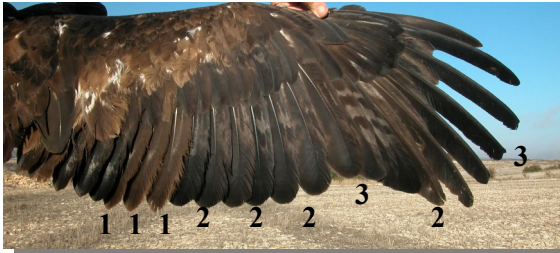


Golden Eagle. 5th year autumn: pattern of wing ().

Golden Eagle. Adult. Male: pattern of wing (09-II).

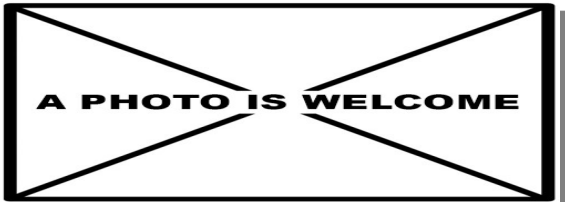
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Golden Eagle. 4th year autumn: pattern of wing (1 juvenile feather, 2 subadult feather; 3 adult feather) (28-XII).

Golden Eagle. Juvenile: pattern of wing with large white patch (14-II).



Golden Eagle. 3rd year autumn: pattern of wing ().



Golden Eagle. Juvenile: pattern of wing with small white patch (14-II).



Golden Eagle. 2nd year autumn: pattern of wing (23-XII).