

1980 Decorah, Iowa CBC

Golden Eagle (adult)

Four observers watched the eagle for about 5 minutes as it soared around over a small valley. Distance as close as 400 feet (overhead). The eagle was being harassed by a Red-tailed Hawk much of the time making a good size comparison possible. Two of the observers with extensive prior field experience with Golden Eagles in northeast Iowa and western states. All observers with extensive previous experience with Bald Eagles (both adults and immatures). Sky clear. All observers with 7x binoculars.

Field marks: much larger size (as compared to redtail); wings (both surfaces), undersides, back, tail and head a fairly uniform dark brown or black. The golden brown feathers on head and neck were noticeable whenever the bird banked in soaring; soared with wings held flat (not in a dihedral); tail had a greyish area at base; there were no areas of white mottling on wing linings or body.

Golden Eagles are regular in this corner of the state during migration and a few regularly winter here. The only rarity about them is getting them to appear in the count circle on count day in view of observers.