

Immature White-headed Eagle in Confusing Plumage: An eagle in a plumage easily confused with that of a juvenile Golden Eagle (white tail with dark terminal band, white patch on the underside of each wing) was observed on several occasions last fall and winter at the Montezuma Wildlife Refuge. On November 1 Mr. Benning of Clyde, New York, saw this bird perched upon a muskrat house, and as he watched it fly to another perch he noted the characters that usually indicate a juvenile Golden Eagle. Two months later Mr. Morse, manager of the refuge, noted the bird flying over the marsh while taking the Christmas Count on January 1.

The following day I identified an immature White-headed Eagle perched upon a low snag on the western side of the refuge. The bird was generally dark above, with the head nearly black. The undersides were also dark, but careful scrutiny with a 30x Balscope showed the breast to be dark brownish heavily streaked with blackish. The folded tail was not easily observed but was largely white with a dark tip. The beak was black and showed the heavy, deep profile characteristic of the sea-eagles, *Haliaeetus*. The lower half of each tarsus was unfeathered and yellow, again diagnostic of the latter eagle.

When the eagle flew slowly across the march to a perch along the woods, the following observations could be made. The tail was largely white but with a dark terminal band similar to that of a juvenile Golden Eagle. The underwing showed



Juvenile Golden Eagle



Immature White-headed Eagle

a pronounced patch of white, which was identified as the small feathering covering the fleshy part of the underwing, and also a separate line of white close to the lead edge of the patagium which joined the rest of the white at the wrist, thus forming a white triangle with a dark center.

Compared with a Golden Eagle, certain differences are to be noted. The tail pattern was similar, but the tail was distinctly shorter and more square across the tip. The white on the underwing was of the small feathering, while that of the Golden Eagle juvenile is the vanes of the bases of the inner group of primary flight feathers (this sometimes extends inward along a few outer secondaries). This is a real difference, because many young White-headed Eagles show white on the underwing but not in the Golden Eagle pattern. Furthermore, this eagle showed no trace of the frequently conspicuous golden nuchal cape characteristic of most Golden Eagles, adult and young. Of course the unfeathered lower tarsus of the White-headed Eagle is diagnostic when observed. The tarsus of the Golden is completely covered with a feltwork of fine soft feathers, contrasting with the yellow toes.

The age of this immature White-headed Eagle is uncertain. It seems unlikely that a bird with so much of the tail white is a juvenile, but again one would expect some white on the forehead and rest of the head after several molts. The head appeared all dark, like a first or second year bird, but the largely white tail could indicate a bird several years old. The well marked terminal bar is unusual, but I recall one similar specimen in the American Museum of Natural History skin collection, and I thought at the time that such an individual might well give a field student pause, not realizing that I might see one myself!

One further note — whether this eagle was also the "Golden" seen at Montezuma on March 28, 1959 (Kingbird, Vol. 9, p. 34) is uncertain. A complete annual molt would have come between these observations, and I doubt that such an unusual plumage would survive the molt. — Walter R. Spofford, 766 Irving Avenue, Syracuse.

Flight Speed of Starlings: As I was driving from the Laboratory of Ornithology to my home in Etna on the afternoon of September 20, 1959, I noticed a flock of 100-150 Starlings flying parallel to the road, over corn fields. I adjusted my car's speed to theirs and found that for a distance of $1\frac{1}{4}$ to 2 miles the flock maintained a speed of just under 45 miles per hour. When I drove 45, I gained slightly on them, but when I dropped to 40, they pulled ahead of me fairly rapidly. There was no wind. Finally the flock turned northeasterly and disappeared from sight over a distant woodlot.

This is near the upper limit of the range of speeds clocked for Starlings (18 to 51.4 mph) as summarized by M. T. Cooke (U. S. D. A. Circular No. 428, May, 1937), and it is interesting that the speed was maintained and could be clocked for a considerable distance in this case. — Sally F. Hoyt, Laboratory of Ornithology, Cornell University, Ithaca.

A Hummingbird Experience: Like many other species of birds, hummingbirds sometimes come to grief by flying into windows or screened-in enclosures. In the case of a bird as tiny and fragile as the hummingbird, death usually results. The particular bird in this episode was luckier than most.

A Ruby-throated Hummingbird had evidently tried to fly across a corner of a screened-in porch and had rammed its bill through a mesh. The bird's speed of flight caused the bill to jam so hard that it pushed the skin away and caused bleeding around the mouth. The bird had evidently been caught for some time when first discovered inasmuch as its body was limp and the blood that had run down on the screen was dry. I was able to gently pull the bird loose and revive him and clean him with some warm water from the kitchen sink. I took the bird outside, opened my hand wide, and off he flew to the top of a tall tree — apparently as good as new. — Marie M. Barteau, Brookhaven, Long Island.

Fearlessness in Pine Siskins: In April, 1950, at Stone Ridge in Ulster County, dandelions were blooming and seeding profusely on a small piece of lawn lying between a driveway and a long rectangular building. Semi-basement windows in this building were slightly above ground level. Finding the dandelion seeds attractive, several Pine Siskins frequented the area for a few days during the month and showed great reluctance to fly when approached. From inside the building the birds