



# Accidental bycatch of golden eagles: issues and avenues

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Québec 

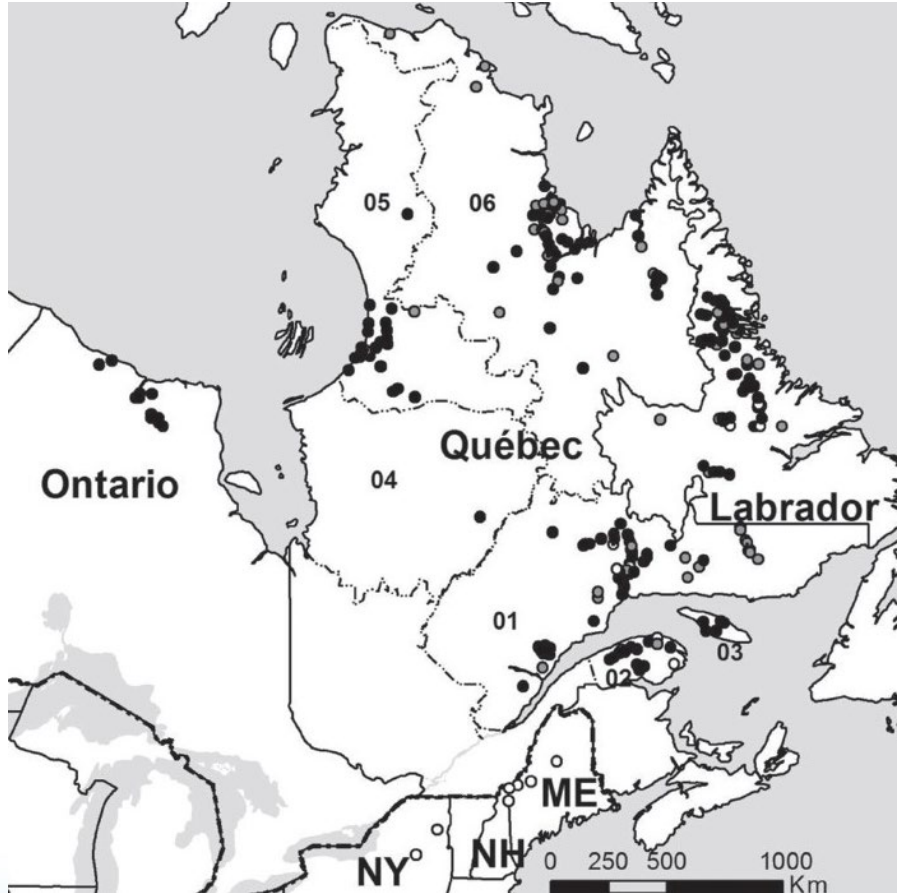


# The eastern Golden Eagle in brief

Species of conservation concern

Breeds in eastern Canada  
Winters in eastern USA

~190 known territories in Québec (CDPNQ)	Québec: ~2/3 of known nests of eastern Canada	> 5000 individuals in the eastern population
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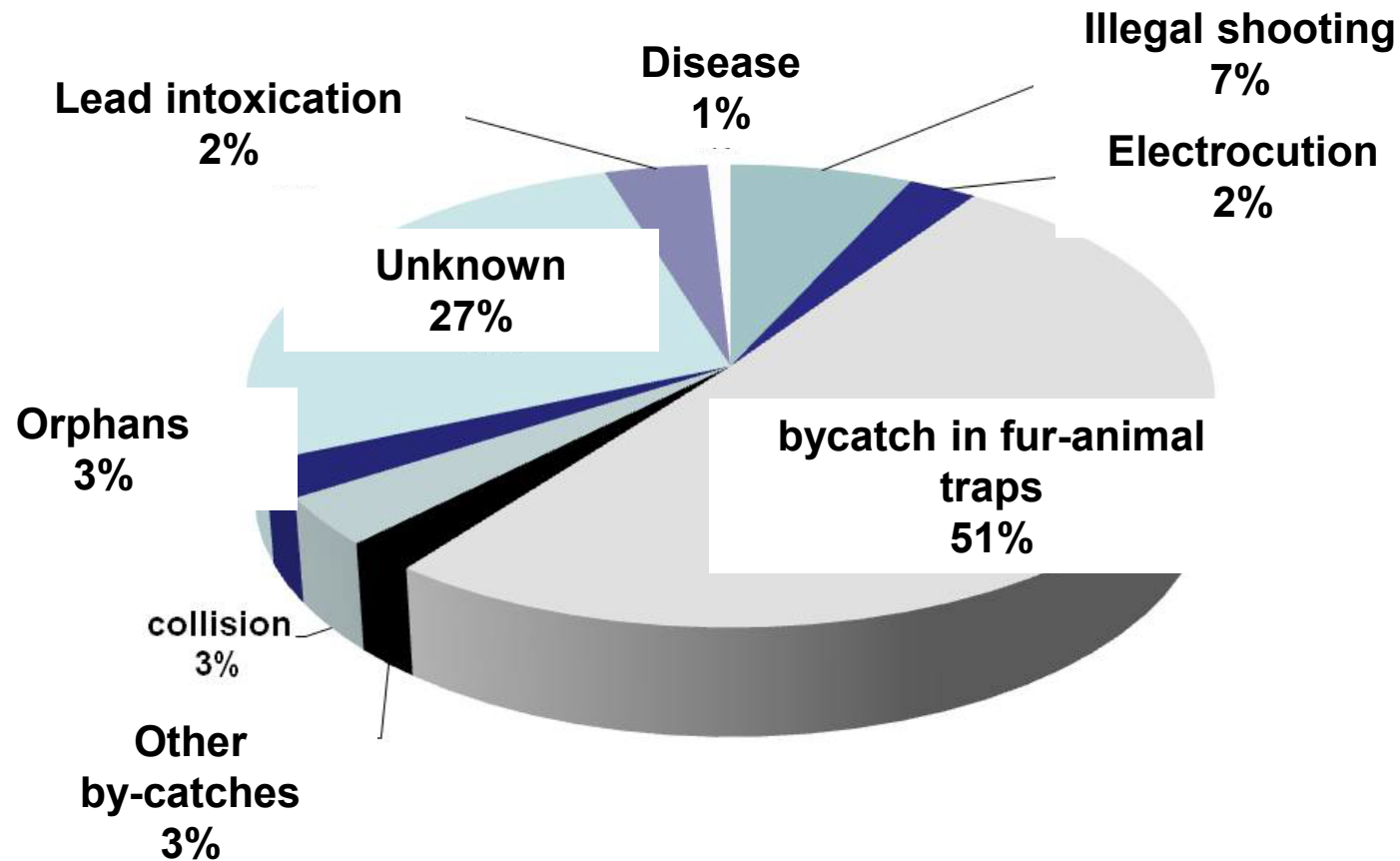
# Main anthropogenic threats

- Accidental trapping
- Poisoning
- Disturbance
- Collision
- Illegal shooting
- Habitat alteration



## Causes of admission to a provincial raptor rehabilitation program (UQROP)

- 232 golden and bald eagles from 1986 to 2012
- Declaration rate: 33%

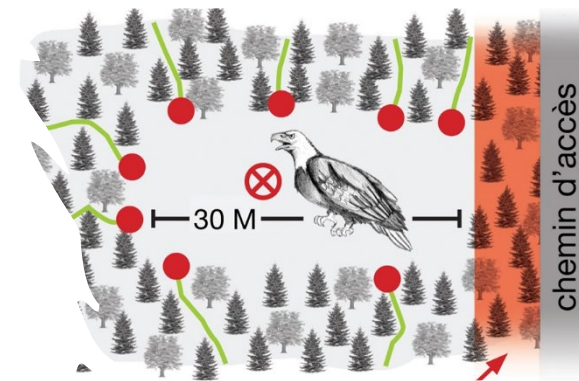


# How do bycatch occur?

- Opportunistic scavengers
- Mainly in fall



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# Population consequences

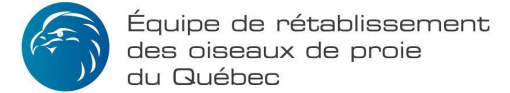
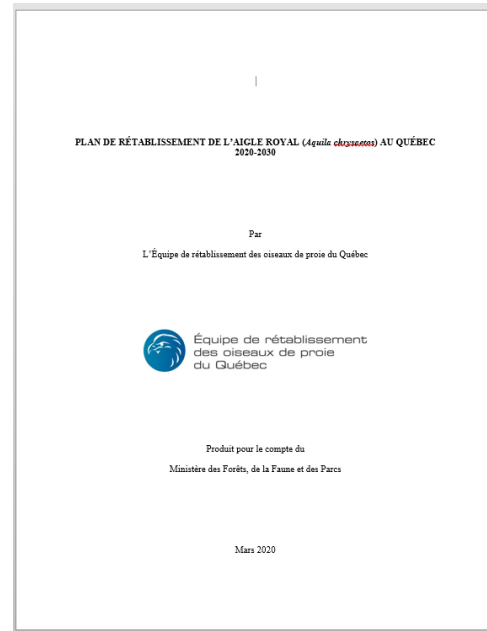
- From 1986 to 2012, 34 golden eagles were reported as incidentally caught:
  - 91% (31 individuals) were found dead on arrival.
  - 3 were alive.
  - 2 were released back into the wild.



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Québec 



## The recovery strategy in action

<b>Change</b>	<b>Educate</b>	<b>Regulate</b>	<b>Improve</b>
Change methods for safer practices	Educate trappers and raise awareness	Mandatory declaration	Improve data collection

## Avoiding accidental captures: a helping hand to the eagles... and you!

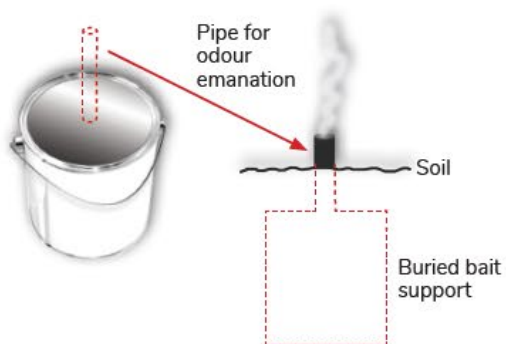
Accidentally capturing a golden or bald eagle (from now on referred to as eagles) is never pleasant. Moreover, these catches have a detrimental effect on Québec's eagle populations. Fortunately, you can easily avoid this unfortunate situation!

There are simple and effective ways to reduce the risk of accidental capture of eagles without compromising your fur-bearing animal trapping success.

## Use of appropriate bait support

Unlike canids who smell the bait, eagles spot them from the air thanks to their sharp sight. Thus, **placing bait in a buried container greatly reduces the risk of an eagle remaining trapped in a snare** while attempting to get to the food source. Adding a pipe that lets out odours will still effectively attract the targeted fur-bearing animals.

**Use of appropriate bait support**  
(e.g., new or recycled paint container)



## Why are eagles getting trapped?

In fall and winter, eagles adopt a diet composed mainly of carrion. They can detect badly hidden bait with ease, and then walk a long distance on the ground to gain access to it, making them particularly susceptible to being caught in snares.

## Responsible trappers for a sustainable activity!

Adopting trapping techniques to limit the accidental capture of birds of prey is a conscientious and sensible gesture for wildlife.

By trapping responsibly, you are helping to preserve endangered species protected by law and maintain healthy biodiversity so that future generations can take full advantage of this wealth!

### To learn more:

[Québec.ca/accidental-captures](https://quebec.ca/accidental-captures)

For more tips on how to avoid accidentally catching birds of prey, watch this online video (in French only): <https://youtu.be/7Jqo-qQ3UI0>



This document was created with the support of:



Cover photos:  
Golden eagle - Philippe Beaupré, MFFP  
Bald eagle - Luc Farrell  
Back photo: Frédérick Lelièvre



Bald eagle

Golden eagle

# ACCIDENTAL CAPTURE OF EAGLES:

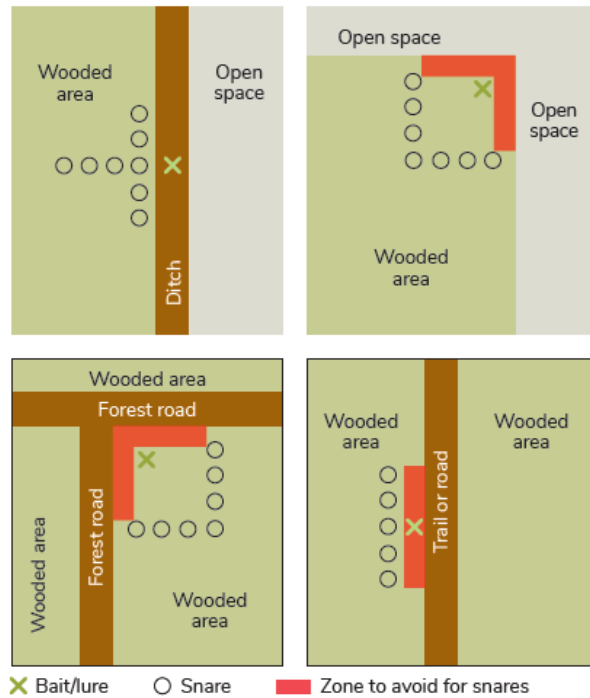
what to do to avoid them  
and how to act when they occur



## Safe disposal of snares

Eagles are very large birds that require landing and take-off space. They will always land in the most open environment and walk toward the bait. For this reason, avoid placing the snares between the bait and the open environment. Canids are particularly suspicious; they will turn around bait or lures before heading for them. The proposed arrangements of snares take this behaviour into account. These effective approaches will improve your trapping success while reducing the risk of accidental captures.

Snare groupings and examples of locations to avoid the capture of non-targeted species (birds of prey, pets):



It is still possible for an animal to dig up bait; an eagle will then be able to see it. By respecting the principle of the safe disposal of snares, you will significantly limit the risk of accidental captures in such a situation.

## What to do in case of an accidental capture?

If the bird is alive, remove it from the capture gear holding it. However, never release it on the spot, even if the bird has no apparent injuries. It may suffer from frostbite, internal injuries or physical exhaustion requiring care. Once the bird is safe, contact wildlife protection officers promptly. They will be able to take charge of the situation and ensure that the animal is sent to a rehabilitation centre so that it can be assessed and treated as needed.



Always having a transportation bin in your possession in case a bird of prey is accidentally captured is a great habit. Why not use a folding box that is easily portable or a bin to transport your equipment? This will keep it handy at all times.

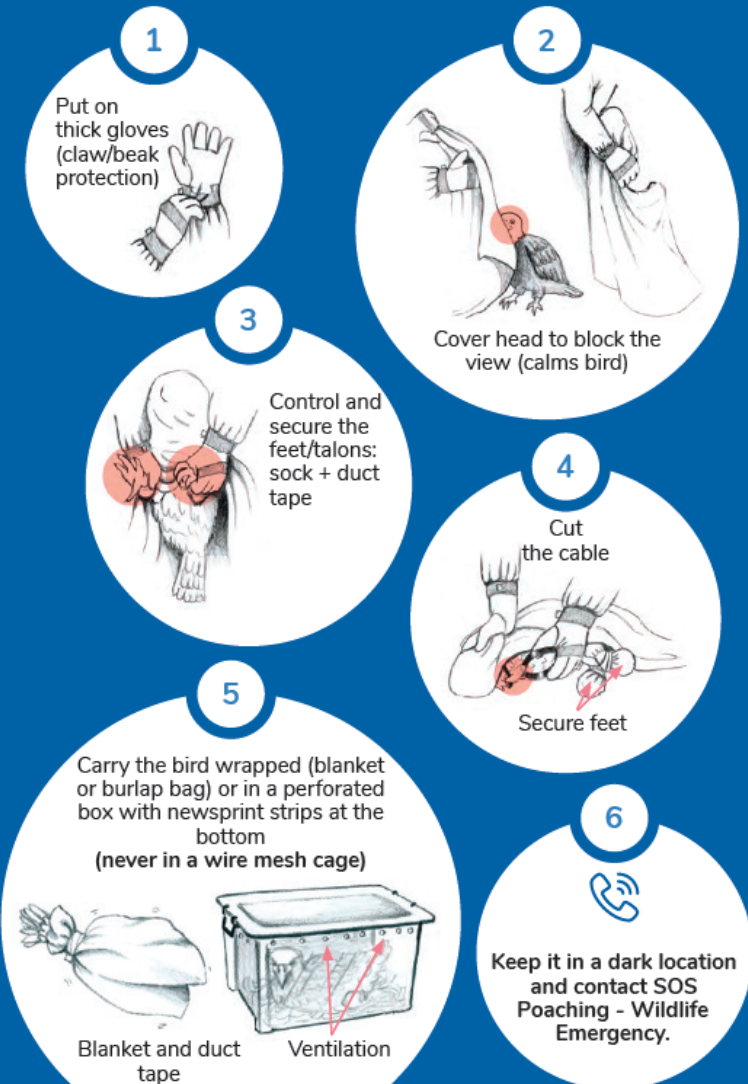


Photo: Philippe Beaupré, MFFP

The accidental capture of an eagle (dead or alive) must be reported to SOS Poaching - Wildlife Emergency by calling 1-800-463-2191 or emailing [centralesos@mffp.gouv.qc.ca](mailto:centralesos@mffp.gouv.qc.ca).

There is no penalty for disclosing the accidental capture of an animal that must be declared.

## When the bird is alive



# Educate trappers and raise awareness

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- Integrate safer practices in textbooks and courses
- Disseminate information:
  - distribute flyers
  - specialized journals
  - trapper events
  - Web diffusion



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# Mandatory declaration

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- Obligation to declare injured or dead birds of prey
- Art. 68 of the Act Respecting the Conservation and Development of Wildlife





## Next steps

- Continue education
- Updating the survey: 15 years after
- Evaluate the impacts on population demography
  - May allow calculation of compensation

# Acknowledgements



Équipe de rétablissement  
des oiseaux de proie  
du Québec

- Alexandre Anctil (MELCCFP, ÉROP)
- Guy Fitzgerald (UQROP, ÉROP)
- Gaétan Fournier (FTGQ)
- Thomas W. Wittig (USFWS)
- ÉROP members
- Members of the Eastern Golden Eagle Working Group