

Eagles and trapping: how to avoid incidental catches



Context

The golden and bald eagles are the two largest species of birds of prey in Quebec. Due to their position in the food chain and their relative fragility to certain types of human interventions, **each individual loss is likely to affect the populations of these raptors**. In Quebec, they are listed as threatened or vulnerable species, and thus require special attention. For this reason, trappers are asked to contribute actively to their recovery.

How to recognize them

We can easily identify an adult bald eagle by its white head and tail, contrasting with the rest of his dark brown body, and its yellow beak and legs. The adult golden eagle is entirely dark brown, with a golden nape and crown. Immatures of both species can easily be confused. Up close, the golden eagle can be differentiated from the bald eagle as both immatures and adults



have their legs covered with feathers down to the toes (see illustration on the following page).

Mortality causes

Several causes of death in eagles are human-related. However, the real impacts of some of those causes on their populations are difficult to measure due to lack of data (e.g., lead poisoning, shooting). Other causes are better documented, especially as more eagles are reported to authorities. It is the case of death due to collisions (vehicles, wind turbines, buildings) as well

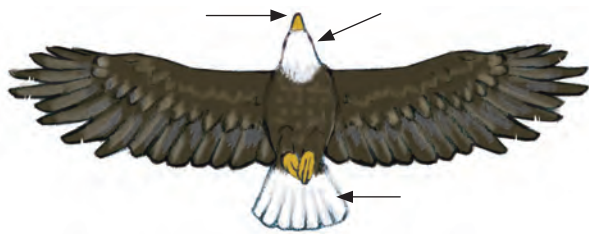
as **incidental catches by trappers**. Notice that **the latter can easily be avoided**. The adoption of trapping methods advocated in this document is advised to prevent this kind of situation.

It is imperative to adopt better trapping practices throughout the province of Quebec, especially in areas of known risk.

→ : identification criteria



common raven



bald eagle



golden eagle

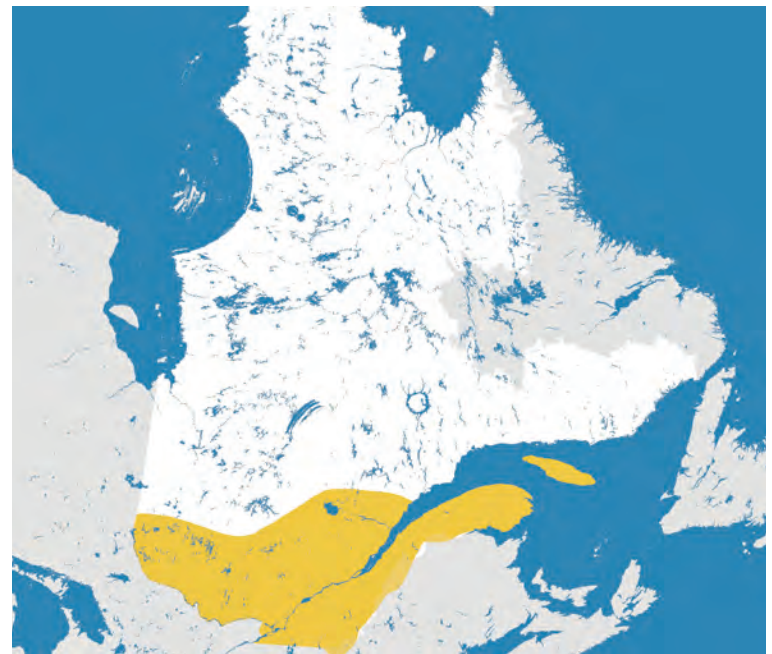


bald eagle

golden eagle

How can trappers contribute to the recovery of eagle populations

Due to their presence and knowledge of the territory, trappers can help detecting the presence of these birds and their nesting sites. Trappers may also contribute to the recovery of eagle populations by adapting their trapping methods to avoid incidental catches.



Areas of known risk

Problematics

Eagles are primarily scavengers during fall and winter. They feed on various carcasses. This diet makes them particularly vulnerable to trapping since **they hunt by sight and are attracted to poorly concealed baits**. Eagles can walk on the ground over long distances to access bait.



Solutions

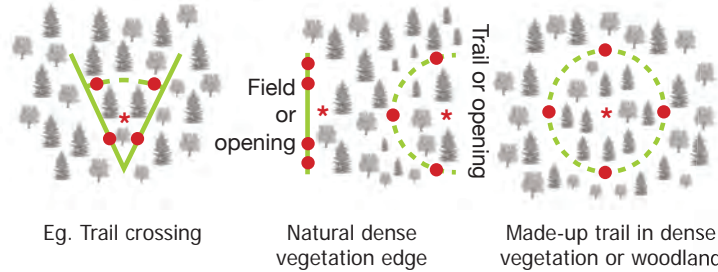
TRAIL SET (WITHOUT BAIT)



Use of trail sets (no bait)

SNARE SET WITH ENCLOSED BAIT AND LURE

VICO approach and its variants



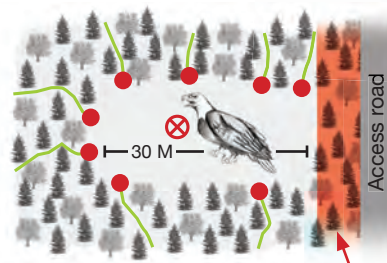
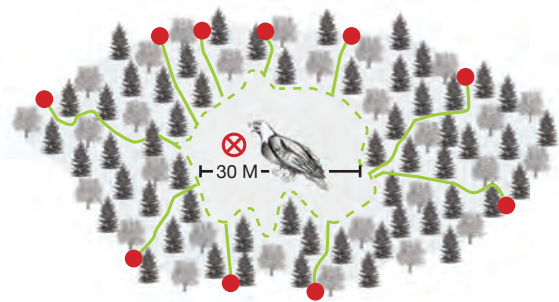
Eg. Trail crossing

Natural dense vegetation edge

Made-up trail in dense vegetation or woodland

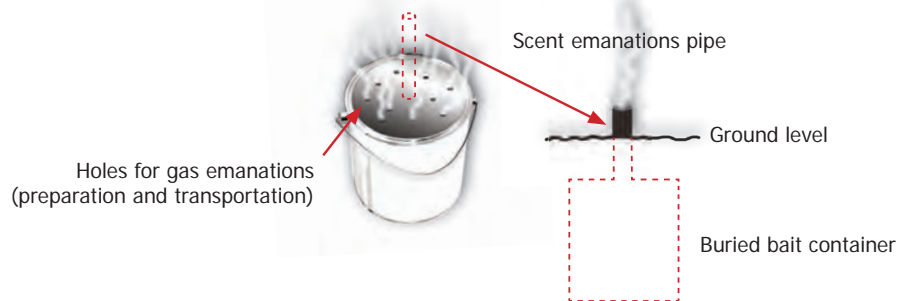
Use of snare sets with lure and small-sized baits (1 lb./0.5 kg) hidden inside a container (plastic pail with holes and lid). **Make sure that the bait cannot be taken out of container.**

BAIT STATION WITH ENCLOSED BAIT



No snare set in this area

Use of a adapted bait container (eg. Steel bucket with lid)



The open area must allow the birds of prey to easily land and take off close to the bait (if bait is visible).



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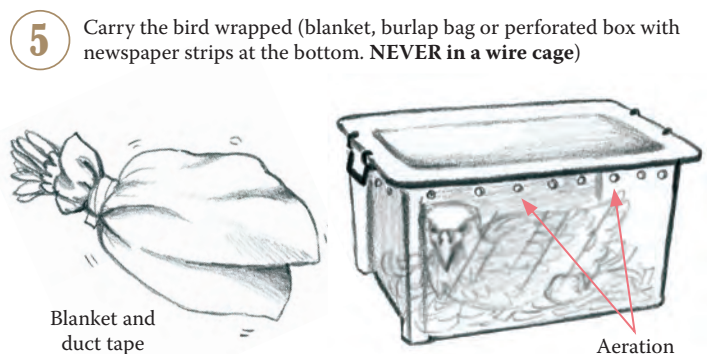
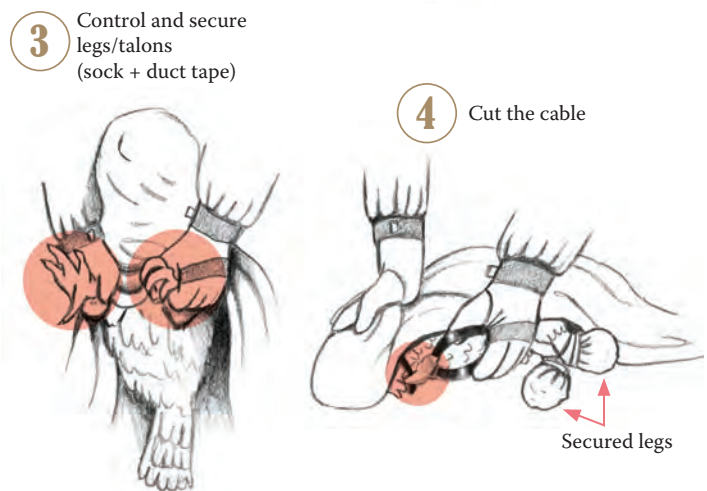
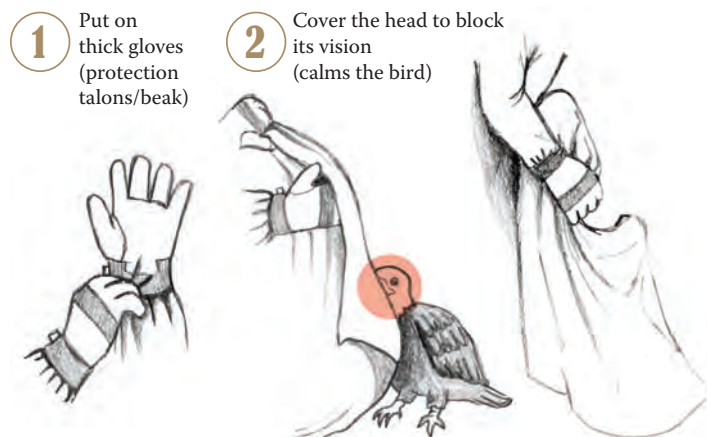
LEGEND : * Attractant : (lure) + (small size bait hidden close to the ground in a bait container)

● Position of neck snares ⊗ Buried bait container - - - Hand made trail — Existing trail or dense vegetation edge

Dos and Don'ts in case of an incidental catch

If the bird is alive, you must remove it from the trap. However, do not release it right away, even if the bird has no apparent injuries. It may suffer from frostbite, internal injuries or physical exhaustion that requires care.

When the bird is alive



- 6**
- Keep it in a dark place
 - Contact wildlife conservation officers (1-800-463-2191). The bird will be sent to UQROP for rehabilitation purposes.

Your involvement can make a difference

By declaring a nesting site, an incidental catch or taking the necessary steps to avoid them, you are helping to protect eagles and other birds of prey. **Remember that the incidental catch of an eagle (dead or alive) must be reported to a wildlife conservation officer.** The mandatory disclosure of an accidental capture of an animal/bird, under the Act, does not entail any sanction.

Useful references

Fournier, G. 2010. *Piégeage et gestion des canidés* (PIGEC), Programme d'Éducation en Sécurité et en Conservation de la Faune (PESCOF). Fédération des Trappeurs Gestionnaires du Québec (FTGQ). 159 pp.

Fournier, G. and Canac-Marquis, P. 2014. Best Trapping Practices (snares/information sheet), www.ftgq.qc.ca, www.mffp.gouv.qc.ca or www.fur.ca

For more information

www.ftgq.qc.ca  www.mffp.gouv.qc.ca  www.uqrop.qc.ca

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Research and text
Gaétan Fournier (MFFP)

Design and illustrations
Mélinda Morissette (FTGQ)

Expert committee
Guy Fitzgerald (UQROP)
Antoine St-Louis (MFFP)
Philippe Tambourgi (FTGQ)
Gaétan Fournier (MFFP)
Alain Forest (MFFP)

Collaboration
Pierre Canac-Marquis (IFC)
Philippe Beaupré (MFFP)

Translation
Nancy Dion
Serge Larivière



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