



*Southwest Wildlife Foundation of Utah  
Wildlife Ambassador Biography*

**Scout**

*with timestamps of accompanying video*

**Hatch Date (0:34 - 1:01)**

It would have been February 2003. Scout is from the wild so we don't have exact hatch date. Probably would have been in the end of February about 2003.

**License Date (1:01 - 1:23)**

Scout became a member of our organization on April 13th, 2006.

**Common Name (1:23 - 1:54)**

His common name is a Golden Eagle.

You can see he's a big brown bird. He actually gets the name from the color on the back of his head. Beautiful golden colored feathers. The bald eagle has the white head the golden eagle has the golden colored feathers on the back of its head.

So that's where they get the name Golden from.



### Scientific Name (1:54 - 2:40)

His scientific name is *Aquila*.

Which is basically the Golden Eagle. The Golden Eagle is the world eagle. Where the Bald Eagle is exclusively a North American Eagle, the Golden Eagle is found worldwide. Not in Antarctica, but almost everywhere else. We have Golden Eagle and Golden Eagle subspecies. We have subspecies in Africa and Australia through Europe and Asia and down into South America. So this is truly the International World Eagle.

### Group (2:40 - 2:59)

The larger group for all of these birds are called *raptors*.

They are the descendants of the avian dinosaurs. If you ever want to see a dinosaur, there he is, he's just a modern version.

### Weight (2:59 - 3:32)

He's a very large male. The average male Golden Eagle starts off at about 5 pounds and will go up to about 9 pounds. A female Golden Eagle will start at about 9 pounds and go up about 13 or 14 pounds in weight.

This is a male and he is 8 pounds, so he's on the large side of a male Golden Eagle.



### **Wingspan (3:32 - 3:50)**

His wingspan is a good six feet.

### **Diet (3:50 - 4:30)**

Primarily mammals. They will eat some larger birds but primarily mammals and some reptiles as well in the wild.

Scout eats primarily rats, mice, quail, pigeons and rabbits. We try to match his diet as close to a natural diet as we possibly can.

### **Activities (4:30 - 6:42)**

Scout is one of our Wildlife Ambassadors. He and I travel throughout the Western United States doing school programs and scout programs, Eagle Courts of Honors and community events educating people about Eagles and how beneficial they are within the ecosystem.

He is also, not only a wildlife ambassador, but he's also one of my falconry birds. During the hunting season, which is September through February, he and I go out and he flies free. He goes thousands of feet in the sky. Flies with the wild eagles and he follows me as I flush out jack rabbits for him to catch.

So he gets to fly like an eagle, hunt like an eagle and still be available for our wildlife programs. He has a pretty busy life.



He does love to go out and do our hunting together. He loves to soar. He's a bit unique in that he really seems to enjoy doing our educational programs. He and I have been doing this for a very long time and he's actually the star of the show. I think he knows that.

Whenever we're doing a program together, he likes to tease me. They are so intelligent. He'll reach up and steal my glasses and throw them out into the audience. He'll take a button and rip it off my shirt and spit it out on the floor. He likes to tease. He thinks that's very very funny. In fact, when we're doing these videos and we have no audience, he behaves himself pretty well because he doesn't see anybody to show off for. But when he's in a crowd, he does get silly.



## Temperament & Personality (6:42 - 8:55)

A Golden Eagle, if handled appropriately, is by far the most intelligent, the most personable, the most patient, the most wonderful raptor to handle on the planet.

If handled inappropriately, this is an eight pound animal that will put you in the hospital on a regular basis. Because of their tremendous intelligence, you never ever want to offend your eagle. They will never forgive and they will never forget.

They have the tools -- look at those feet. There's 600 pounds per square inch of crushing power in those feet and talons of four inches plus long. Those talons are strong enough to literally crush the small bones of my hand. They can be dangerous to work with.

But like I said, if you handle them appropriately, they're just a sheer joy. Scout here, fortunately, we've handled him appropriately and he is a very very dear friend. Every morning he...he lives out in his chamber outside...and every morning as soon as I get up, I hear him calling for me. I have to walk out to his chamber and talk to him and give him a big hug and tell him he's a good boy before I start my day and start feeding and watering everybody. He needs his recognition that we're buddies.

So yes, their personality is truly remarkable when you're working with an eagle, especially if you've handled them appropriately.



## Story of Arrival (8:55 - 12:35)

It's a bit of a sad story and a happy story. My previous eagle, Bud, and I were together for 16 years. He was bitten by a mosquito and died of West Nile Virus. After Bud passed away it was incredibly heartbreaking, he was a very very dear friend. He was my falconry bird and my wildlife ambassador.

After we lost Bud, I got a phone call from the US fish and wildlife service. There was a farmer up in Wyoming that was having problems with an eagle and thought that the eagle was killing his livestock. To be honest with you, that's really not true. An eagle is capable of carrying one third of his body weight into flight. He's not going to fly off with cows or sheep or goats or anything else. They are primarily a scavenger. The farmer drives up and sees the eagle eating on a dead sheep or a dead lamb and the farmer thinks it was the eagle who killed it when the eagle is just a scavenger cleaning it up.

Anyway, the farmer wanted the eagle gone. So the fish and wildlife service called me and said we have this eagle depredation situation, can you get up to Wyoming and rescue that eagle. I grabbed my wife and we ran up to Wyoming. We trapped Scout to get him out of the situation. The agreement is that he never returns to Wyoming. In most situations like that the eagle ends up in a zoo, in a cage for the rest of its life. That is because if you release them, they migrate right back where they learn to fly. He'd go right back to Wyoming.

But with what I do, he gets to be a falconry bird. He gets to fly free and to hunt.



So we went to Wyoming, it took me about a week to trap him, and as soon as we caught him, we got him released from the trap, got him in his transport box and headed for Utah. We got him home, we made sure he was medically fine, and those kinds of things and then it was time to have a falconer's wake.

A wake is a very traditional way to convince a wild animal that I'm a nice guy. What a wake is is basically, I went downstairs in my basement where it's dark and it's cool and it's quiet. We had a little tiny television, we turned on down there. I sat down there with my eagle for three days and three nights. For those three days and three nights, we just sat quietly. I had food for him and he finally settled down.

When he started to eat, we noticed that's when he overcame a great deal of his fear of me and it was time to put him out in his chamber. The wake kind of bonds the falconer and the bird together.

That was our first introduction.



### **Treats (12:35 - 13:47)**

His favorite thing is jack rabbit. But he likes, like I said, quail and pigeons and rats and mice, all of that kind of stuff too. As long as it's a natural diet, very similar to what they'd eat in the wild, they are quite happy.

When he's out hunting, his motivation is food. So when he's out hunting, if I want to call him back to me, I always have food in mostly bite size portions. For him, bite sized portions is a mouse. For a hawk and a falcon, a bite size portion is what we call a tidbit. We'll always bring food for him and so he knows that if he flies back and lands on my glove he's going to get fed. That's that really is the reason he comes back. Not because he likes me, even though he truly does. That's not why he comes back. He comes back because he exploits me. I make his life easier and he knows that if he doesn't catch a rabbit he'll get fed anyway.

### **Life Expectancy (13:47 - 14:39)**

Life expectancy with an eagle is remarkably long. In the wild about twenty years would be considered an average life expectancy for a golden eagle.

In captivity, we can double that, we can go up to 40 years, if all goes well.

So if all goes well with Scout here, I will be in my 90's and still trying to work with an eagle.