




Ontario's Vultures & Eagles – Flight Behaviour and Silhouettes

Created by Catherine Manschot © NPH, 2021

Vulture/Eagle	Flight Behaviour		Soar	Glide
Turkey Vulture TV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large vulture with long and broad wings • Seen solo and in groups • Amazing ability to soar, and flaps infrequently • Habitually rocks and teeters side to side in flight • At certain angles, the head seems to disappear 	In a Soar: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head on, wings are in a pronounced dihedral • From below, broad wings, deeply slotted outer primaries, shortish tail, and very small head 	In a Glide: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head on, wings form a modified dihedral (flattened from the wrist to tips) • From below, wrists are forward 	
Black Vulture BV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medium-sized vulture with moderately long, broad wings • Amazing ability to soar, but will intermittently flap more often than a TV • BV is more stable and does not exhibit tippy buoyancy of TV • Wingbeats are quick, choppy, giving a hurried quality to them • At certain angles, the tail seems to disappear 	In a Soar: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head on, wings are flat or in a slight dihedral 	In a Glide: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head on, wings are mostly flat or very slightly arched • From below, wrists are forward 	
Bald Eagle BE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large, with long, broad wings • Head projects with near equal length to the tail, head and beak are larger than a GE • Slow, powerful, even, and stiff wingbeats, ending on the downstroke • Adept at powered flight, even in poor weather conditions 	In a Soar: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From below, wings look long and wide, "plank-like" • Head on, wings are flat • Makes wide and slow turns, and hardly ever needs to flap 	In a Glide: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From below, wings project forward from the wrist • Head on, wings are flat, with drooped tips 	
Golden Eagle GE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large, with long, broad wings • Head projection is half of the tail projection, head and beak are smaller than a BE • Wingbeats are slow, even, and deliberate, more shallow than a BE, and ends on an upstroke 	In a Soar: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From below, GE exhibits a secondary "bulge" (vs the BE) and forms a "notch" where it meets the tail • Head on, wings are in a slight dihedral 	In a Glide: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From below, wrists are thrust forward • Head on, wings are in a modified dihedral or somewhat flat • Prefers gliding to powered flight, more so than BE 	