

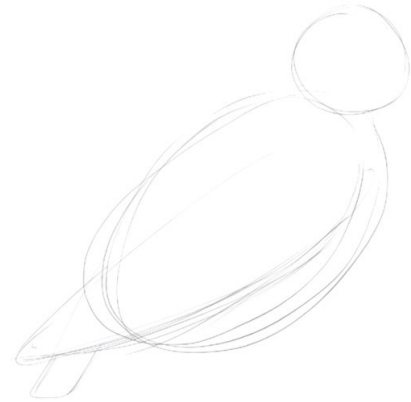
How to Draw a Bald Eagle with David Sibley



① Start with an oval for the body, in this case a relatively large oval angled up at about 45 degrees above horizontal. Then add a smaller circle on top of the body and starting to roll off the right side, not quite balanced. In general large birds like eagles have relatively small heads, small birds like chickadees have large heads relative to their bodies.



③ Now make some light lines as guides around the bill. Start with a straight line from the middle of the right side of the head, horizontal or angled very slightly down. Then another line from the top of the head, angled down slightly more than the first line. Connect these with a vertical line to form a nearly rectangular shape outlining the bill. Now draw a vertical line from the right side of the body up to the bill. Place the small eye along this line and just below the top of the bill.



② For the folded wing, a long narrow oval extends from just below the head and out behind the body, and a short rectangular tail sticks out just below the wing.



④ Now add details to the outline of the bill, using your guide lines. The top and bottom edges of the bill are nearly straight, and the tip curves down to a strong hook. The lower mandible is much thinner than the upper. Create the smooth outline of the head and body, from the chin down to a slight bulge on the chest, then curving around to shaggy feathers on the belly. The forehead feathers begin about one-third of the way between the eye and the bill tip, rising slightly to the crown, then curving down the back of the head. The back is nearly straight, and you should extend that line beyond the oval of the body, about halfway to the wingtip.



5 Going back to details around the head, add a short straight line over the eye, then angling up to the base of the bill. Another line below the eye curves back to a point, then forward to the bill. Draw a border of shaggy feathers separating the white head from the dark body.



7 Add details of feathers in the secondaries and coverts. Notice that the smaller coverts overlap in a different direction than the larger coverts and secondaries, so their edges are at a different angle. Add the pointed wingtip formed by the longest feathers (the primaries) on the outer wing.



9 The whole body and wings are dark brown, with white head and tail. I've only colored the belly, and a little bit of the back, with some lines to suggest the shaggy feathers of the back of the head and some shading under the chin.



6 Adding detail to the wings, continue the line from the back approximately horizontal to the right/lower edge of the wing. These are the big secondary feathers. Then draw a series of progressively smaller curved lines up toward the front of the wing, closer to the head. These are the rows of wing coverts.



8 Find the balance point and place the feet there. Eagles have short and thick legs, with large toes (one in back and three in front) and very long curved talons.

Have fun!

Drawings by David Sibley