

Bass Lake Bald Eagles Nesting History

“Pine Point” Nest Chronology

Nest Location (approx.)	Tree Type	Year	Nesting Outcome
Southeast side of Bass Lake, opposite Pine Point	Ponderosa Pine (Tree started to die at the top in early 2016)	2008	Successful, fledged two eaglets
		2009	Successful, fledged two eaglets
		2010	Successful, fledged two eaglets
		2011	Successful, fledged two eaglets
		2012	Successful, fledged two eaglets
		2013	Successful, fledged two eaglets
		2014	Successful, fledged two eaglets
		2015	Successful, fledged two eaglets
	Ponderosa Pine (Green tree North of the 2008 nest tree)	2016	Successful, fledged two eaglets from a new nest site north of the old one
		2017	Successful, fledged two eaglets
		2018	Successful, fledged two eaglets
		2019	Unsuccessful, pair had two young in February; Female/Adult electrocuted on power pole in March; Male/Adult brooding young until another female/adult arrived in the territory; No nestlings observed 4 days after original female/adult was electrocuted; Adult pair-bonding in territory as of June.
		2020	Unsuccessful, Territory occupied by pair
		2021	Unsuccessful, Territory occupied by pair
		2022	Unsuccessful, Territory occupied by pair. Nest in good condition. Tree remains green.
2023			

“The Forks” Nest Chronology

Nest Location (approx.)	Tree Type	Year	Nesting Outcome
Southwestern side of Bass Lake, Goat Mountain Trail area near The Forks Campground	Ponderosa Pine Nest A	1998	Established Nesting Territory
		1999	Successful, fledged one eaglet
		2000	Successful, fledged two eaglets
		2001	Successful, fledged one eaglet
		2002	No Nesting Attempted*
		2003	Unsuccessful, nest collapsed
		2004	Successful, fledged two eaglets
		2005	Successful, fledged two eaglets
		2006	Successful, fledged two eaglets
		2007	Successful, fledged two eaglets
		2008	Successful, fledged two eaglets

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	Ponderosa Pine Nest B	2009	Successful, fledged one eaglet in new nest nearer to the lake
		2010	Successful, fledged two eaglets
		2011	Unsuccessful, nest collapsed (likely due to late season snowstorm in June)
		2012	Unsuccessful
	Ponderosa Pine Nest C	2013	Unsuccessful, created a new nest near Goat Mtn. Trail
	Ponderosa Pine Nest B	2014	Successful in nest near the lake across from the Pines Resort, fledged one eaglet
		2015	Unsuccessful, Pair not detected this season. Nest no longer intact or active. No attempt to rebuild nest observed.
	Ponderosa Pine Nest D (Tree died in 2017, No needles in 2018)	2016	Successful, New nest built in 2016 near Goat Mtn. Trail, fledged one eaglet
	Ponderosa Pine Nest E	2017	Unsuccessful; Initial use of the nest, but not used for reproduction
		2018	Successful; fledged two eaglets
		2019	Successful; fledged two eaglets
		2020	Successful; fledged two eaglets
		2021	Unsuccessful; Nest blew out in February; Pair put minimum nesting material in a flat-topped Ponderosa pine on the ridgeline. Territory occupied.
	Ponderosa Pine Nest F (Near Goat mtn trail)	2022	Successful; fledged 3 eaglets. New nest in flat-topped, live, Ponderosa Pine near Goat Mountain trail.
		2023	

**2002: Original female bald eagle from Catalina Island (banded female Number 31) that had nested at Bass Lake from 1998 through 2001 passed away in 2002. The male eagle bonded with new female later in the season.*

“Marina View” Nest Chronology

Nest Location (approx.)	Tree Type	Year	Nesting Outcome
Southeast side of Bass Lake, Marina View Boat Launch Area	Ponderosa Pine (directly adjacent to road 274)	2022	Unsuccessful; Territory occupied by pair. Nest created in winter 2021 in a mid-sized, live, Ponderosa pine near Marina View boat launch.
		2023	

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Brief Life History of Bald Eagles

Habitat: Bald Eagles typically nest in forested areas adjacent to large bodies of water, staying away from heavily developed areas when possible. Bald Eagles are tolerant of human activity when feeding, and may congregate around fish processing plants, dumps, and below dams where fish concentrate. For perching, Bald Eagles prefer tall, mature coniferous or deciduous trees that afford a wide view of the surroundings. In winter, Bald Eagles can also be seen in dry, open uplands if there is access to open water for fishing.

Food: Fish of many kinds constitute the centerpiece of the Bald Eagle diet (common examples include salmon, herring, shad, and catfish), but these birds eat a wide variety of foods depending on what's available. They eat birds, reptiles, amphibians, invertebrates such as crabs, and mammals including rabbits and muskrats. They take their prey live, fresh, or as carrion. Bald Eagles sometimes gorge, ingesting a large amount of food and digesting it over several days. They can also survive fasting for many days, even weeks.

Nest Description: Bald Eagles build some of the largest of all bird nests—typically 5 to 6 feet in diameter and 2 to 4 feet tall, ranging in shape from cylindrical to conical to flat, depending on the supporting tree. Both sexes bring materials to the nest, but the female does most of the placement. They weave together sticks and fill in the cracks with softer material such as grass, moss, or cornstalks. The inside of the nest is lined first with lichen or other fine woody material, then with downy feathers and sometimes sprigs of greenery. Ground nests are built of whatever's available, such as kelp and driftwood near coastal shorelines. Nests can take up to three months to build, and may be reused (and added to) year after year.

Nest Placement: Bald Eagles nest in trees except in regions where only cliff faces or ground sites are available. They tend to use tall, sturdy conifers that protrude above the forest canopy, providing easy flight access and good visibility. In southern parts of their range, Bald Eagles may nest in deciduous trees, mangroves, and cactus. It's unknown whether the male or the female takes the lead in selecting a nest site. Nests are typically built near the trunk, high up in the tree but below the crown (unlike Osprey nests).

Nesting Facts: Clutch sizes for Bald Eagle nests range from 1–3 eggs, with only one brood per year. Eggs vary from 2.3–3.3 inches in length and 1.9-2.5 inches in width and are dull white,

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usually without markings. The incubation period lasts for 34–36 days, after which the nestlings stay in the nest for another 56–98 days. Upon hatching, nestlings are covered with light-gray down. Juvenile feathers including flight feathers and contour feathers usually begin emerging 25-27 days after hatching.

Life History and Behavior: Bald eagles reach sexual maturity at around four or five years of age. At that time, the eagle's energies become concentrated on the effort of finding a mate and raising offspring. Bald eagles mate for life, but when one dies, the survivor will not hesitate to accept a new mate.

During breeding season, both birds protect the nest territory from other eagles and predators. Immature Bald Eagles spend the first four years of their lives in nomadic exploration of vast territories and can fly hundreds of miles per day. Some young birds from Florida have wandered north as far as Michigan and birds from California have reached Alaska.

Bald Eagles can live a long time, with a longevity record of 28 years in the wild and 36 years in captivity. Bald Eagles occasionally hunt cooperatively, with one individual flushing prey towards another. Bald Eagles are powerful fliers—soaring, gliding, and flapping over long distances. In one of several spectacular courtship displays, a male and female fly high into the sky, lock talons, and cartwheel downward together, breaking off at the last instant to avoid crashing to earth.

Bald Eagles frequently harass birds including Ospreys and other eagles to steal their food, and occasionally do the same to mammals such as river or sea otters. On the ground, Bald Eagles walk in an awkward, rocking gait. Capable of floating, a Bald Eagle may use its wings to “row” over water too deep for wading. Though often solitary, Bald Eagles congregate by the scores or even the hundreds at communal roosts and feeding sites, particularly in winter. These groups can be boisterous, with birds jostling for position and bickering over prey.

During breeding season you may see Bald Eagles defending their territories from a variety of intruders, including raptors and ravens, coyotes and foxes. When feeding at carcasses, Bald Eagles may push Black and Turkey Vultures out of the way; other species including ravens, coyotes, bobcats, and dogs sometimes hold their own. Bald Eagles are often harassed or chased by their fellow raptors and by songbirds including blackbirds, crows, and flycatchers.

Conservation: The Bald Eagle's recovery is a spectacular conservation success story. Once abundant in North America, the species became rare in the mid-to-late 1900s—the victim of trapping, shooting, and poisoning as well as pesticide-caused reproductive failures. In 1978 the bird was listed for protection under the Endangered Species Act.

Since 1980, gentler treatment by humans, along with the banning of DDT (the bird's main pesticide threat) have led to a dramatic resurgence. By the late 1990s, breeding populations of Bald Eagles could be found throughout most of North America. In June 2007, the bird's recovery prompted its removal from the Endangered Species list. Continuing threats to Bald Eagle populations include lead poisoning from ammunition in hunter-shot prey, collisions

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with motor vehicles and stationary structures, and development-related destruction of shoreline nesting, perching, roosting and foraging habitats.

Phase	Activity	Sensitivity to Human Activity	Comments
I	Courtship and Nest Building	Most sensitive period; likely to respond negatively	Most critical time period. Disturbance is manifested in nest abandonment. Bald eagles in newly established territories are more prone to abandon nest sites.
II	Egg laying	Very sensitive period	Human activity of even limited duration may cause nest desertion and abandonment of territory for the nesting season.
III	Incubation and Hatching	Very sensitive period	Adults are less likely to abandon the nest near and after hatching. However, flushed adults leave eggs and young unattended; eggs are susceptible to cooling, loss of moisture, overheating, and predation; young are vulnerable to elements.
IV	Nestling period, 4 to 8 weeks	Moderately sensitive period	Likelihood of nest abandonment and vulnerability of the nestlings to elements gradually decreases. However, nestlings may miss feedings, which may affect their survival, or may prematurely leave the nest due to disruption,
V	Nestlings 8 weeks through fledging	Very sensitive period	Gaining flight capability, nestlings 8 weeks and older may flush from the nest prematurely due to disruption and die.

Data Sources:

- Buehler, D. A. 2000. Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*). In *The Birds of North America*, No. 564 (A. Poole and F. Gill, eds.). The Birds of North America, Inc., Philadelphia, PA.
- Dunne, P. 2006. *Pete Dunne's Essential Field Guide Companion*. Houghton Mifflin, New York.
- US Fish and Wildlife Service Bald Eagle Management Guidelines
http://www.fws.gov/northeast/EcologicalServices/eagle/guidelines/baea_nhstry_snstvtty.html