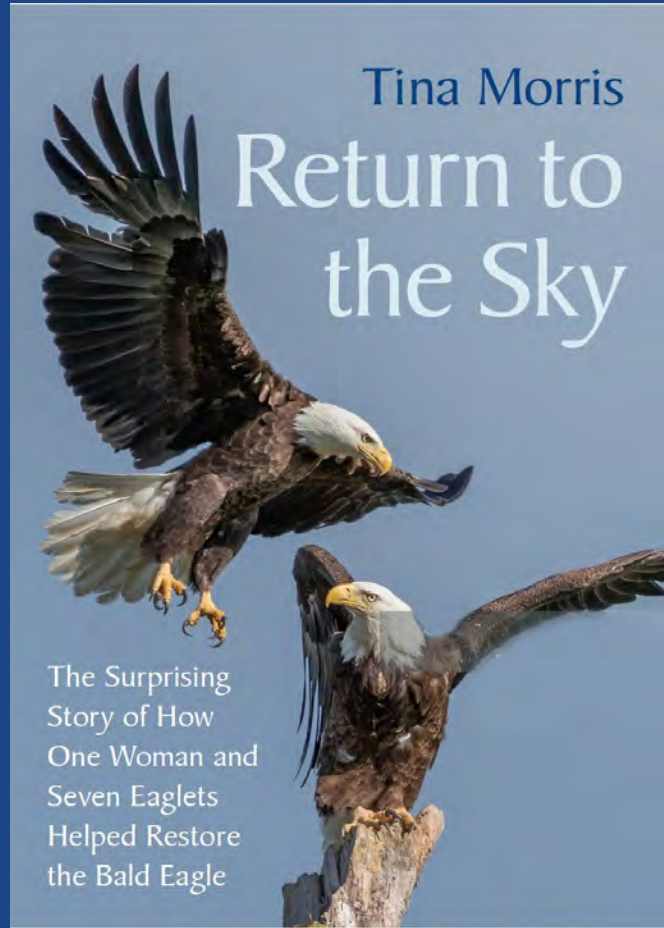


**Friends of
Merrymeeting Bay**

December 10, 2025





Getty Images

December 24, 2024

A Christmas Eve Surprise



Preston Cook

Recognition of the Bald Eagle as our National Bird



The Beginning



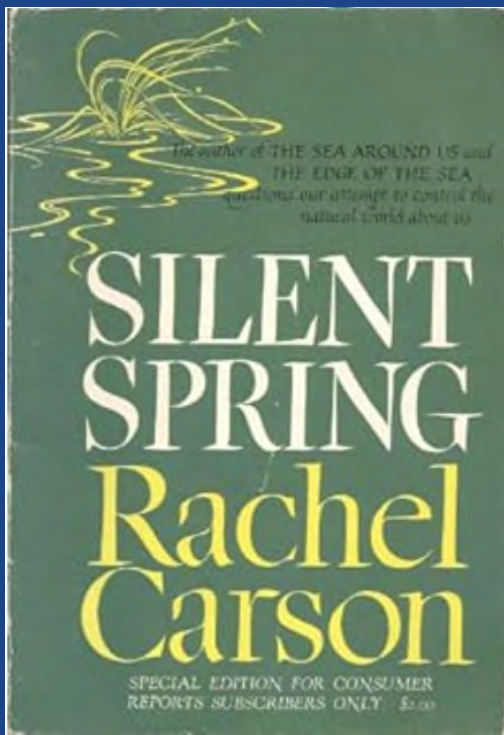


Cayuga Lake



Cornell University
Ithaca, New York

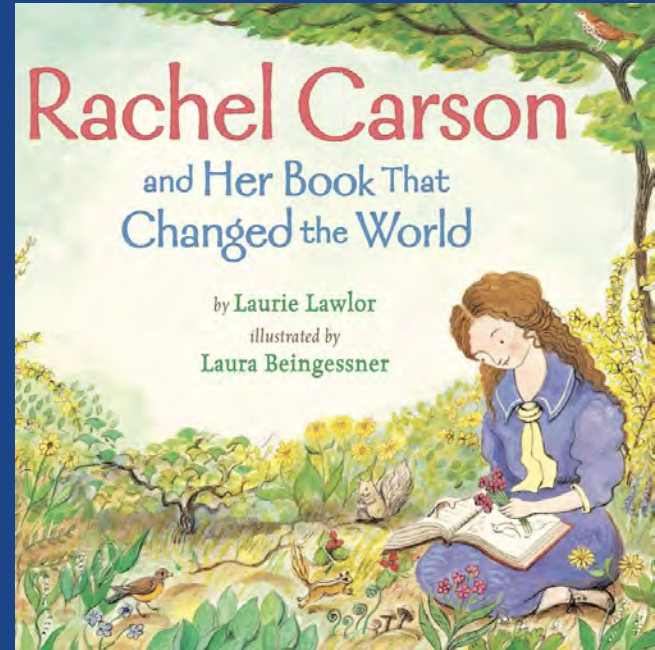




pub. 1962



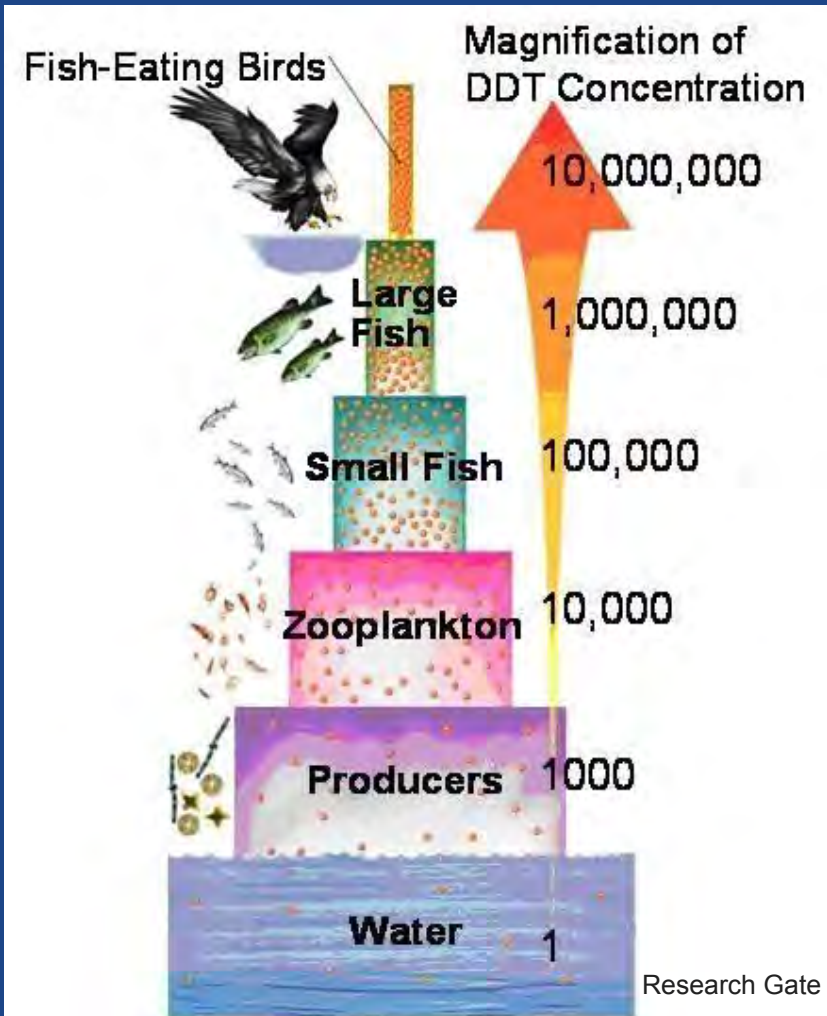
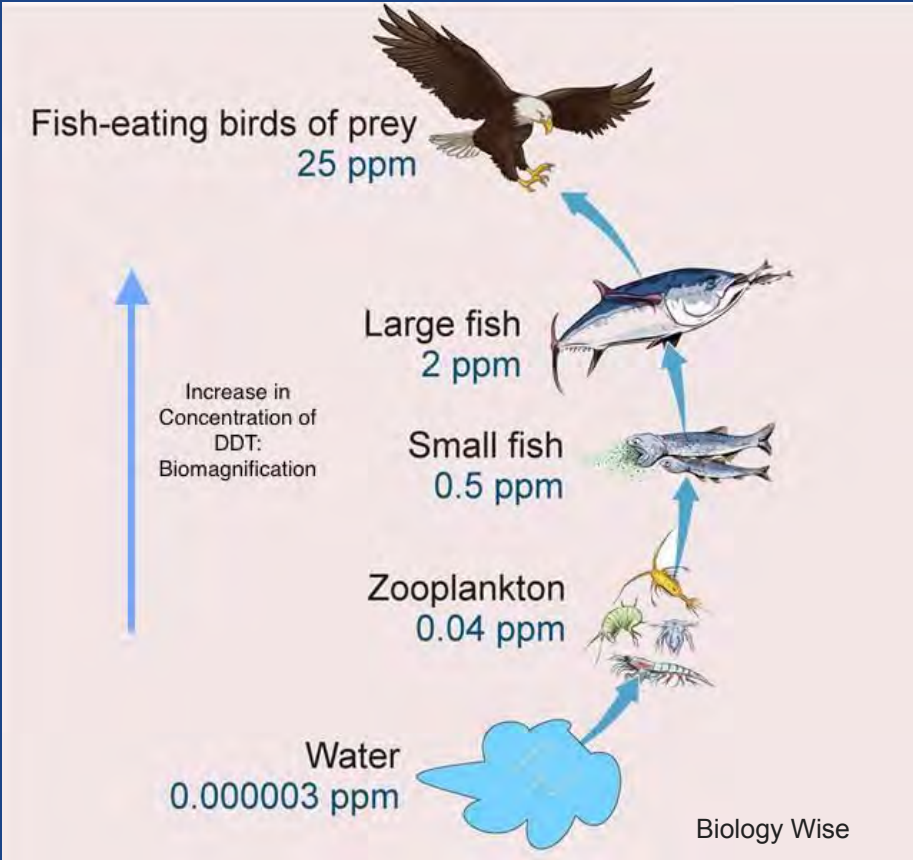
1907 - 1964





Effect of DDT on
osprey (*top*) and
peregrine (*bottom*)
eggs

Biomagnification





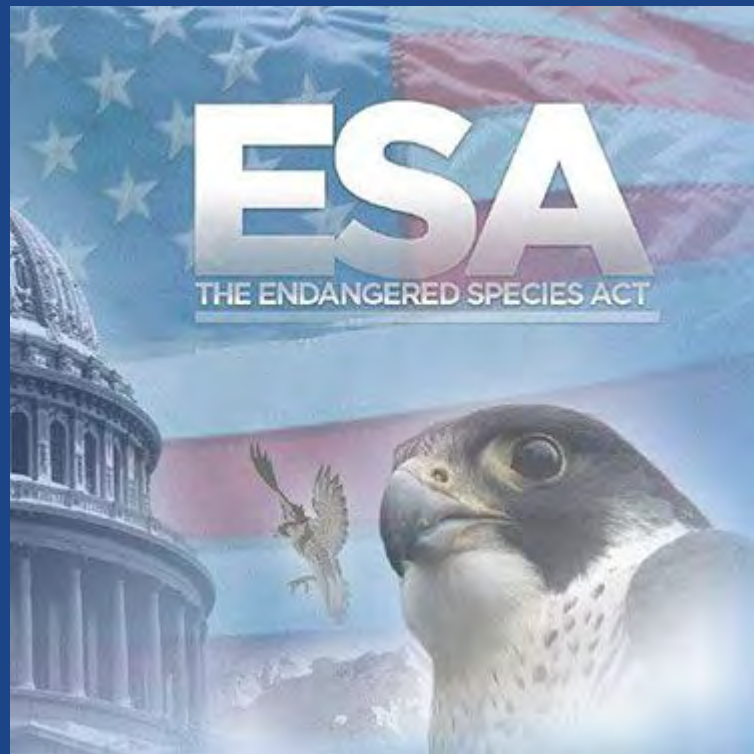
Founded in 1965
Madison, Wisconsin
Peregrine Conference
Organized by Joe Hickey



First Earth Day



1970



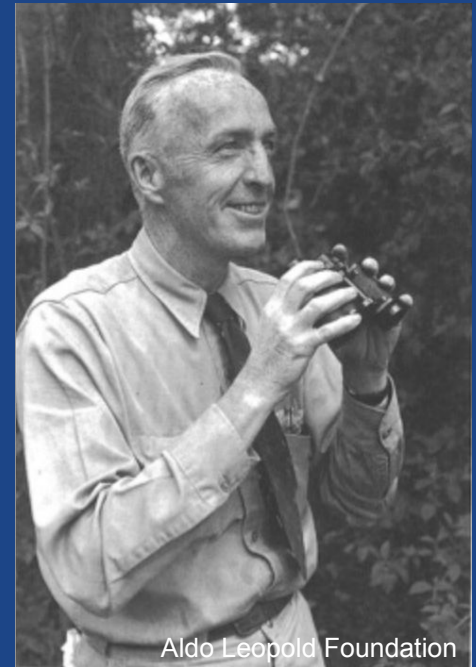
Endangered Species Act

1973



Banned DDT in **1972**

Key Peregrine Players



Tom Cade, Heinz Meng, and Joe Hickey (L to R)

Aldo Leopold Foundation



Peregrine Fund



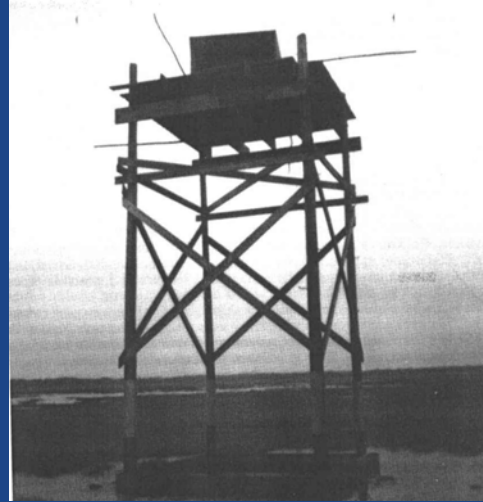
Peregrine Fund

Captive Breeding in Ithaca, NY



W.D. Smith

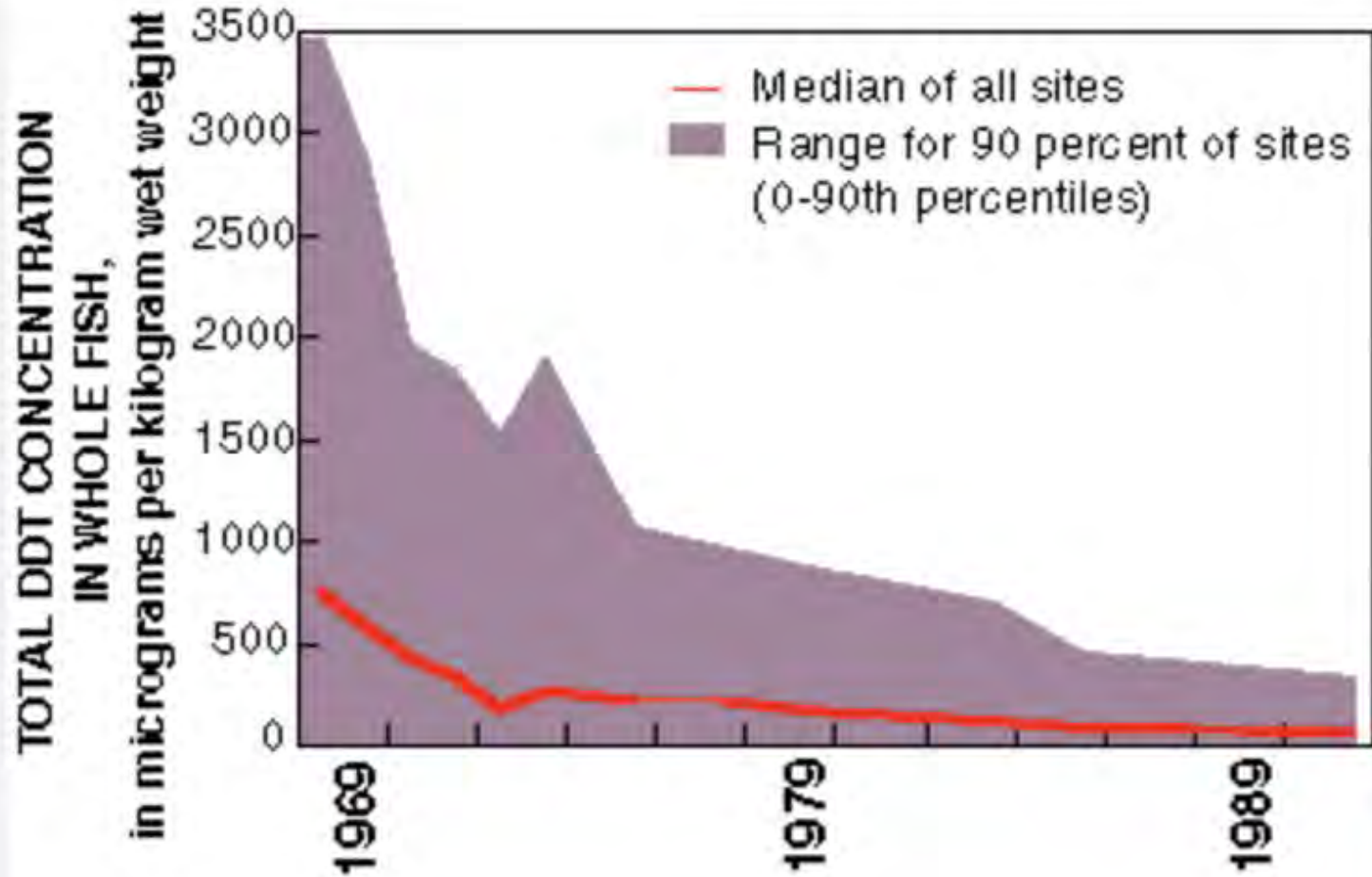
Hacking boxes for peregrines





1976
The Bicentennial



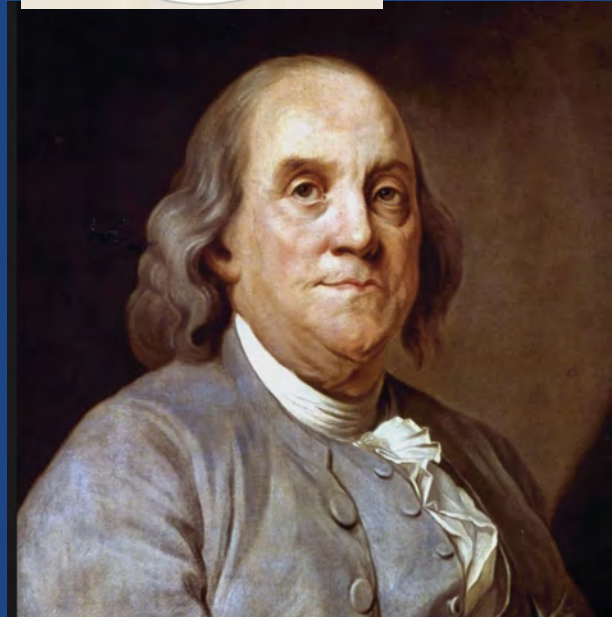




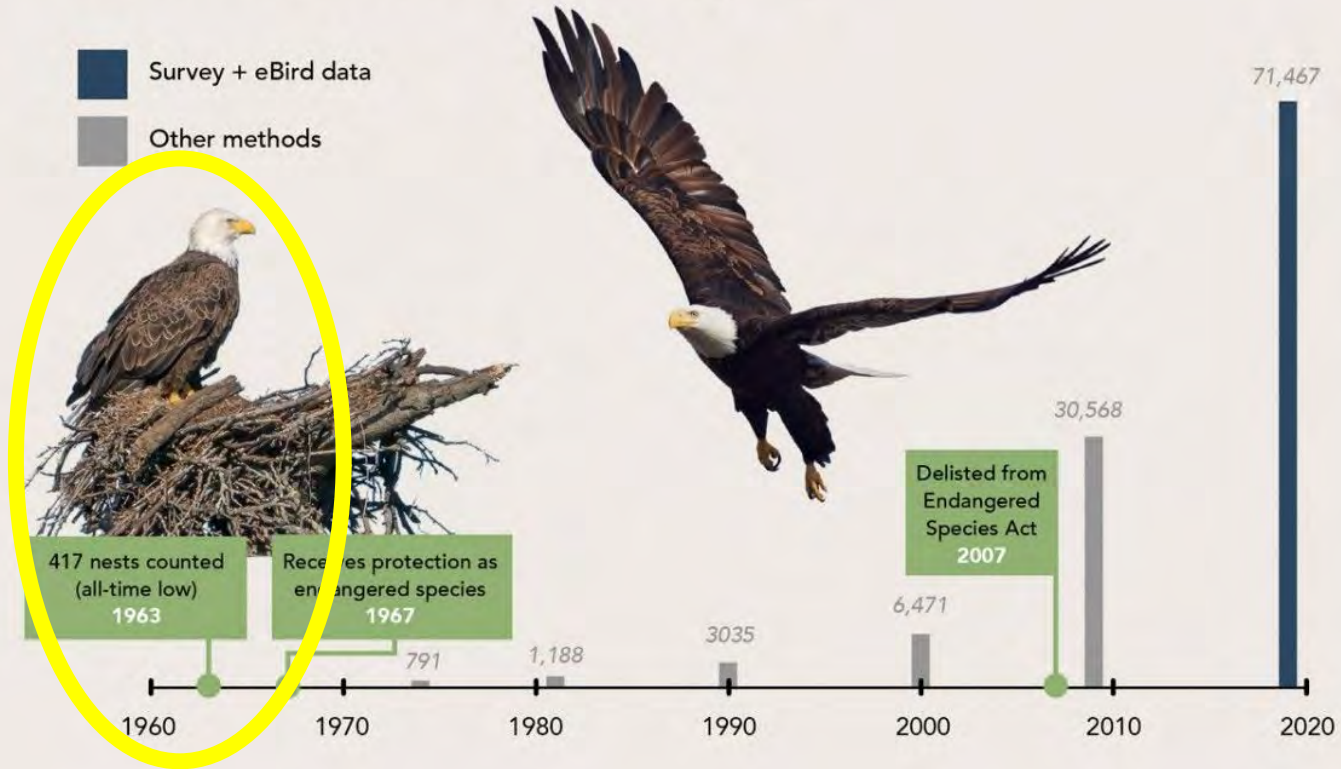
VS



Philadelphia Eagles



Number of nests with breeding pairs



Selecting a Site



What is Needed?

Food supply/Water access



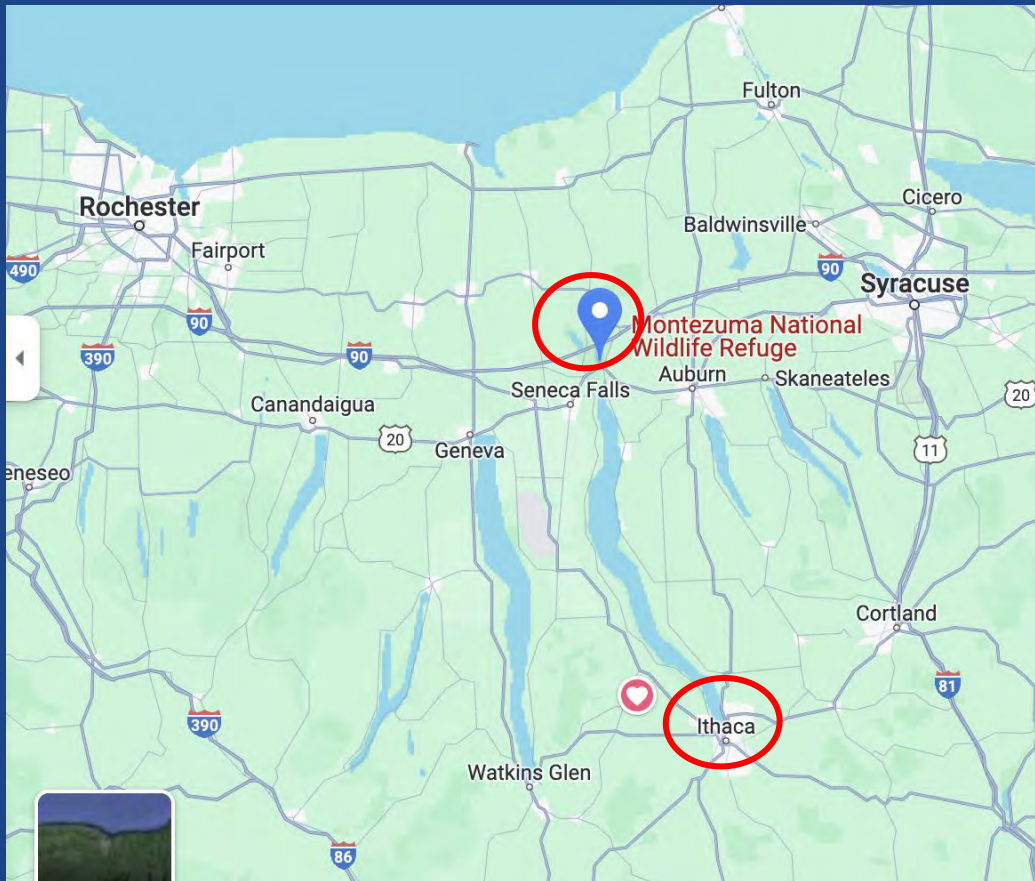


Privacy and Protection



Proximity to Cornell

$D = \sim 44 \text{ mi}$

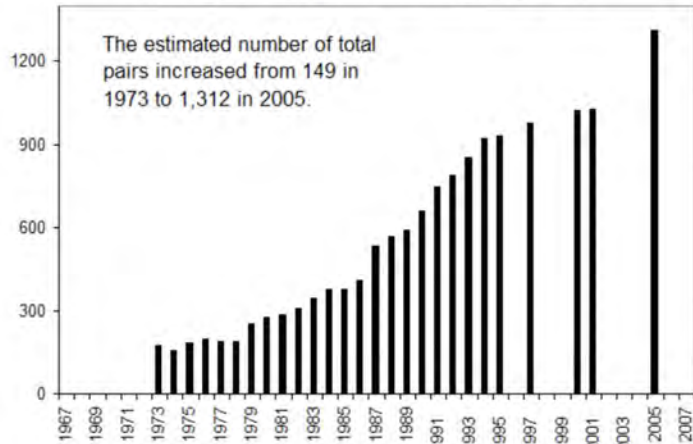


Nesting Habitat



Breeding Bald Eagles in Minnesota: 1967-2005

The estimated number of total pairs increased from 149 in 1973 to 1,312 in 2005.



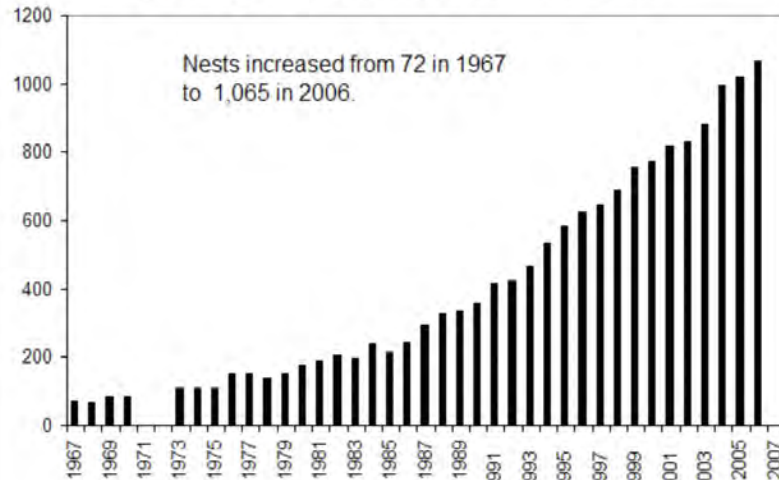
Center for Biological Diversity 6/07

← MN
>150 pairs

WI →
~100 pairs

Breeding Bald Eagles in Wisconsin: 1967-2006

Nests increased from 72 in 1967 to 1,065 in 2006.

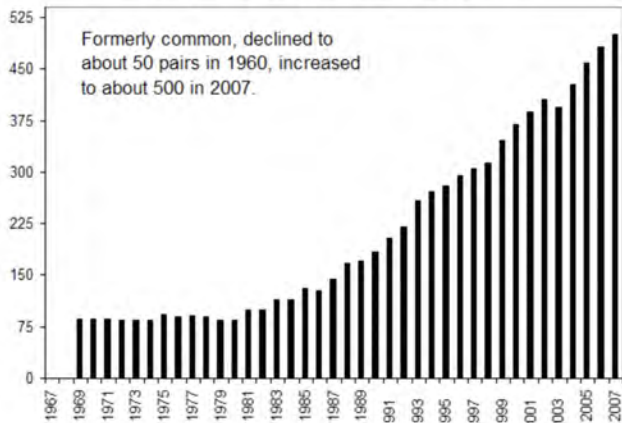


Center for Biological Diversity 6/07

Bald Eagle
populations in
Great Lakes in
1975

Breeding Bald Eagles in Michigan: 1967-2007

Formerly common, declined to about 50 pairs in 1960, increased to about 500 in 2007.

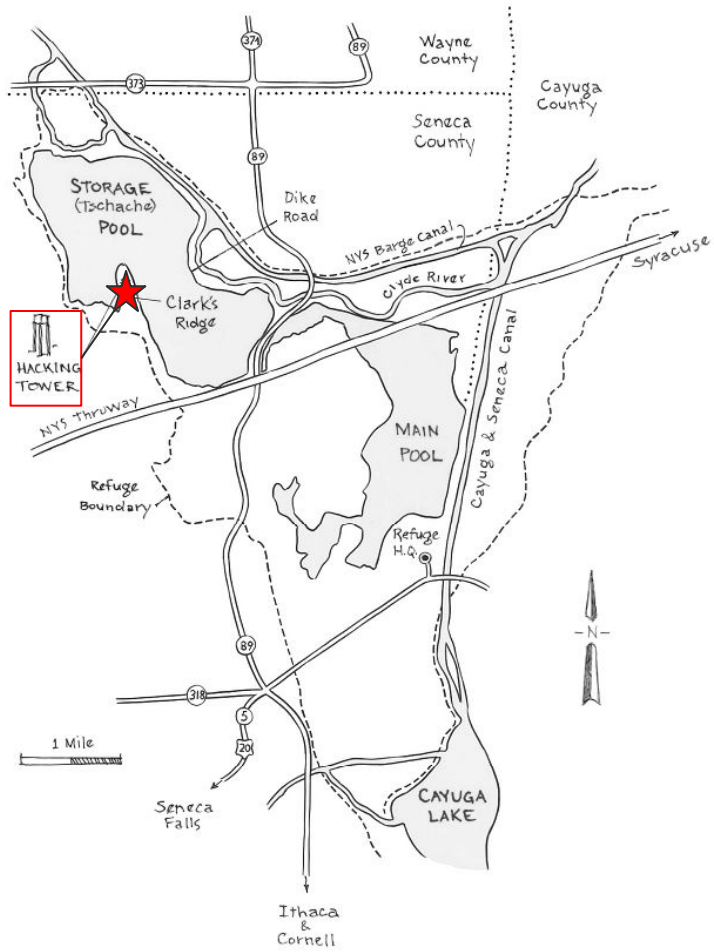


Center for Biological Diversity 6/07

← MI
~80 pairs

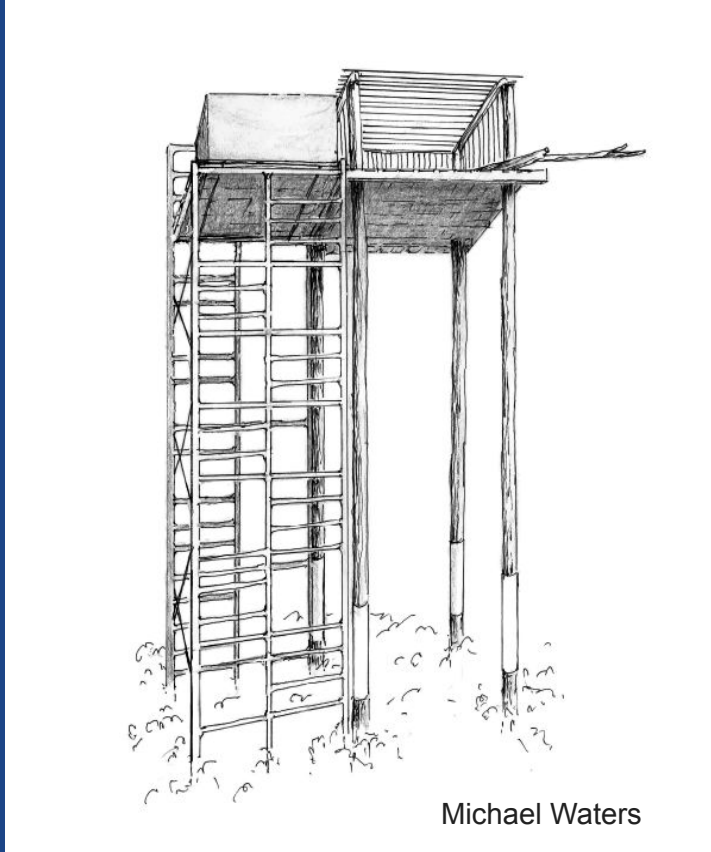


NY DEC



Michael Waters

Preparing for Arrival



Flying to New York





Cornell
Univ.



Arrival





First Day



Life on the Hillside



Feeding time



Menu Choices



Banding and Radiotelemetry



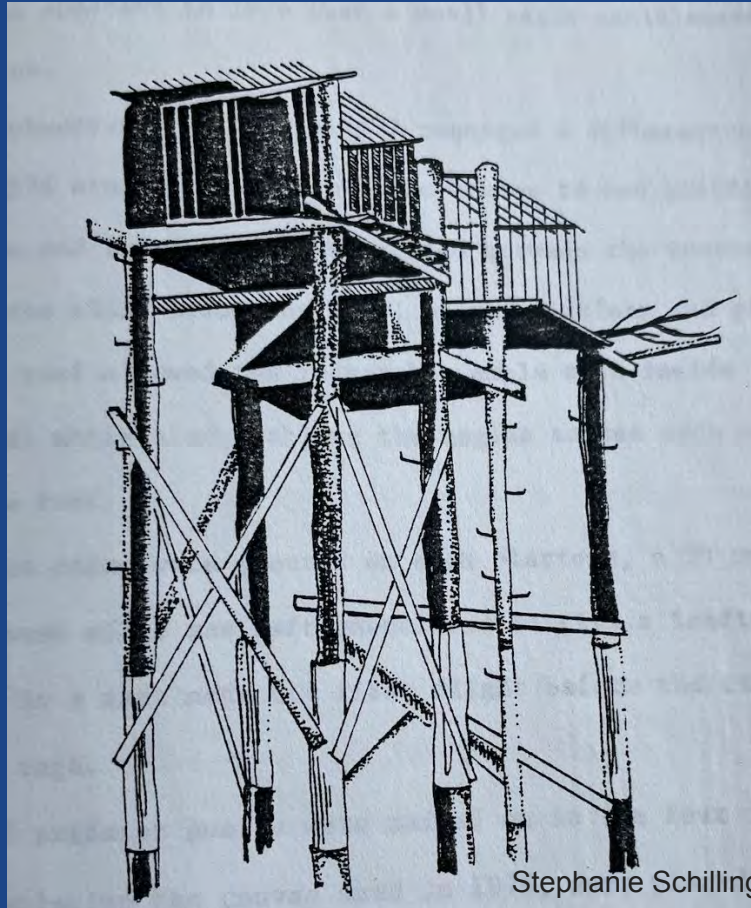


Fledging



Jackie Bakker

1977



Stephanie Schilling







Cornell University



Pamela McClelland

M3 – A rehabbed eagle arrives from Michigan in July





The New York Times Fall 1977

2 Bald Eagles Leave Human Care At Refuge to Fend for Themselves

By HAROLD WINTER

Two young bald eagles, hand-reared by humans, were released from Wisconsin to a New York Wildlife refuge late June when they were 9 weeks old, have learned to fly, fish and fend for themselves after being watched over by human foster parents through the summer, a Cornell University research team has reported.

The young pair, now 7 months old, recently left the refuge on their own, presumably to migrate southward as eagles usually do when winter approaches.

The team's effort, carried out at the Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge near Lake Cayuga, is believed to be the first successful release of eagles to the wild by the government, primarily paying the bills for the birds' care. The project, however, was not successful with previous Bald Eagle chicks, but the endangered species of birds is several years.

Proven Release Project

The Cornell project, led by Thomas Cade, a poultry professor, and Elizabeth Milbrink, a graduate student in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, is an effort to reestablish the number of the national symbol in New York State where the eagle population today numbers only a few hundred pairs. Birds were released there only after they had a chance to be fed in a section of DDT residue in the environment since it was believed to have caused the birds' decline.

Mr. Milbrink, nursing toward a master's degree in wildlife management, reported that the young eagles were a good part of the winter and the summer. Many of the birds' heads were cut off by the birds' parents, and the birds were fed by the birds' parents. The birds were fed by the birds' parents. The birds were fed by the birds' parents.

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Playing mother hen to a pair of eagles

By MICHAEL ZEIGLER

"They shall mount up with wings as eagles," Isaiah

"There! There he is!" And Leonovich gestured a warning to the other side of the marsh, across the pond, maybe 500 yards away.

"Where? I can't see."

"Right there! In the trees down by the edge."

There he was, waving cautiously at them over the pond's edge and leaning the traditional air of flight.

The eagles had returned to Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge in Seneca County.

Not just any eagles. These are American bald eagles — the nation's symbol — while have been ravaged by man and pollution that only one nesting pair is known to exist in New York State.

And just past any bald eagles, they're Baldwins who were hatched from their nests in Wisconsin in June and put into a main-line nest at Montezuma, where they've been fed and cared for daily.

It's a drastic idea, wildlife biologists say. One that has never been tried before. Can this young eagles — a 15-week-old male and a 10-week-old female — be brought to be ready



Eagles, which conservationists hope will start New York colony

(Rochester Democrat/Chronicle)

Visitors welcome

Don't be shy about going to Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge to see the bald eagles, the refuge staff is reporting.

To get to Montezuma, you can take the Thruway to the Waterloo and Seneca Falls turnoff. Take Rt. 191 north on Route 474 and you come to Route 316. Go left and take Rt. 101 to your right on Route 9 and 26, then turn left Montezuma's main entrance is just down the road.

Stop first at the headquarters to get a map. You'll need one, because the refuge is 4,200 acres. The eagles' location is clearly marked.

The eagles' nest is on a ridge overlooking Yonkers Pond at the refuge's southwest. The chicks you can get to see in June. But there's no observation tower set up near the pond and the eagles fly about it sometimes.

If the weather's nice, you might want to take a picnic lunch and enjoy the refuge staff will be happy to point out to you on a map.

Secret Project Nurtures Pair of Young Bald Eagles

The bald eagle, the national symbol, has returned to the refuge in New York State after a 15-year absence, according to a Cornell University research team.

The birds were fed by the birds' parents. The birds were fed by the birds' parents. The birds were fed by the birds' parents.

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Move began to restore Bald Eagle life to state

Honor



Induction into Iroquois Confederacy
September 1977 at New York State Fair, Syracuse

10 States that hacked eagles:

NORTHEAST

NY 1975-1988 198

MA 1982-1988 41

VT 2004-2006 29

Alaska

Cape Breton, Nova Scotia

Maine, New York, Maryland, Massachusetts

MID-ATLANTIC

PA 1983-1989 89

NJ 1983-1990 60

**Saskatchewan and other Canadian
Provinces**

SOUTH

TN 1980-2020 370

GA 1979-1995 89

NC 1983-1988 29

AL 1995-1998 91

KY 1981 1

GRAND TOTAL = 1,012

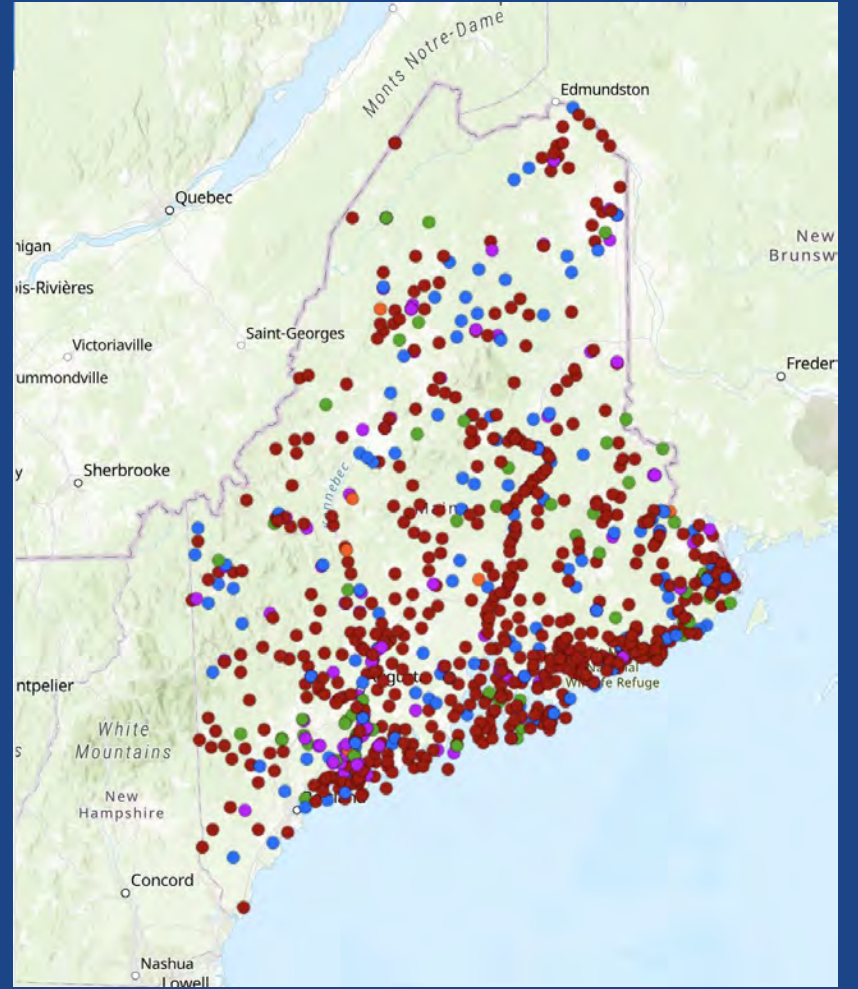
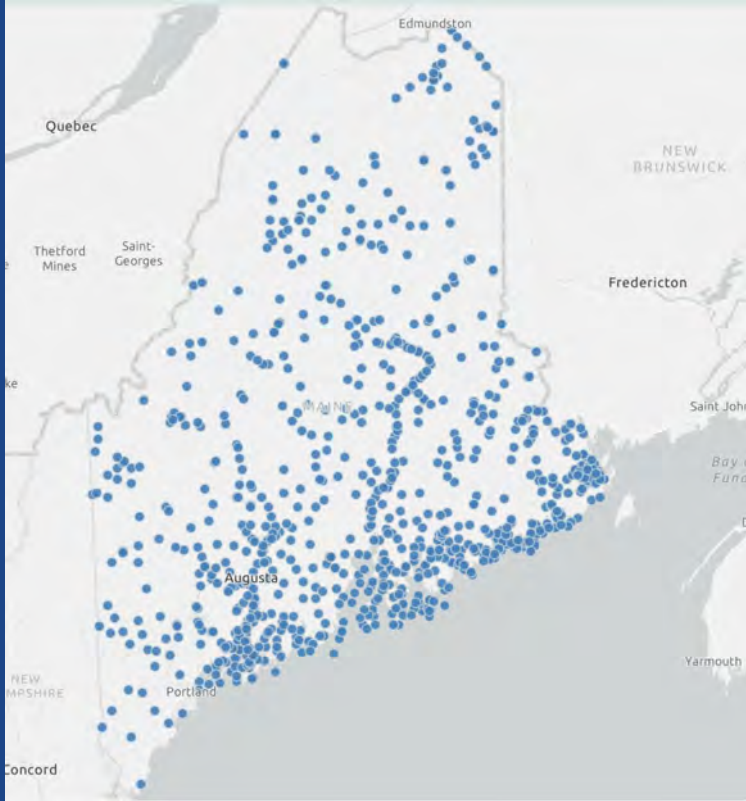
Nesting Pairs: 1967-2023 in NY and New England

	ME	NH	VT	MA	RI	CT	NY	Total
1967	21	0	0	0	0	0	0	21
2007	414	12	0	25	0	1	123	452
2023	~800	119	38	90+	6	90+	426	~1,343

Pennsylvania:

3 nesting pairs in 1980s
300 nesting pairs in 2023





Breeding Success



1980 - W1 and W2 (1976)
Nest near Watertown

1983 - M3 (1977)
Breeds and nests at
Hemlock Lake

July 19, 1980 – New York Times
1976 Wisconsin eagles mate

All NYS BAEA Territories 1970

1 NEST @ HEMLOCK LAKE



All NYS BAEA Territories 1980



All NYS BAEA Territories 1990



All NYS BAEA Territories 2000



All NYS BAEA Territories 2010



All NYS BAEA Territories 2020



Bald Eagle Nesting Territories (1970 - 2020)

Bald Eagle Populations - Lower 48 + Alaska 2018-2019

Estimate of population size 2018-2019

316,708
BALD EAGLES



42,068

Pacific (North)
Flyway

no estimate

84,541

Atlantic Flyway

30,427

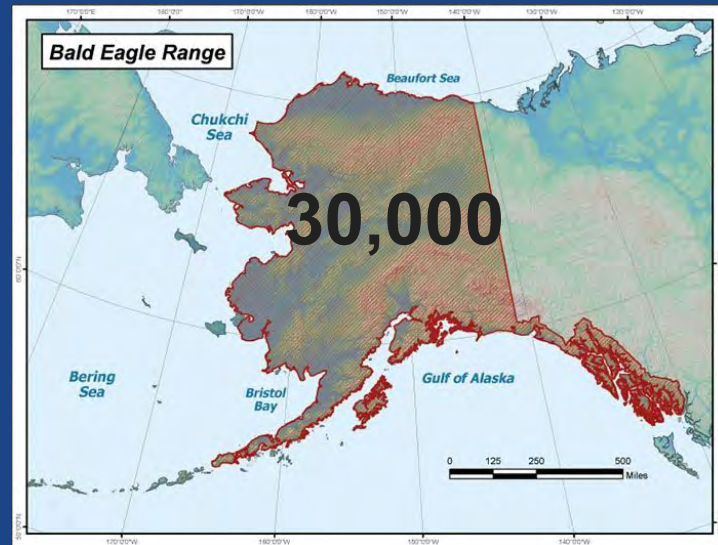
Central Flyway

159,772

Mississippi Flyway

4X

Increase in
10 years based
on population
recovery and new
eBird estimation
methods



**In Lower 48, there are
~ 72,000 breeding pairs**

Eagle Reintroduction Timeline

1940 Bald Eagle Protection Act passed

1960 Silent Spring was published

1962 Rachel Carson died

1965 Madison WI conference – Joe Hickey raised status of PF

1970 DDT banned at Madison conference

Peregrine Fund was founded

1972 Federal Ban of DDT

1973 Endangered Species Act passed

First Peregrine reproduced by the Peregrine Fund

1976 Bald Eagle Reintroduction Project began in Montezuma NWR in New York

2007 Bald Eagles removed from the Endangered Species List

2020 Last Bald Eagle hacked in Tennessee

My Return



Bald Eagle: A Conservation Success Story

NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE SYSTEM

Before European landed on North American shores, there may have been 500,000 bald eagles on this continent.

By the early 1960s, their population fell to endangered levels, with fewer than 420 pairs in the lower 48 states and only one known pair in New York.

Bald eagle populations have recovered thanks to habitat restoration, reintroduction programs, and other legal protections. The US Fish and Wildlife Service removed bald eagles from the federal endangered species list in 2007.

Bald Eagle Facts

- Bald eagles truly have "eagle eyes." An eagle flying at 1,000 feet can see prey across almost three square miles.
- With wingspans of six to eight feet, bald eagles can lift prey weighing up to four pounds.
- Bald eagles can fly about 65 miles per hour, soar as high as 10,000 feet, and stay aloft for hours using wind currents and thermal updrafts.
- Bald eagles mate for life. During courtship they perform "sky dances"—spectacular aerial displays in which the male and female soar and dive together, or lock talons and cart-wheel toward the ground.

06/16/2023



Eagle sculpture at MNWR.

Designed by Jay Seaman in 2016 to commemorate 40th anniversary of reintroduction of Bald Eagles in New York.



Meeting with refuge staff in 2022



09/26/2025

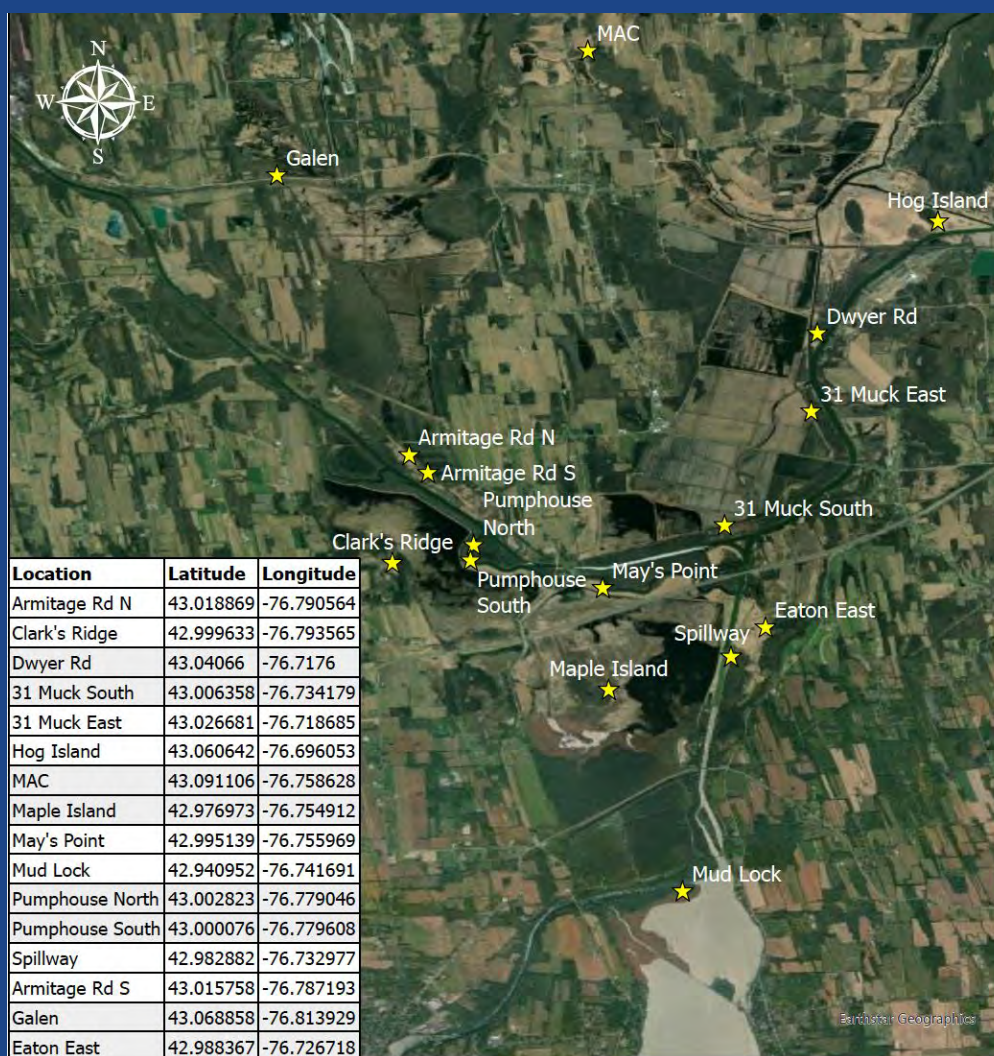
The Mural

Jackie Bakker



09/26/2025

Bald Eagle Nests in refuge - 2023





Public Relations



Kate Davis photo ©



On osprey platform at MNWR

Eagle stealing
fish from osprey



Eaglet born on
osprey platform



Center for Conservation
Biology

The Future: Current Threats to Eagles

1. Lead Poisoning

HOW DOES LEAD AFFECT BALD EAGLES?



Legal hunting and fishing support conservation efforts. However, the use of lead ammunition and fishing tackle can have unintentional consequences for native wildlife.

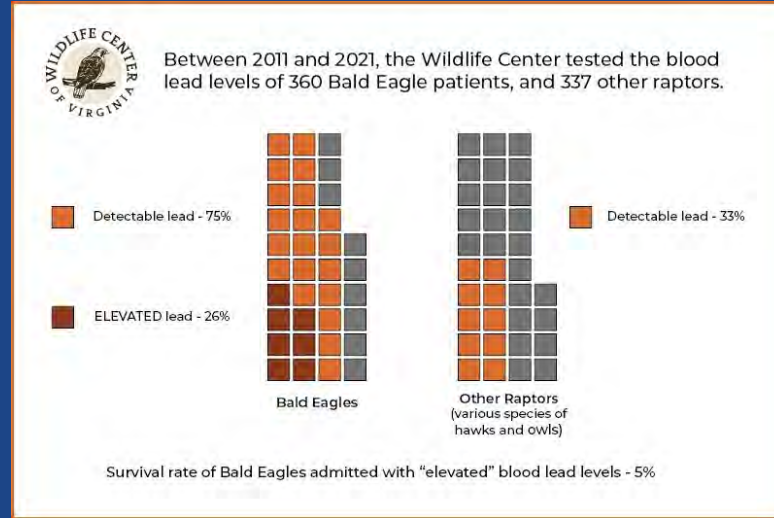
Lead enters our ecosystem when gut piles or carcasses are abandoned, when quarry escapes after being shot, or when fish break the line and swim off with tackle.

Going lead-free protects bald eagles and other wildlife. Lead-free alternatives are becoming more affordable, offer greater accuracy, and ensure the highest quality game meat.

A lead fragment the size of a grain of rice is lethal to eagles. Lead accumulates in the system over time, so there is no safe amount of lead exposure.

AMERICAN EAGLE DAY
JOIN US. TAKE ACTION. MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

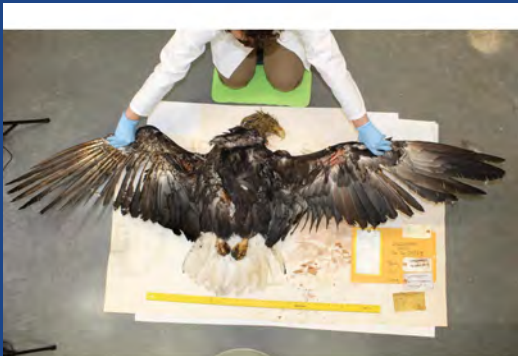
AMERICAN EAGLE FOUNDATION
EST. 1987



2. Shooting



Eagle feathers sold on black market



Forest and Rangeland Ecosystem Science Center

3. Vehicles

Rover the Bald Eagle, Central Park Celebrity, Killed By Vehicle On West Side Highway

February 21, 2024 | 5:06 PM in NEWS, OUTDOORS



Rover hunting over the Central Park Reservoir. Photo Credit: Sandra Beltrao.



4. Vacuolar Myelinopathy (VM)



A toxic cyanobacterium transferred by coots and other water birds to bald eagles.

5. Wind Farms



Other Threats

6. Rodenticides — secondary poisoning from preying on rodents

7. Habitat Loss — human development of lakeshores, oceanfront, and open forest land

8. Climate Change — extreme weather, food availability

9. Avian Flu





09/05/2023

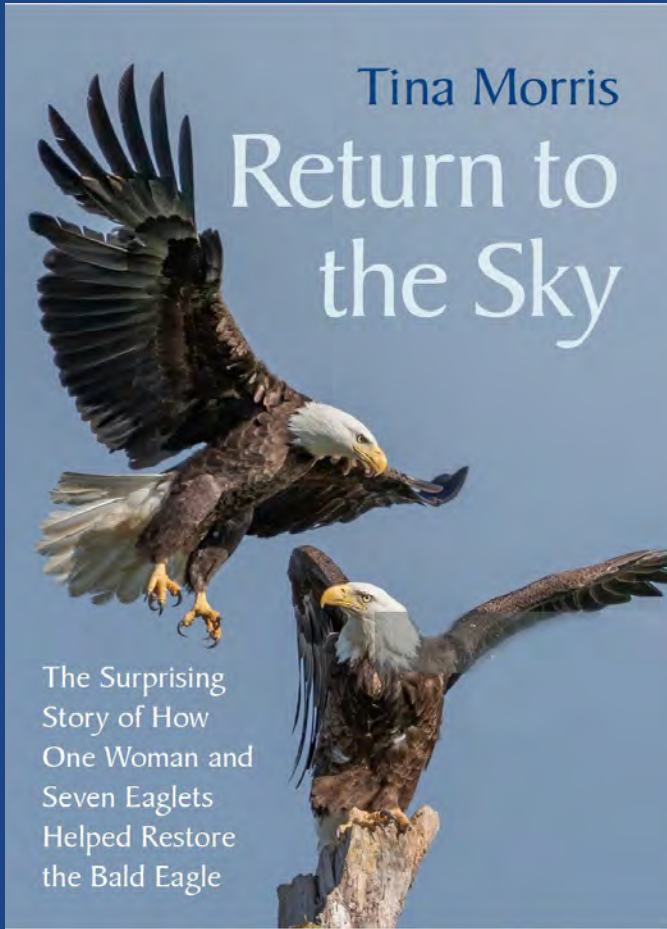
Jackie Bakker

In nature,
nothing exists alone.

~ Rachel Carson, 1962



Nick Gates



Available in Bookstores in Hardcover, Kindle, and Audio.

Also found on:

– Amazon

– Bookshop.org

– Chelsea Green Publishing

for 35% off (coupon code

“CGP35” at checkout

<https://www.chelseagreen.com/product/return-to-the-sky/>

Email: tinamorris474@gmail.com