

General Facts about Bald Eagles

- June 28, 2007 - The Interior Department took the American bald eagle off the endangered species list. The removal of the bald eagle from the Federal List of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants will become effective 30 days after publication in the Federal Register.
- The bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) is a member of the sea and fish eagle group.
- Color - Both male and female adult bald eagles have a blackish-brown back and breast; a white head, neck, and tail; and yellow feet and bill.
- Juvenile bald eagles are a mixture of brown and white. They reach full maturity in four to five years.
- Size - The female bald eagle is 35 to 37 inches, slightly larger than the male.
- Wingspan ranges from 72 to 90 inches.
- Bald eagles can fly to an altitude of 10,000 feet. During level flight, they can achieve speeds of about 30 to 35 mph.
- Bald eagles weigh from ten to fourteen pounds.
- Eagle bones are light, because they are hollow.
- The beak, talons, and feathers are made of keratin.
- Bald eagles have 7,000 feathers.
- Longevity - Wild bald eagles may live as long as thirty years.
- Bald eagles sit at the top of the food chain
- Lifting power is about 4 pounds
- Diet - Mainly fish, but they will take advantage of carrion (dead and decaying flesh).
- The bald eagle is a strong swimmer, but if the water is very cold, it may be overcome by hypothermia. Hunting area varies from 1,700 to 10,000 acres. Home ranges are smaller where food is present in great quantity.
- All eagles are renowned for their excellent eyesight.
- Nests are built in large trees near rivers or coasts.
- An eagle reaches sexual maturity at around four or five years of age.
- Fidelity - Once paired, bald eagles remain together until one dies.
- Bald eagles lay from one to three eggs.
- The 35 days of incubation duties are shared by both male and female.
- Nesting cycle - about 20 weeks Today, there are an estimated 9,789 breeding pairs of bald eagles. Eagles molt in patches, taking almost half a year to replace feathers, starting with the head and working downward.
- The bald eagle became the National emblem in 1782 when the great seal of the United States was adopted.
- Causes of death - Fatal gunshot wounds, electrocution, poisoning, collisions with vehicles, and starvation.