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PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Bald Eaglets Driven From Their Nest on the Northern Channel Islands

Yesterday two seven-week-old bald eagle chicks were unexpectedly taken from their nest at Pelican Harbor on Santa Cruz Island by an attacking sub-adult bald eagle.

Anxious eagle enthusiasts watched intently via the Channel Islands Live EagleCAM as the young eaglets attempted to defend themselves. Within minutes of their first encounter with the invading sub-adult bald eagle one of the chicks was snatched from the nest. About an hour later the second chick was knocked out of the nest falling 30 feet below—the entire episode left eagle watchers devastated.

“This is a rare occurrence, I have never seen anything like this in my career as an eagle biologist,” said Dr. Peter Sharpe with the Institute for Wildlife Studies (IWS). “The EagleCAM allows us and enthusiasts to observe live bald eagle behavior and learn more than previously known.”

As the incident unfolded, EagleCAM watchers quickly notified IWS biologists who were nearby, having just returned from conducting eagle surveys offshore. A team of four biologists briskly hiked out to the nest site and found the two young bald eagle chicks under brush on the ground below the nest. A quick assessment revealed that one of the young birds suffered a possible broken wing and the other a cracked bill.

To calm the birds, the biologists placed hoods over their heads and carefully swaddled them for transport to a temporary care facility on the island. Today the pair are being flown to a veterinary facility in Orange County to fully assess the extent of their injuries.

As IWS biologists arrived at the nest site yesterday they observed one of the parent bald eagles in aerial combat with the sub-adult intruder. Over the next few days they will be analyzing transmitter data hoping to identify which of the 8 to 12 sub-adults

that reside on the northern Channel Islands is responsible for this attack to better understand this unusual behavior.

The eagle chicks will not be returned to their nest near Pelican Harbor. Once the chicks have recovered from their injuries, they will likely be placed in a “hack tower” on Santa Cruz Island. They will be fed by biologists until they fledge in late June.

Today, nearly 40 bald eagles are in Channel Islands National Park as a result of a restoration program that released 61 eagles between 2002 and 2006. This spring there were four nests established on the northern Channel Islands, three on Santa Cruz Island and one on Santa Rosa Island. Only two of the nests produced chicks, including this nest at Pelican Harbor. On Catalina Island five nests have produced seven young eaglets this spring

For More Information

The EagleCAM is one of a number of educational opportunities offered as part of Channel Islands Live (CHIL), a cooperative partnership between Channel Islands National Park and the Ventura County Office of Education. The EagleCAM and associated discussion board can be found at: http://chil.vcoe.org/eagle_cam.htm.

To see video of the nest incident go to: www.nps.gov/chis

The bald eagle restoration efforts on the Channel Islands are funded by the Montrose Settlements Restoration Program (MSRP), a multi-agency government program dedicated to restoring natural resources harmed by DDTs and PCBs released into the environment. Further information on MSRP can be found at: www.montroserestoration.gov.

The Institute for Wildlife Studies, a non-profit organization dedicated to the conservation of wildlife species, has conducted bald eagle restoration on Catalina Island for over 25 years, as well as efforts on the northern islands within Channel Islands National Park. For links to webcams on Catalina and Santa Cruz Islands go to: www.iws.org

This publication is available online at: www.nps.gov/chis/parknews/newsreleases.htm