



501 W. Ocean Blvd. Suite 4470 • Long Beach, CA 90802 • 562.980.3236

PRESS RELEASE

CONTACT: Yvonne Menard, National Park Service, 805-658-5725
Gabrielle Dorr, MSRP, 562-980-3236

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Bald Eagle Chick with Broken Wing Returns to the Wild

On May 19th, EagleCAM watchers witnessed two eagle chicks being unexpectedly taken from their nest at Pelican Harbor on Santa Cruz Island during an attack from a sub-adult bald eagle. Both eaglets fell from their nest 30 feet to the ground.

One of the eagle chicks suffered a cracked beak while the other had a broken wing. Both eaglets were taken to a veterinary facility in Orange County where they were under the care of Dr. Scott Weldy. The eaglet with the cracked bill, named "Spirit" by EagleCAM watchers, was released into an artificial nest referred to as a "hack tower" on Santa Cruz Island a few weeks ago. Biologists from the Institute for Wildlife Studies (IWS) fed and monitored Spirit until the eagle was ready to fledge. On July 1, biologists opened the hack tower door to let the eagle begin its first flight. Spirit has also been fitted with a satellite transmitter so that the eagle's movements can be tracked by biologists.

On Monday July 14th, the eagle with the broken wing, named "Skye" will be returned to Santa Cruz Island where biologists hope it will fledge in two to four weeks. "We watch the eaglets for wing movement to determine when they are ready to fledge from the nest," said Dr. Peter Sharpe a biologist from IWS. The biologists will continue feeding and monitoring Skye during this time. Skye had surgery where pins and wire were used to heal the broken wing. Now the pins have been removed and the eagle is ready to return to the wild.

Today, nearly 40 bald eagles are in Channel Islands National Park as a result of the Montrose Settlements Restoration Program (MSRP) 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