

Bald Eagles of Shasta & Trinity Lakes

Shasta & Trinity Units • Whiskeytown - Shasta-Trinity National Recreation Area
Shasta-Trinity National Forest



The USDA Forest Service closely monitors bald eagle nesting sites and installs bald eagle protection zones at Shasta and Trinity Lakes. Please observe posted buoys on the lakes, regarding speed, and access in certain areas. These postings are made to discourage human disturbance both on land and water within approximately one-half mile of eagle territories of greatest concern.

The Shasta and Trinity Units of the Whiskeytown-Shasta-Trinity National Recreation Area support at least 31 pairs of resident eagles, 18 pairs at Shasta Lake, 10 pairs at Trinity Lake and 3 pairs at Lewiston Lake. This constitutes close to 20% of the nesting eagles in California. The bald eagles of Shasta Lake are still a concern, however, as their production rates for the last five years have not met the average production target of one young eagle per nest as identified in the Bald Eagle Recovery Plan. Productivity at Trinity and Lewiston lakes meet the recovery objective. A concerned public, and our efforts to protect nests from disturbance all contribute to breeding success and a growing eagle population.

Several variables may be responsible for the failure of eagle nests in the Shasta Unit of the NRA. These vari-

ables include drought, water level changes, weather, fish availability, human activity, osprey competition, pesticide residues and age/fertility of individuals.

Some pairs of bald eagles are sensitive during their breeding season, which lasts from approximately January 1 through August 1. During this period, the eagles will re-construct their nest, court, mate, incubate eggs and raise young. After the first week of July, most young eagles are able to fly, although for the next six weeks they will rely heavily on their parents while learning how to fish.

You can help protect our national symbol by obeying the posted signs and notifying the Forest Service if you see any action which may harm the eagles. The bald eagle is protected under federal laws. Anyone undertaking unlawful actions which might result in harm to an eagle is subject to criminal and civil penalties (50 CFR 17.3).



Bald Eagle Facts

Scientific name: *Haliaeetus Leucocephalus*

Identification: Bald eagles are large birds, and are easily identified. Adults, which are older than five years, have the characteristic white head and tail on a dark brown body. Immature eagles are dark brown all over with white mottling and molt every year through a series of plumages before they reach adulthood. Adult bald eagles can weigh up to 14 pounds with a wingspan of up to eight feet. Female eagles are usually larger than the males.



United States
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Agriculture



Forest Service
Pacific Southwest Region
www.fs.fed.us/r5/

Shasta-Trinity National Forest
www.fs.fed.us/r5/shastatrinity/

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Breeding

Eagles mate for life, replacing the partner only if lost through death. The pairs usually return to the same nest site in January or February, year after year. Occasionally, they will build a new nest in different tree within their territory. The largest nest found was 9½ feet wide, 20 feet tall, and weight almost 6000 pounds. Eagles usually select larger diameter trees which have green branches above the nest bowl, which makes them appear “hidden.” One to three eggs are laid in March and hatch 35 days later. Young eagles begin to fly 12 weeks after hatching, usually in July. Adult eagles continue to feed their young until the immature eagles learn to forage for themselves and disperse.

Behavior

Eagles feed primarily on fish, which is why they live and nest along shorelines. If other food sources become readily available, such as waterfowl or carrion, they will take advantage of the situation. Often eagles “rob” osprey or other wildlife of their meals. Bald eagles often perch in a tree and rely on their keen eyesight to spot their prey. Although hunting from a perch requires less energy, eagles remain alert for a potential meal even when flying. Eagles fly with their wings spread straight out and do not hover.



For more information, contact the US Forest Service

Shasta Unit

14225 Holiday Road
Redding, Ca 96003
530-275-1587 (voice)
530-242-5526 (TDD)

Trinity Unit

P.O. Box 1190
Weaverville, Ca 96093-1190
530-623-2121 (voice)
530-623-2124 (TTY/TDD)

Similar species

Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*) are often confused with the bald eagle. Although both species are brown with white markings, osprey are easily distinguished by their mostly white heads with a dark band, or “mask” across the eyes. They fly with a bend in their wings and frequently hover. Osprey nest in conspicuous locations near marinas or other developments, on top of power poles, towers, and dead trees.

Or contact us on the web: www.fs.fed.us/r5/shastatrinity

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