

## Bald Eagle Comparison with Other Species

Since eagles and ospreys can use each others' nests and build nests of comparable size, it is often useful to observe the active nest to determine the current owner. Adult bald eagles will have a pure white head and tail and dark brown to black body and underwings, while ospreys have a brown streak behind the eye and neck, a whitish chest and underwings, and a brown and white mottled or banded tail. When perched, eagles tend to appear more upright, while ospreys appear to be leaning forward at about a 45 degree angle. Great blue herons are another species that builds larger stick nests in tall dominant trees, often near shorelines and water bodies. These herons are long-legged and long-necked with long, triangular bills. Their nests are generally smaller than eagles and multiple heron nests are often in the same tree or adjacent trees.

## What can I expect after I report a potential nest location?

The landowner or State biologist may follow up with you to ask additional questions to clarify the nest location or other information.

## How do I find out about an existing Bald Eagle nest's activity status?

If you already know about an existing Bald Eagle nest and desire to know the current status of the nest (e.g., last known year the nest was occupied, etc.), contact the appropriate regional biologist at the offices listed or the Maine State eagle specialist in Bangor at 207-941-4468.

## How do I find out about good management practices at Bald Eagle nest sites?

Contact your Regional State biologist for more information at the offices listed above. We have learned that bald eagles can flourish in Maine's woodlands, but this outcome benefits greatly from current information and planning for their special needs.



## Who to contact:

- Contact the landowner if known (see below)
- Contact a Maine State Wildlife Biologists at one of the offices listed below:
  - Ashland regional office: P.O. Box 447, Ashland, ME 04732; tel. 207-435-3231
  - Greenville regional office: P.O. Box 551, Greenville ME 04441; tel. 207-695-3756
  - Enfield regional office: 73 Cobb Road, Enfield ME 04493; tel. 207-732-4132
  - Jonesboro region office: P.O. Box 220, Jonesboro, ME 04648, tel. 207- 434-5927
  - Strong regional office: 689 Farmington Road, Strong, ME 04983, tel. 207-778-3324
  - Gray regional office: RR1, 358 Shaker Road, Gray, ME 04039, tel. 207-657-2345
  - Sidney regional office: 270 Lyons Rd, Sidney ME 04330-9711, tel. 207-547-5300

You may also contact a Maine State eagle specialist at the Bangor research office for eagle nest reports: 650 State Street, Bangor ME 04401; tel. 207-941-4468

## Plum Creek Contact:

Wildlife Biologist

Plum Creek

P.O. Box 400

Fairfield, ME 04937

207-453-2527 ext. 141

# Bald Eagle Nest Identification Guide



**How to identify nests and report observations to help contribute to continued eagle success in Maine.**



Developed by the Maine Forest Products Council and the Sustainable Forestry Initiative Implementation Committee

## What is the status of the Bald Eagle? Are they still legally protected?

Although the bald eagle was recently removed from both the Federal and State of Maine Endangered Species Acts, they are still legally protected by other laws that prohibit their harm or harassment (Golden and Bald Eagle Protection Act).

## How have private landowners, foresters, and logging contractors contributed to Bald Eagle recovery?

For years, landowners, foresters, and logging contractors have implemented nest



protection measures around known eagle nests to conserve the nest tree and reduce disturbance to the nesting eagles. In addition, alternate and future nest trees were protected in forest stands to provide new sites as the eagle population expanded or old nests and trees fell down.

## Why should we be aware of new or changing Bald Eagle nests?

As the eagle population continues to grow, new eagle territories and nests will be established. In addition, eagles will periodically change their nesting site. Given that Federal and State funds for eagle surveys are now being redirected to other species in conservation need, accurate locations of bald eagle nests may quickly become outdated. Landowners, foresters, and logging contractors, in cooperation with the State, are anxious to know the locations of eagle nests so they can plan and avoid conflicts with timber harvesting operations, just as they have been doing for years.

## Nest Reporting

*If you have found or suspect a bald eagle nest, landowners and the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife are anxious to know about it.*

### Critical items to observe and report:

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Location of the nest tree:

Town: \_\_\_\_\_

Body of water: \_\_\_\_\_

(N/W/S/E Shore? Island? Upland? Distance from edge of water?)

GPS coordinates (if available): \_\_\_\_\_

#### Description of nest tree:

Pine

Hardwood

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Is the tree dead or alive?: \_\_\_\_\_

Total number of birds observed: \_\_\_\_\_

# of adults: \_\_\_\_\_

# of young: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Your contact information for follow up:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

## Landscape Locations

Eagles typically build nests in the vicinity of lake or river shorelines, although they may be found inland from these water bodies.

## Tree Species, Nest Size, and Position in the Tree

Eagles build large stick nests, averaging 4 ft. wide and 3 ft. deep, near the top of tall trees, usually super-story white pines, although large hardwoods such as oaks or maples can be used. Typically, the eagle nest is built below a live canopy of branches. Osprey nests are often located at the very top of dead trees or poles, but even these are sometimes used by eagles.



(Bald eagle nest in white pine)

## Bald Eagle Nest Identification

If you see an eagle flying or perched along the water's edge, take some time to watch it. During the spring and summer when young are in the nest, adults will make frequent trips to the nest with food. If you spend enough time watching them and can figure out a pattern to their activity, they may lead you to the nest. Just be cautious and don't disturb the birds unnecessarily by approaching too close. Binoculars can be a great help, and the viewing angle of lofty nests is always better from a distance.

## Bald Eagle activity period and behavior

Adult eagles in Maine are generally close to their nests starting in March. If they successfully hatch eggs, they typically remain near their nesting territory into August.



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