



Bald Eagle

Facts and Figures

(Sources: National Eagle Center and WI DNR)

Eggs and fledging: It takes about 18 weeks from egg laying to fledging (leaving the nest) – 35 days to incubate, 8-12 weeks to fledge. In Wisconsin, eggs are laid from early February through early April. Most pairs lay 2 eggs, 10-15% in Wisconsin lay three eggs.

Post fledging: Fledglings rely on their parents for food for 4-6 weeks after they fledge.

Eyesight: An eagle can see something the size of a rabbit running at three miles away.

Wingspan: The average wingspan ranges from 6 to 7.5 feet.

Speed of flight: Eagles can achieve 30 mph using powerful wing-beats and even faster when diving after prey (stoop). Bald eagles can dive at up to 100 mph; golden eagles at up to 150 mph.

Legal protection:

Eagle feathers, and any part of an eagle, are federally protected. Only individuals and organizations with a permit from the United States government can legally possess any part of an eagle.

Bald and golden eagles are protected under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act, passed by Congress in 1940. The Act prohibits the taking or possession of any bald or golden eagle, alive or dead, including any part, nest, or egg, unless allowed by permit.

Eagles are also protected by the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918, which protects more than 800 species of birds in North America. Feathers and parts of all migratory birds are protected and are illegal to possess without a permit.

Endangered status: Bald eagles were removed from the Federal Endangered Species list on June 28, 2007.

Male & female plumage: Male and females eagles have the same coloration.

Weight: Weight varies depending on latitude and gender. Generally, males weigh approximately 25% less than females from the same area. The average weight of a female bald eagle is 10-14 pounds and males are 8-11 lb. Males in Florida can weigh 6 lb. while females in Alaska can weigh 18 lb.

Eagle species: There are around 60 different species of eagle in the world. Eagles are found on every continent (except Antarctica).

Mortality: Eaglets in the nest may die from falls, starvation or siblicide. Once fledged, many eagles die from impact injuries, starvation, disease, shooting, poisoning and electrocution. Lead poisoning is a common cause of injury and is most often fatal.

About 50% of the eaglets die in their first year. Another 20-30% die before they reach adulthood at five years of age.

Flight distances: Eagles monitored with tracking devices have been known to fly 50-125 miles in a day during migration depending on the weather conditions and wind currents.

Migrate separately: There is data to suggest that pairs may not migrate together. Rather, each will return to the nest and territory that they have used successfully in previous years.

