

Bald Eagle

Haliaeetus leucocephalus

General Information:

-The national bird of the United States of America has an awe-inspiring wingspan and striking white head and tail that make adults easy to identify. Big concentrations of these huge birds can be seen perched in trees and resting on sandbars when the salmon run in river of the Northwest. Juveniles can be recognized by their large size; dark brown head, tail, and body; mottled white patches on under-wings and under-part; grayish eyes; and light yellow feet.

Song:

-Both sexes utter gull-like squealing cackle of *kleek-kik-ik-ik-ik* or lower *kak-kak-kak*.

Behavior:

-Hunts for prey, primarily fish, especially in breeding season. Sometime steals fish from Ospreys. Also eats carrion and injured or crippled waterfowl, squirrels, rabbits, and muskrats.

Breeding:

-Monogamous; though to pair for life; a solitary nester.

Nesting:

-Incubation of 31-46 days by both sexes. The 1 brood per year of semi-altricial young is fed by both sexes and stay in the nest for 70-98 day until their first flight. The parents teach them to fly and hunt.

Population:

-Fairly common to common but local outside of Florida and Alaska.

Conservation:

-Protected by national wildlife refuges and legally with heavy fines. Made a great comeback, especially in the United States, since the 1970s with wide-scale restoration programs, and the banning of DDT and other chemical pollutants. It has since been moved from the endangered status to threatened. America is the world's leading producer of DDT, although it banned its used in the 1970s.

Shoreline Restoration Issues:

-If you would like to create an environment friendly to the Bald Eagle on your property, firstly you are going to have to have some pretty substantial conifer trees to begin with. The Bald Eagle builds huge nests made of large sticks and other vegetation, sometimes 30-60 feet up in a tree. They will use the same nest for years, adding more material every year until it starts to look like someone parked a Volkswagen up in a tree. Besides needing big trees for the immediate generation, it is important to plant some conifers such as the Red Pine and Eastern White Pine for future generations of Bald Eagles. If you are serious about restoring the shore for Bald Eagles, you are going to have to restore it to bring in the food that they like to eat. I suggest planting a lot of shrubs that are going to attract rabbits such as High-bush Cranberry, Pussy Willow, Nannyberry, Staghorn Sumac, American and Beaked Hazelnut, Witch Hazel, and Red Osier Dogwood along the shoreline. Then I would concentrate on planting a diverse range of emergent aquatic vegetation and shoreline vegetation to increase the fishery, such as Hard-stem Bulrush, Lily Pads, Sago Pondweed, Water Shield, Water Smartweed, White and Yellow Water Buttercup, Wool-Grass, Indian Grass, and Japanese Millet.

