

**B**ald eagles have increased in Washington State from about 105 nesting pairs in 1980, to about 650 pairs today. In Washington, a small portion of Bald Eagle nests are in parks and other protected public lands, but two-thirds of the nests are located on private lands. Private land-owners who have cooperated in protecting nesting birds and their habitat deserve our thanks in helping Bald Eagles recover to their present numbers.

**W**hen adopted as the nation's symbol in 1782, Bald Eagles inhabited every large river and major concentration of lakes in North America. By the late 1800s, the Bald Eagle's population and range had been reduced to the point that most of the remaining birds were restricted to Alaska, Canada, the Great Lakes states, Florida, and the Pacific Northwest.

**A**fter decades of federal protection, as well as public and private recovery efforts, Bald Eagle populations have increased 7 fold since the early 1970s. In 2003, there were 5,700 known pairs of Bald Eagles nesting in the lower 48 states.

**Photos Courtesy of Tom Michalski**



## Bald Eagles along the Pend Oreille River



For more information:

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## “Stewards of the River”

As part of its continuing stewardship and commitment toward preserving the health and beauty of the river, Pend Oreille Public Utility District participates in many environmental efforts, including monitoring and protection of Bald Eagles.

The District will conduct annual surveys of eagle populations at various times throughout the year to study nesting behavior, nest productivity, and winter use. You can help us in this process to observe the Bald Eagles.

As part of the new license that the PUD has received, additional work that will be done to enhance Bald Eagle populations on the river will include cottonwood plantings and other actions to improve eagle habitats along the reservoir. Other District activities will be coordinated to protect Bald Eagles from disturbances.

Bald Eagles are monogamous and mate for life. A Bald Eagle will only select another mate if its faithful companion should die. Bald Eagles build nests primarily along marine shorelines and major rivers of western and northeastern Washington. Nests are usually built in large trees.

Large trees along shorelines are important perch sites for foraging, roosting, and nesting. At night, eagles often perch together in communal roosts. Roost sites are selected that provide a favorable microclimate, such as protection from prevailing winds.

Eagles are sensitive to disturbance while nesting; and by boaters while foraging. Eagles often avoid foraging in water around stationary boats.

Washington nesters usually return to their territories by late January. Eagles are most sensitive to disturbance February through April. They are establishing territories and beginning incubation at this time. Once the chicks have hatched, the adults are less likely to abandon them as a result of disturbance. After mid-July, the chicks are typically able to fly and are then less vulnerable. The least sensitive period for eagles is July through January.

## What do landowners need to know?

- Learn appropriate distances
- Keep observations brief, then move on
- Move quietly, slowly, and in plain view
- Respect the environment, disturbing as little as possible

## Additional Protection

For citizens who own property where Bald Eagle nests are located that have a strong interest in providing maximum protection to Bald Eagle nest sites, an additional process is available. It is called the Bald Eagle Management Plan.

A Bald Eagle Management Plan is a habitat protection agreement between the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and the landowner to help ensure minimal impact on Bald Eagles and reasonable land use for the owner. Large projects located near Bald Eagle nests, such as logging or home construction, may necessitate a Bald Eagle Management Plan. For further information contact the WDFW at (509) 892-1001 or [www.wdfw.wa.gov](http://www.wdfw.wa.gov), bald eagle.

