



OHS HUMANE EDUCATION NEWSLETTER

Promoting Education in Animal Welfare



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ANIMAL NEWS

A CLOSER LOOK



THE BALD EAGLE

- Young eagles or eaglets are born white or grey, turn brown as fledglings, and slowly change from brown to white on their head and tail feathers, completed when they are about 4-5 years old.
- The Bald Eagle is one of the largest North American birds, with a wingspan between that of a Blue Heron and the California Condor, neither of which are considered raptors.

- A few months before the juvenile bald eagles fly from the nest at about 12 weeks, they will flap their wings and make small jumps up and down as they practice flying. Once their muscles are stronger, they will jump in trees from branch to branch to practice being airborne.
- Once they leave the nest, the young bald eagles spend about years exploring and flying hundreds of miles per day.
- When they are ready to breed, they mate for life and use the same nest over and over, adding twigs and nesting materials to it each year. Should one of them die, they will pick a new mate. Because bald eagles can live 30-40 years and start breeding at 4-5 years, ornithologists suspect the fact that they use the same nests or several in the same area over and over may be responsible for some nests being as big as a car!
- The largest Bald Eagle nest on record, in St. Petersburg, Florida, was almost 10 feet wide and 20 feet tall. Another famous nest in Ohio weighed almost two tons. The bald eagles used the nest for 34 years until the tree it was in blew down.



Link to Video:
All About Bald Eagles for Kids



- Bald eagles are known for being opportunistic and stealing food caught by other birds or mammals. A bald eagle will pester another animal with food in its talons or mouth until the animal drops its prey in midair, in water, or on land. Bald eagles tend to prefer to eat fish, often dead or dying, but also eat carrion or decaying animals.
- Weighing only about 6-14 pounds with hollow bones, but a wingspan over 6 feet wide, the bald eagle relies strongly on its "eagle eye" vision. It can see prey in fields and lakes from a mile high in the air.
- The bald eagle has been our national bird since 1782, but a pesticide, DDT, used for mosquito control, infiltrated the environment and made their egg shells so thin that the baby birds were unable to incubate and hatch normally. The number of bald eagles declined from hundreds of thousands to fewer than 2,000 nationally, with only about 30 breeding pairs left in California. After the United States passed the Environmental Protection Act and banned DDT in 1972, the bald eagle started to slowly recover.
- The San Francisco Zoo participated in a seven-state repopulation project with the state of California and helped place over 150 eagles in central and Southern California.
- Today, the bald eagles number over 300,000 nationally. Most live in Alaska, but, although they were removed from the federal endangered species list in 2007, the bald eagle is still endangered in California. Lead shot used by hunters and then contaminating eagle prey was found to be harmful to bald eagles. In 2016, California banned all lead shot used for hunting. Although now a protected bird with no natural predators, the biggest obstacle to their survival is humans and man-made threats -- power lines, cars, and hunting among the biggest problems.
- Breeding season in California starts in January and may run through July or August; however, the best time for viewing is December through March.
- Most California bald eagles live on the California-Oregon border and approximately 1,000 come in from Canada or other states to spend the winter.
- [Live bald eagle cams](https://www.tinsweb.org/midwinter-bald-eagle-count) on Catalina islands and videos of bald eagles in nests in the wild are available on YouTube and various sites. Lake Tahoe at the Tahoe Institute for Natural Science (TINS) assumed the role of the annual bald eagle count from the US Army Corps of Engineers and the USFS Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit This upcoming count with the help of citizen scientists is on January 13, 2023. See their website at <https://www.tinsweb.org/midwinter-bald-eagle-count>

January Animal Holidays

- Adopt a Rescued Bird Month
- Resolve to go GREEN Day! - January 1
- National Bird Day - January 5
- Save the Eagles Day - January 10
- Eagle Day - January 14 (Second Saturday in January)
- Tahoe Mid-Winter Bald Eagle Count - January 13
- Penguin Awareness Day - January 20
- Bald Eagle Appreciation Days - January 21-22
- Squirrel Appreciation Day - January 21
- Rattlesnake Round Up - January 28

AWARENESS FUN FOR ELEMENTARY STUDENTS



What's Your Wingspan?

Scientists who study birds, called ornithologists, use wingspan measurements as one way to identify birds. They measure wingspan from the middle of the bird's back to the very end of the feather tips and multiply by 2. Can you measure your "wingspan"? Whose wingspan in your class is longest or shortest? Longer wingspans can reach farther, but shorter wingspans can move faster through brush. Both types adapt to their habitats!

