



The FWC has a nest database on the eagle Web site (MyFWC.com/eagle) that may be used to locate documented bald eagle nests and view their locations. Please call the Fish and Wildlife Research Institute at 386-758-0525 or e-mail baldeagle@MyFWC.com, if you have any nest specific questions.

Three ways you can help conserve bald eagles in Florida

- Follow the state guidelines when conducting a project.
- Report potential violations of wildlife laws to FWC's toll free Wildlife Alert number 1-888-404-3922.
- Volunteer your time to help monitor eagles. Audubon of Florida's Eagle Watch program is a volunteer group that conducts annual eagle nest monitoring. Call 407-644-0190 or e-mail eaglewatch@audubon.org, if you would like to participate.

Find out more about bald eagles

The FWC bald eagle Web site at MyFWC.com/eagle offers information about the Bald Eagle Management Plan (BEMP), technical assistance for projects, permitting, eagle biology, current research and the bald eagle nest locator. There is contact information for FWC personnel who can assist with information regarding eagle nests, permitting and FWC BEMP questions.

For more information call 352-732-1225, email eagle_plan@MyFWC.com or visit MyFWC.com/eagle/Eagle_Management.htm.

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Florida's bald eagle

Triumph of a legendary species



photos by Dominick Martino



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A conservation success story

The bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*), the national bird, is a majestic symbol of freedom. The bald eagle has not always had an easy life. Following dramatic decreases in population size, several federal and state regulations were put in place to protect this magnificent species. These regulations included the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act. In 1972, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency banned all domestic use of the pesticide dichloro-diphenyl-trichloroethane (DDT) because it was associated with egg shell thinning, leading to reproductive failure. The following year, the Endangered Species Act of 1973 was passed, and the bald eagle was added to the list of federally endangered and threatened species in 1978.

The elimination of DDT and the increased protection for the eagle led to the species' recovery nationwide and in Florida. When Florida's population was first surveyed in the 1972-73 season there were less than 200 nesting territories. By early 2007, there were 1,218 active bald eagle nesting territories in Florida (Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) unpublished data). Florida now supports 11 percent of the nesting population in the lower 48 states, more than any state other than Alaska and Minnesota.

The outstanding conservation efforts in combination of regulations led to the bald eagle being removed from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) endangered species list in August 2007 and the FWC imperiled species list in April 2008. The bald eagle continues to be protected under the federal Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act and Migratory Bird Treaty Act and FWC's bald eagle rule (Florida Administrative Code 68A-16.002 Bald Eagle *Haliaeetus leucocephalus*).

How the FWC helps to conserve bald eagles in Florida

The FWC adopted a new Bald Eagle Management Plan (BEMP) in April 2008. The BEMP provides guidelines and recommendations to help people avoid violating state and federal eagle laws. The BEMP also outlines strategies to maintain the Florida population of bald eagles at or above current levels. The BEMP goal is to, "maintain a stable or increasing population of eagles in Florida in perpetuity."

The USFWS issued the National Bald Eagle Management Guidelines in May 2007. The FWC management plan was written to closely follow the federal guidelines.

Permitting under the FWC BEMP

The FWC will be issuing three types of eagle permits under the new BEMP and the new eagle rule: Disturbance, Nest Removal and Scientific Collecting. Permits will be issued for projects or activities that further the goals and objectives of the BEMP.

Buffer zones are recommended in the BEMP and are based on the nature and magnitude of the project or activity. All bald eagle nest trees are protected by state and federal laws. The recommended protective buffer zone is 660 feet or less from the nest tree, depending on what activities or structures are already near the nest. A FWC eagle permit is not needed for any activity occurring outside of the 660-foot buffer zone. No activities are permitted within 330 feet of a nest during the nesting season, Oct. 1 - May 15 or when eagles are present at the nest site.

Florida's population surveys

Florida is committed to conserving the bald eagle. Since the 1972-1973 nesting season, all known nesting territories are monitored annually by aircraft to determine reproductive parameters, such as territory occupancy, number of eggs and nestlings, and nestling survival.

