

KLAMATH **NATIONAL FOREST**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 4, 2004

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Klamath's Bald Eagles Holding Their Own

Yreka, CA - Bald eagle numbers remained steady throughout Siskiyou county this winter with the exception of the east side, according to results of the annual midwinter count.

The count was conducted on the Salmon, Scott and Klamath Rivers, Scott and Shasta Valleys, Copco and Irongate Lakes, and throughout the Goosenest Ranger District. Participants in the count were from the Klamath, Six Rivers and Mendocino National Forests, US Fish and Wildlife Service, California Department of Fish and Game, Discovery High School and several local volunteers.

Results:

- Salmon River - 1 bald eagle
- Scott Valley and Scott River - 22 bald eagles
- Klamath River (Somes Bar to Yreka) - 12 bald eagles
- Shasta Valley - 6 bald eagles
- Copco and Irongate Lakes - 8 bald eagles
- Goosenest Ranger District - 22 bald eagles



The Bald Eagle

All areas had an average number of bald eagles with the exception of the Goosenest Ranger District. Traditionally, anywhere from 20 to 200 eagles may be counted on the Goosenest; however, a low number of waterfowl this year, which make up a large part of the eagles diet, is likely contributing to the low number counted.

Based on similar surveys, there are approximately 70,000 bald eagles in North America. About half of those live in Alaska with another 20,000 in British Columbia making the Pacific

Northwest their stronghold. Bald eagles do well here because of the salmon and waterfowl, which are important food sources for them. Over-wintering Siskiyou County bald eagles also feed on the carcasses of dead animals in agricultural areas.

Midwinter bald eagle counts have been taking place since 1977, the year after their listing as an endangered species. The data is collected and used by many agencies and organizations such as the Forest Service, California Department of Fish and Game, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management, National Wildlife Federation, colleges, and universities.

Bald eagle tale one of recovery

North America is the only place in the world where bald eagles exist. Before the settlement of Europeans in America, bald eagles may have numbered 500,000. They occupied every large river and lake concentration in North America. With the influx of people and their movement westward, the competition for food (mostly fish) between people and eagles increased. People, having weapons at their disposal, had the upper hand.

By the 1800s, there was a sharp decline in bald eagle populations. In the 1930s, people began to notice the lack of bald eagles. The Bald Eagle Act was passed in the 1940s reducing harassment to eagles and bald eagle numbers began to increase. At the same time the use of DDT and other pesticides increased. These pesticides eventually became part of the food chain that harmed both adult birds and their eggs. The pesticides resulted in thin eggshells causing them to be crushed during incubation. High levels of DDT were found in the fatty tissues of dead bald eagles which may have caused infertility.

Since the banning of DDT and the passing of laws to protect the bald eagle and its nesting sites, bald eagle numbers have increased. The US Fish and Wildlife Service changed the listing to threatened in 1995. It was proposed that the bald eagle be declared fully recovered by 2000. That decision has been delayed until a plan is made to manage the species after delisting.

If you are interested in additional information concerning the bald eagle, please visit www.baldeagleinfo.com. Surveys and studies such as this are part of the Klamath National Forest Commitment to preserving and restoring our natural ecosystems.