

Bald Eagle



*Field Observation &
Data Collection*

MANUAL

Welcome

Watching a Bald Eagles' nest is fascinating and fun.

It is also challenging work with enormous value to the world.

While the things we observe at the nests we monitor each season clearly help to protect the families we are watching over, the data we collect at the nest also has the potential to help eagles and other animals around the world for years to come.

Thoughtful, careful observation and accurate data recording amplifies the value of the time we spend outdoors and reverberates across the planet.

It begins with hatching

- A.** Adult sitting higher in nest than previous weeks.

- B.** Second adult returning to nest with food.

- C.** Adult in the nest may show tugging/pulling action, they may be shifting their head from side to side suggesting feeding nestlings.

- D.** On a warm day (or if sun directly on the nest) the adult may spend more time on the rim of the nest and not sitting in the bowl.

*Preserving observations & contributing data*

Status	Incubating, Hatching, or Brooding at this stage.
Adults	M and F if you see both adults, M or F if you see one and can sex U if you see one and can't sex.
Eggs	— if you can't see the eggs, or 0-4 if you can see the eggs.
Chicks	0-4 . Always record only the number of chicks you actually see.

Possible hatchling in view

- A.** During feeding time, you may see the top of a chick's head. In NestStory you would switch from "brooding" to "nestling" status.

- B.** Feeding happens more frequently.

- C.** The adult will still sit on the chicks, tucking them underneath their chest.



Preserving observations & contributing data

Status	Brooding , or Nestling at this stage.
Adults	M and F if you see both adults, M or F if you see one and can sex U if you see one and can't sex.
Eggs	— if you can't see the eggs, or 0-4 , if you can see the eggs.
Chicks	0-4 . Always record only the number of chicks you actually see.

Better hatchling count

- A.** At 3 weeks, you should be able to count the number of nestlings.

- B.** Adults may start sitting on branches above or near the nest.

- C.** Adults may bring in branches to build up the rim of the nest.

- D.** Adults may bring food more frequently.

- E.** You may see a gray "mohawk" on the oldest chick, as they begin to lose their down and grow feathers.



Preserving observations & contributing data

Status	Nestling at this stage.
Adults	M and F if you see both adults, M or F if you see one and can sex U if you see one and can't sex.
Eggs	— if you can't see the eggs, or 0-4 if you can see the eggs.
Chicks	0-4 . Always record only the number of chicks you actually see.

Full count

- A.** You should be able to get an accurate count of nestlings.
- B.** Depending on the number of nestlings, you might see both adults bringing food back to the nest: more chicks require more food!
- C.** Adults may perch out of your view (depending on nest location), but they will always perch where they can see the nest.
- D.** You will begin to see brownish pin feathers on the oldest nestling.

*Preserving observations & contributing data*

Status	Nestling at this stage.
Adults	M and F if you see both adults, M or F if you see one and can sex U if you see one and can't sex.
Eggs	– if you can't see the eggs, or 0-4 , if you can see the eggs.
Chicks	0-4 . Always record only the number of chicks you actually see.

Pin feather development

A. Nestlings begin to grow pin feathers that stick out and cover the grayish down.



B. Adults will continue to bring food and still feed the nestlings.



Preserving observations & contributing data

Status	Nestling at this stage.
Adults	M and F if you see both adults, M or F if you see one and can sex U if you see one and can't sex.
Eggs	— if you can't see the eggs, or 0-4 if you can see any remaining, unhatched eggs.
Chicks	0-4 . Always record only the number of chicks you actually see.

Feathering

- A.** The nestling's wings and head will have brown feathers; underbelly and legs still have gray down.

- B.** Adults will stay out of the nest, with the exception of feeding times.

- C.** Adults may still bring sticks to the nest.



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Chicks	0-4 . Always record only the number of chicks you actually see.

Self feeding

- A.** Oldest chick will start to self-feed from scraps in the nest.
- B.** The adult will still feed all the chicks.
- C.** Nestlings will start some wing stretching.
- D.** Adults may not be seen during nest monitoring, but they will always be watching the nest.

*Preserving observations & contributing data*

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Eggs	– if you can't see the eggs, or 0-4 if you can see any remaining, unhatched eggs.
Chicks	0 - 4 . Always record only the number of chicks you actually see.

Flapping & Stretching

A. Nestlings will begin flapping, hopping, and stretching their wings.

B. Nestlings will sleep more, between feedings and exercise.



Preserving observations & contributing data

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Eggs	– if you can't see the eggs, or 0-4 if you can see the eggs.
Chicks	0-4 . Always record only the number of chicks you actually see.

Branching

- A.** Nestlings will begin stepping out on branches close to the nest. They are building balance and confidence.

- B.** Almost all their gray down has been replaced by brown feathers.

- C.** Adults will still bring food to the nest, but most nestlings will self-feed.

- D.** Adults will stay nearby to protect nestlings.



Preserving observations & contributing data

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Eggs	– if you can't see the eggs, or 0-4 if you can see any remaining, unhatched eggs.
Chicks	0 - 4 . Always record only the number of chicks you actually see.

Exercise

A. All eaglets should be exercising, flapping, and hopping, especially on windy days. This activity strengthens their wing muscles and mimics the feeling of flying.

B. Eaglets will be branching farther from the nest.

C. Eaglets may show mantling, which is huddling over their food to keep it to themselves.



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Chicks	0-4 . Always record only the number of chicks you actually see.

Leaving the nest bowl

- A.** Eaglets will be fully branching. They will stretch and extend their wings during branching.

- B.** Eaglets will spend less time in the nest bowl.

*Preserving observations & contributing data*

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Chicks	0-4 . Always record only the number of chicks you actually see.

Fledge

A. First flights (fledging) will begin, with short flights between the nest and other branches and nearby trees.

B. There is often vocalizing between adults and eaglets to encourage the eaglets to fly.

*Preserving observations & contributing data*

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Adults	M and F if you see both adults, M or F if you see one and can sex U if you see one and can't sex.
Eggs	– if you can't see the eggs, or 0-4 if you can see the eggs.
Chicks	0-4 . Always record only the number of chicks you actually see.

Another season complete

All eaglets should have fledged at this stage.

Eaglets will return to the nest for food and sleep, but will mainly be on nearby branches.

Adults will rarely be at the nest. Adults can be seen flying overhead and circling, they will vocalize to entice eaglets to follow them for food.

Adults will still protect the nestlings.

The adults continue to provide food, and the eaglets will learn by following an adult.

Fledglings may continue to return to the nest, they may be visible in the nest in early mornings or evenings, because that's "home base."



THANK YOU





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FOUNDATION
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