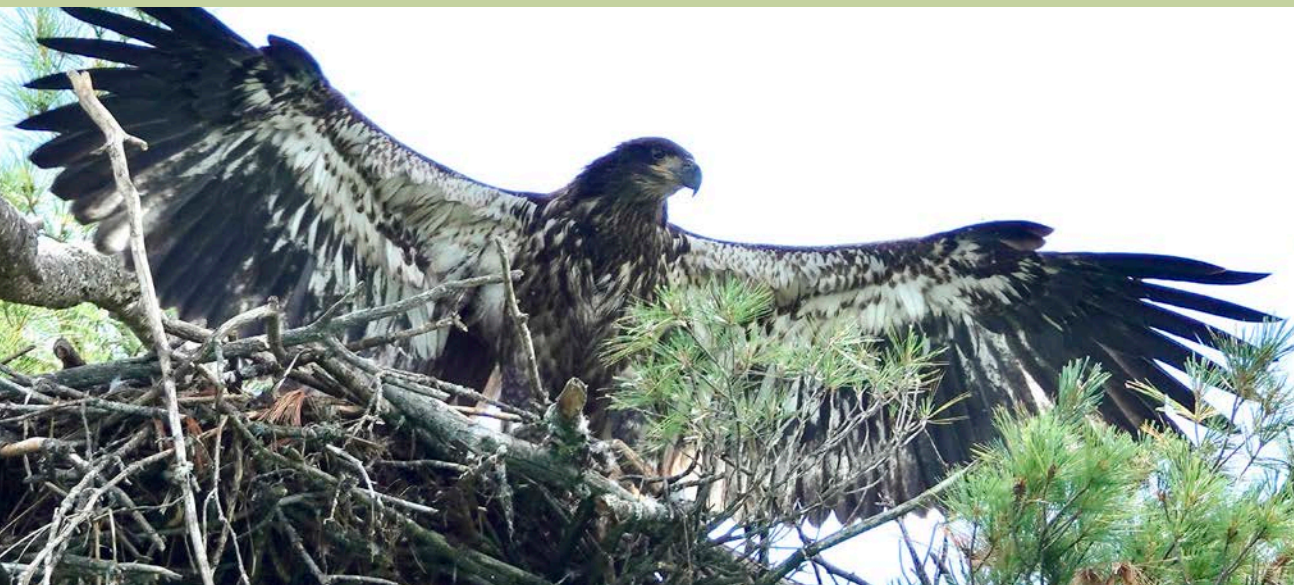


Conservation Notes



One of New Hampshire's 81 fledgling Bald Eagles spreads its wings at Elm Brook Marsh in Hopkinton, NH. Photo by Joe Grande, July 5.

Bald Eagle 2021 Breeding Season

by Chris Martin

Staff and volunteers confirmed 81 territorial pairs of Bald Eagles in New Hampshire in 2021, up nearly 7% compared to 2020. We documented 67 pairs incubating, up almost 4% over 2020. We counted 53 successful nests and 81 young fledged, equaling 2019's record high total. The number of young Bald Eagles fledged per territorial pair remained at 1.00 young/pair in 2021, right at the state's long-term productivity average. A grand total of 735 juvenile eagles have fledged from New Hampshire nests since the species resumed breeding in the state in 1989 and nearly one-third of those young (32%) have fledged in just the past three breeding seasons!

Over the last quarter-century, our state's breeding Bald Eagle population has doubled every five to seven years (see graph). At that rate, there could be over 150 territorial pairs of eagles nesting in the Granite State before 2030! That would be a truly remarkable resurgence in a period of less than 40 years. Several large lakes and rivers in the Granite State now have multiple breeding pairs. For example, Lake Winnepesaukee alone now has 10 nesting pairs (not including five more on adjacent lakes like Squam, Waukegan, Wentworth, and Winnisquam!). The Merrimack River from Franklin to Nashua now has seven nesting pairs and in the North Country, Lake Umbagog supports five pairs (three nests in NH, two in Maine) and Pittsburg's Lake Francis hosts two pairs.

Since Fall 2020, we recorded band encounters with 15 individual color-banded Bald Eagles; 13 were seen/photographed alive, while only two were found dead. Those two dead birds were 21 and 14 years old, and both had been long-standing members of New Hampshire breeding pairs. A total of 11 individuals (73%) were encountered in NH, while the remaining four (27%) were seen in either

Connecticut or Vermont. The oldest was a 21-year-old female who had nested for many years on Squam Lake but was found dead on Wickwas Lake. The youngest was a one-year-old immature from Lake Massasecum that was seen at two separate locations in Connecticut.

NH Fish & Game took the Bald Eagle off the state's Threatened List in March 2017 after several decades of robust eagle recovery. At NH Fish & Game's request, NH Audubon focused monitoring attention in 2021 on the Connecticut River Valley, and in 2022 we will focus on the Lakes Region. We continue to document new breeding pairs wherever they are reported in the state, adding them into future monitoring efforts.

Bald Eagle monitoring and management is funded by private donations and the NH Fish and Game Department's Nongame Program. A special thank you to all our supporters!

New Hampshire Bald Eagle Productivity, 1987-2021

