

2016 Presidential Migratory Bird Federal Stewardship Award
Top Three Nominee

Bureau of Land Management: Raptor Nest Inventory Survey (RINS)

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Project Description: Raptor Inventory Nest Survey (RINS) is an all-volunteer organization concerned with birds of prey that nest throughout Utah. RINS focuses on habitat protection with particular emphasis on raptor species listed as sensitive, threatened or endangered.

Volunteers are asked to locate all of the raptor nests within their assigned territories throughout the State of Utah including the counties of Box Elder, Tooele, Juab, Millard, Rich, Daggett, Uintah, Duchesne, Emery, Grand, San Juan, Weber, Morgan, Summit, Wasatch, Salt Lake, and Utah counties in Utah. They regularly check the nests' condition to see whether a raptor is using the



Photo credit: Robyn McDuff

nest, and to determine yearly productivity (how many young fledged from the nest). Observing and recording what types of human disturbance, vegetation, prey, and prey remains present at or near the nest site is also recommended. All raptor nests are protected under federal law, so the data collected by RINS volunteers provides current information regarding birds of prey and their nests, that aids in management decisions and protection, which ensures the nest sites and young are protected. RINS volunteers have discovered and documented over 450 new nests, many of these are active nests since the majority of raptors are nomadic following prey availability and structures to build nests on. RINS volunteers have contributed 10,323 days in the field while spending 100,873 hours collecting and processing data. This same group of volunteers has driven 997,650 miles to monitor raptor nests for five BLM Field Office jurisdictions in Utah. RINS

provides this important information to the BLM and the BLM uses the information to determine the potential impacts of actions it is considering by using appropriate conservation measures or mitigation. RINS volunteers have also assisted the BLM by monitoring project sites before and during construction when asked by the BLM. This insures that the species are protected adequately.

With the information collected, BLM actions contribute to achieve stable or increasing populations of raptors in Utah and in their wintering habitat (Mexico/Central America). The BLM will continue to collect and the data to see the trends in raptor populations to try to determine cause/effect relationships. With consistent data inputs year-to-year, we may be able to determine the primary drivers of some trends, whether actions here during breeding is driving the population or if winter habitat may be more of a factor. With that information, the BLM establishes conservation measures to reduce the potential for impact to the populations in the future. Many of the raptor species are rare, therefore it is important for the BLM to meet its obligations under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act, Endangered Species Act and the BLM 6840 (Sensitive Species). The RINS helps with these obligations and helps the BLM fulfill its mission of multiple use and sustained yield. RINS data assist the BLM in managing raptor species as well as all of the other resources. With programs like RINS, the BLM is achieving its goal to sustain the health, diversity and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.