

News Release



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Environmental and Conservation Efforts Resulting in More Bald Eagles in Southeast Michigan

Grosse Ile, MI – Monitoring shows that there are more bald eagles in southeast Michigan. Bald eagles are not only our national symbol and bird, but they are a key indicator of ecosystem health.

Starting in the 1950s, bald eagle numbers throughout southeast Michigan and the United States began to decline because of widespread use of pesticides, like DDT, and other factors. In fact, from 1961 to 1987 there were no bald eagles produced in Metropolitan Detroit due primarily to pesticide contamination. Recognizing that bald eagle populations were in peril, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service placed it on the endangered species list in 1967. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality coordinate a monitoring program aimed at assessing the health of bald eagles.

Since 1991, there has been a steady increase in the number of occupied bald eagle nests per year in metropolitan Detroit. From 2012-2015 at least 25 active nests have been documented each year, resulting in the fledgling of 28 or more young per year.

In 2007, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service removed the bald eagle from the endangered species list because their populations recovered sufficiently across the United States. The most recent survey data from 2015 show that there were 14 occupied nests in Monroe County and six occupied nests in Wayne County that produced a total of 21 eaglets. It is important to remember that we, as humans, share the same ecosystem with bald eagles and if it is cleaner for them, it is cleaner for us.

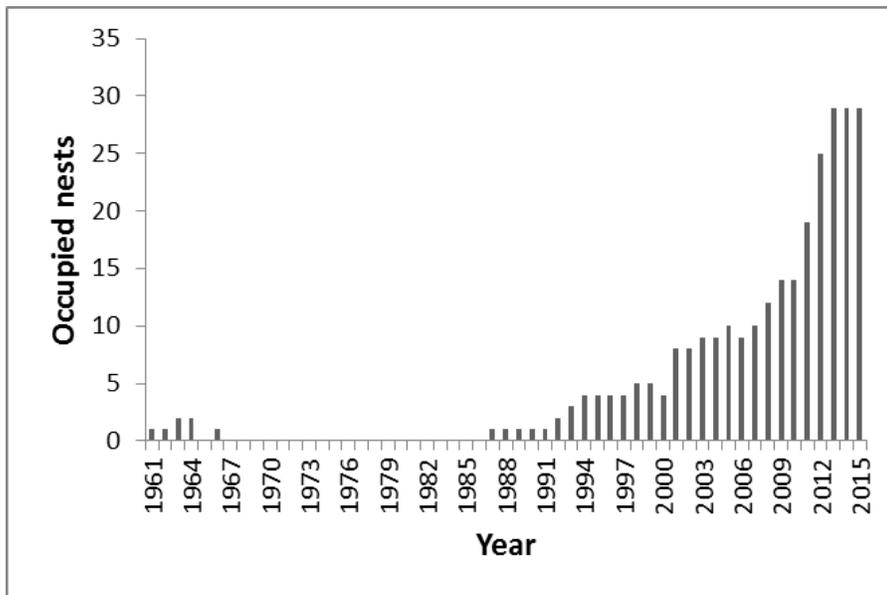
”The recovery of bald eagles is a true success story of the Endangered Species Act,” noted Chris Mensing, Biologist for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. ”The eagle’s rebounding population in southeast Michigan can be attributed to protecting nesting habitat and reducing the presence of contaminants throughout the Great Lakes.”

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service continues to monitor and research eagles, and is committed to maintaining stable or increasing eagle populations throughout their range. The bald eagle remains federally protected in the U.S. under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act.

The Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge is proud to be the only international refuge in North America and one of only 14 priority urban refuges in the nation charged with bringing conservation to cities. It covers 48 miles of shoreline along the lower Detroit River and western basin of Lake Erie -- stretching from southwest Detroit to the Ohio-Michigan border. The Refuge focuses on conserving, protecting and restoring habitat for 300 species of birds and 117 species of fish. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service currently owns or cooperatively manages 6,202 acres of unique habitats and partners with other organizations like Michigan Department of

Natural Resource and Essex Region Conservation Authority and the City of Windsor in Ontario to cooperatively manage other lands. In total, over 18,700 acres of land in southwest Ontario and southeast Michigan are now being cooperatively managed for conservation and outdoor recreation for nearly seven million people living in a 45-minute drive. More information can be found at: www.fws.gov/refuge/detroit_river/.

The number of occupied bald eagle nests in southeast Michigan, 1961-2015.



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