

News Release



Long Island National Wildlife Refuge Complex
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December 11, 2020

Wertheim National Wildlife Refuge Closes Little Neck Run For Nesting Bald Eagles

The staff of Wertheim National Wildlife Refuge continue to monitor the pair of bald eagles along Little Neck Run, a small tributary of the Carmans River. Two eaglets successfully fledged from the nest in 2020. Recent observations of the eagles at the nest site prompt a seasonal closure of Little Neck Run to public access. The closure will help reduce disturbance to the birds and help protect the nest location during this very sensitive time. Once eagles select a nesting territory, they tend to use it for the rest of their lives.

Bald eagles reach sexual maturity at five years of age and obtain the characteristic white head and tail. They build large nests in tall trees and prefer undisturbed areas along the shorelines of rivers, marshes and large lakes. In the northern U. S., eagles generally initiate nest building in December - January. Egg laying and incubation (33-35 days) can start in February and chick hatching and rearing takes place in March – May. Eaglets make their first unsteady flights 10-12 weeks after hatching and begin fledging in June – August. Refuge staff conduct weekly observations of the Wertheim nest, and will re-open Little Neck Run after chick fledging.

With the use of a spotting scope or binoculars, some favorable locations for visitors to view eagles and other wildlife include the Black Tupelo trail, Indian Landing and refuge overlooks along the Carmans River. Visitors are reminded to obey closed area boundary signs and to adhere to refuge regulations.

Bald eagles were removed from the endangered species list in 2007, but are still federally protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act. These acts help to ensure the safety of eagles and their parts (feathers, nests and eggs) from hunting, collection, harassment and other harmful actions.

Wertheim National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1947 to preserve habitat for migratory birds. The refuge is located along the Carmans River in Suffolk County, New York, and protects one of the last undeveloped estuaries on Long Island. Refuge management programs have expanded to also include the protection of federally-listed endangered and threatened species, the conservation of native flora and fauna, and opportunities for wildlife-dependent public uses, where appropriate and compatible.

For further information, please contact us at 631-286-0485 or visit www.fws.gov/refuge/wertheim.

The mission of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit www.fws.gov.