

Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*)

Description: The adult Bald Eagle is a huge, blackish-brown raptor with a distinctive white head and tail and yellow bill, eye, and legs. It usually attains complete adult plumage by its fifth year. In flight, the Bald Eagle soars with its long, broad wings (often described as plank-like) held flat.

Juvenile Bald Eagles (birds younger than five years old) are mottled with varying degrees of brown and white and are sometimes confused with the Golden Eagle. The Bald Eagle can be identified from the Golden Eagle by its more massive bill and unfeathered lower legs.

Trends: Increasing

Habitat: Often next to water along coasts, rivers, or large lakes; in forested areas with access to openings and/or edges for foraging.

Ways You can help with Conservation: The Bald Eagle is perhaps the most iconic bird in all of North America. Bald Eagles are protected under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act, which prohibits the taking or possession of these raptors and their feathers, eggs, and nests. Once in steep decline due to DDT, Bald Eagles have made a dramatic recovery in recent years. Within a couple of decades, the Bald Eagle has gone from regional rarity to a fairly common species locally.

Healthy populations exist at Jordan and Falls Lakes, and eagle pairs frequently nest near local rivers and reservoirs. Collision with human-made structures such as poorly sited towers, powerlines, and wind turbines is one of the leading causes of Bald Eagle mortality. Its habit of scavenging roadkill makes it especially susceptible to fatal collisions with motor vehicles. Bald Eagles readily scavenge game and animal remains left by human hunters. These remains often contain fragments of lead ammunition, which the eagles accidentally ingest. Even small amounts of lead can be enough to poison, and eventually kill, an eagle.

If you are a hunter or know hunters encourage them to not use lead shot as this is dangerous for all raptors and the environment.

Stop the use of pesticides and rodenticides which can impact many bird species.

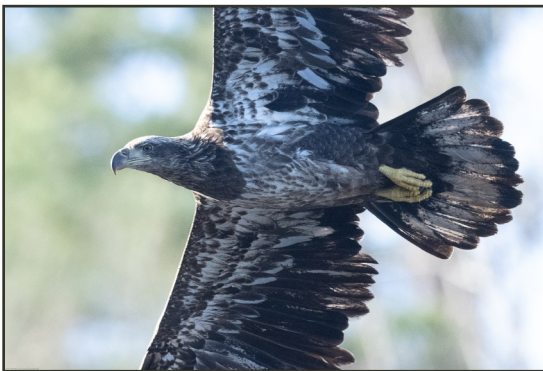
Volunteer to monitor the local Bald Eagle population. New Hope Bird Alliance monitors Bald Eagles at Jordan Lake with eagle counts four times a year. If you are interested in helping to count eagles please the [NHBA Eagle Count page](#).



Photo by Tom Driscoll



Photo by Joe Donahue



Immature Bald Eagle photo by Joe Donahue