



GAME AND FISH NEWS

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Arizona Game and Fish Department

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Arizona's bald eagles expand breeding sites in 2017



PHOENIX — Arizona's bald eagle population continues to soar as the number of breeding areas expanded statewide and a record 82 young hatched during the 2017 breeding season, according to an annual Arizona Game and Fish Department survey.

While the number of hatchlings rose from the previous high of 79 in 2016, the number of young that actually fledged dipped slightly to 63 birds that made the important milestone of their first flight. In Arizona, at least 95 eggs were laid, which was slightly less than the 97 laid in 2016, and a record 85 breeding areas were identified, including two new areas.

“We continue to see phenomenal growth of Arizona’s bald eagle population,” said Kenneth Jacobson, AZGFD bald eagle management coordinator. “An increase in breeding areas and increasing numbers of hatchlings is a testament to the resiliency of these magnificent animals and our ongoing efforts to help recover bald eagles in Arizona.”

Arizona’s bald eagle populations have flourished since 1978, when 11 pairs were counted within the state and the species was listed as endangered. Today there are an estimated 67 adult breeding pairs.

Bald eagles in Arizona were removed from the federal Endangered Species Act in 2011. The department’s conservation efforts contributed to the species recovery. Nationally, the birds remain protected by the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act.

The impressive growth of the population is attributed to the continued efforts of the Southwestern Bald Eagle Management Committee – a coalition of AZGFD and 25 other government agencies, private organizations and Native American tribes – and its years of cooperative conservation efforts, including extensive monitoring by the nationally-awarded Bald Eagle Nestwatch Program.

The breeding season for bald eagles in Arizona runs from December through June, although eagle pairs at higher elevations nest later than those in the rest of the state.

Continued support from the committee, State Wildlife Grants and the Heritage Fund (Arizona Lottery ticket sales), will help ensure that Arizona’s bald eagles continue to thrive.

For more information on bald eagles in Arizona, visit www.azgfd.gov (click on “wildlife”) or www.swbemc.org.

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