

Bald Eagle

Haliaeetus leucocephalus



Status: **Special Concern**

Threats:

- ◆ Poaching
- ◆ Accidental trapping
- ◆ Heavy metal contamination
- ◆ Collisions with electrical lines



Photo: Eric Frommer



Photo: Jorg Hempel

Description:

- ◆ Very large bird of prey 70-102 cm tall; weight 4.5-6.5 kg
- ◆ Wingspan up to 2 m
- ◆ Adults: brown body with white head, neck and tail
- ◆ Juveniles: mostly brown with a variable amount of white; resemble golden eagles; do not attain adult plumage until maturity (4 years old)
- ◆ Beak is large, yellow & hooked
- ◆ Call is a weak chirping whistle, harsher and more shrill from young birds than adults
- ◆ Can live up to 22 years

Biology:

- ◆ Nests are huge, constructed with sticks; usually near the top of a tree and close to water
- ◆ Lays 1-3 eggs
- ◆ Feeds mainly on fish, as well as birds and small mammals
- ◆ Will scavenge for carrion such as deer carcasses
- ◆ Will steal food from other birds like osprey
- ◆ Have keen vision to see prey on the ground or in the water during flight
- ◆ Strong beaks and sharp talons grasp and carry away food
- ◆ Are frequent winter visitors in central Ontario but nest records are few to date

Habitat:

- ◆ Need large areas of continuous forest cover with large trees for nesting near lakes and rivers

Species at Risk
STEWARDS' GUIDE SERIES

Bald Eagle

Haliaeetus leucocephalus

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Bald Eagle on Your Property? Here's What You Can Do:

- ◆ **Don't disturb nests, young or adults.** Be respectful and observe from a distance.
- ◆ **Do not use pesticides,** especially near water.
- ◆ **Support sustainable forestry practices when you purchase wood products.** Look for an FSC logo.
- ◆ **See a Bald Eagle?** Submit your sighting to the Natural Heritage Information Centre at nhic.mnr.gov.on.ca/MNR/nhic/species/species_report.cfm. Photographs with specific locations or mapping coordinates are always helpful.
- ◆ **Contact the Ministry of Natural Resources.** If you find a Bald Eagle or a nest on your property, you may be eligible for stewardship programs that support the protection and recovery of species at risk and their habitats. Contact the MNR for more information.
- ◆ **Learn More.** Check out the Species at Risk section on the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources website at www.mnr.gov.on.ca.



Did You Know?

The Bald Eagle is a conservation success story!
Bald Eagles nearly became extinct due to the widespread use of pesticides like DDT following WWII.
These chemicals are now restricted and many populations appear to be recovering.

Ontario's Endangered Species Act

Ontario's *Endangered Species Act, 2007* came into force on June 30, 2008, making Ontario a North American leader in the protection of species at risk and their habitats.

Compared to Ontario's previous Act, written in 1971, the new ESA 2007 provides:

- ◆ Science-based assessment of species' status
- ◆ Automatic protection of a species and its habitat once it's listed as endangered or threatened
- ◆ Broader protection for species at risk and their habitats
- ◆ Greater support for volunteer stewardship efforts of private landowners, resource users, and conservation organizations
- ◆ A commitment to recovery of species through recovery planning
- ◆ Greater accountability, including government reporting requirements

Ontario is home to more than 30,000 species, most of which have stable populations.

However, more than 180 species in Ontario, 34 of which are found in Parry Sound-Muskoka, are currently considered "at risk" because of threats like:

- ◆ Habitat loss
- ◆ Global changes in insect populations
- ◆ Pollution
- ◆ Invasive species
- ◆ Climate change
- ◆ Over-harvesting
- ◆ Road mortality



Learn more about Species at Risk on the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources website at www.mnr.gov.on.ca.