

JOB PROGRESS REPORT

State: California Project Number: E-W-2Study & Job Numbers: V-1.5Title: Southern Bald EaglePeriod Covered: October 1, 1977 - September 30, 1978

OBJECTIVES:

Restore the southern Bald Eagle (Haliaeetus leucocephalus leucocephalus) to nonendangered status.

ABSTRACT:

Agency activities involving major aspects of Bald Eagle research and management in California were coordinated through the Bald Eagle Working Team. Forty-two Bald Eagle nesting territories were known to be active in 1978. Fourteen of 40 active territories checked produced 18 fledgings. Production was the lowest recorded since surveys were initiated.

BACKGROUND:

The nesting population of the historically abundant Bald Eagle in California declined because of disruption of nesting habitat by logging, human encroachment into nesting and feeding areas, environmental contamination of the food chain by persistent pesticides, irresponsible shooting, and power line electrocution. Resource managers need sufficient biological information on habitat needs of nesting and wintering Bald Eagles in California to develop and implement management programs. Also required is close coordination of the many state and federal agencies and private interests involved in Bald Eagle habitat management and land use. Studies of Bald Eagle nesting and wintering population size and habitat requirements are being conducted for use in developing management plans and guidelines. Efforts are being coordinated by the Southern Bald Eagle Working Team.

FINDINGS:

Southern Bald Eagle Working Team

Meetings of the Working Team were held on May 18-19 and September 29, 1978. Department members on the team were Robert Mallette of the Endangered Wildlife Program and Dave Smith, Region 1. Major issues that the team was involved with during the period covered were: review of diatomaceous earth mining proposals in the Lake Britton, Shasta County, Bald Eagle nesting area; coordination of nesting and winter roosting surveys; review of nest territory management plans; review of Bald Eagle research proposals; and review of Bald Eagle electrocution problems in the Mt. Dome area. Associated with meetings were field trips to Bald Eagle nesting and wintering habitats.

Nesting Survey, 1978

Project personnel, in cooperation with U. S. Forest Service and U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service personnel, coordinated surveys of Bald Eagle nesting territories. Seventy-seven historic or new territories were checked for activity. Forty-two territories were active. Forty active territories were checked for nesting success, and 14 (35%) of the nesting pairs produced 18 fledglings. Productivity was 0.45 fledglings per active nest checked, or 1.28 fledglings per nest for pairs that fledged young. Productivity was the poorest recorded in the 10 years for which productivity data are available (Table 1). This was attributed primarily to adverse climatic conditions, including heavy, late spring rains.

Management Plans

Proposed management plans for Bald Eagle territories are still being submitted to the Working Team for review and comment. Project personnel assisted the team in reviewing plans and coordinating agency responsibilities.

Other Activities

Staff assistance was given to other staff and regional personnel in reviewing and commenting on Timber Harvest Plans and Environmental Impact Reports. Assistance was provided to U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service personnel in reviewing consultations on federal projects involving Bald Eagle habitats.

Department contracted with U. S. Forest Service for a study to evaluate nest site parameters of Bald Eagle nest site requirements. This work was included as a project amendment, Job V-1.51.

Project personnel provided information to State Board of Forestry Ad Hoc Task Force on Protection of Nesting Sites to aid in development of Forest Practices rules that will adequately protect Bald Eagle nest sites on private timberlands.

ANALYSIS:

Nest survey procedures have improved annually as agency biologists gain experience in surveying Bald Eagle breeding habitats. Increased efforts are needed by agencies to complete nest territory management plans. Progress is being made to meet project objectives.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Continue participation in Southern Bald Eagle Working Team. Continue statewide nest survey and initiate winter population survey.

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Table 1. Summary of Nesting Activity and Production of Known Bald Eagle Nest Territories in California, 1968-1978.

	<u>1968</u>	<u>1969</u>	<u>1970</u>	<u>1971</u>	<u>1972</u>	<u>1973</u>	<u>1974</u>	<u>1975</u>	<u>1976</u>	<u>1977</u>	<u>1978</u>
<u>Activity</u>											
Active territories	6	7	16	17	22	20	19	21	31	40	42
Inactive territories	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>35</u>
Total territories checked	6	8	18	23	30	30	29	32	43	52	77
<u>Production</u>											
Active nests checked	0	5	6	12	11	19	18	19	28	33	40
Active nests, none fledged	-	1	2	1	3	4	5	8	9	12	26
Active nests, 1 fledged	-	2	2	4	3	8	8	5	10	12	10
Active nests, 2 fledged	-	2	2	7	5	5	3	6	8	7	4
Active nests, 3 fledged	-	-	-	-	-	2	2	0	1	2	0
Total fledglings	-	6	6	18	13	24	20	17	29	32	18
Fledglings/Active nest checked	-	1.20	1.00	1.50	1.18	1.26	1.11	0.89	1.04	0.97	0.45
Fledglings/Successful nest	-	1.50	1.50	1.64	1.62	1.60	1.54	1.54	1.53	1.52	1.28