

JOB FINAL REPORT

State: California

Project Number: E-W-5(+1) Project Title: Endangered, Threatened and Rare Wildlife

Job Number: V-14.2 Job Title: Bald Eagle Breeding Population Inventory

Period Covered: October 1, 1981 - September 30, 1982 Job Type: Survey and Inventory

SUMMARY:

State and Federal agency personnel and cooperators surveyed 70 currently used or historical Bald Eagle nesting territories in California in 1982. Four of these territories were discovered in 1982. Another five territories were not surveyed. Eighteen territories were found to be unoccupied, and 52 territories were occupied by one or two adult Bald Eagles. Pairs at 41 territories were reproductively active: 31 pairs were successful in raising 48 young to fledging age, 9 pairs were unsuccessful, and success of 1 pair was unknown. All known active territories were located in eight northern California counties. One near-fledging age nestling was translocated for release on Santa Catalina Island.

OBJECTIVE:

Determine the status of territories and number of young produced at known Bald Eagle breeding territories in California.

PROCEDURES:

Field biologists from the Department and cooperating agencies surveyed known Bald Eagle breeding territories throughout northern California during the breeding season. At least two visits were made to most territories. Agency field data forms or field notes were prepared by cooperators, and these data were to be submitted to the Department's Endangered Wildlife section for tabulation and filing.

BACKGROUND:

Statewide Bald Eagle survey efforts in California began in 1968, but thorough coverage was not attained until 1977. Adequate survey efforts have been made annually since then by interagency cooperators. Increasing numbers of territories have been reported annually, partly because of improving survey efforts. Also, there seems to be at least a short-term improvement in status of populations in some areas.

Job V-14.2 was initiated in FY 1979-80.

FINDINGS:

Survey results for the previous 2 years were reported in job progress reports for E-W-4 and E-W-5 and are summarized in Tables 1 and 2.

In 1982, cooperators surveyed 70 of the 75 currently occupied or historical territories in California (Table 3). Four of these survey sites were discovered in 1982. Nest site field data sheets, telephonic reports, and field notes are maintained in Department files.

Table 1. Bald Eagle Nesting Summary, 1980-1982 Breeding Seasons in California

Year	Number of Territories							No. of		
	Not Surveyed	Surveyed	Status Unkn.	Unoccupied	Occupied, Activity Unkn.	Not Active	Occupied, Active, Success Unkn.		Active, No Success	Active, Successful
1980	0	70	2	16	4	4	0	9	35	57
1981	0	71	1	13	4	5	1	8	39	60
1982	5	70	0	18	4	7	1	9	31	48

Table 2. Bald Eagle Reproductive Success Rates, 1980-1982

Breeding Seasons in California

	Breeding Seasons in California	
	1980	1981
Fledglings/Successful Territory	1.6	1.5
Fledglings/Active Territory ^{1/}	1.3	1.3
Fledglings/Occupied Territory ^{1/}	1.1	1.0

^{1/} Includes only territories for which fledging success was known.

Table 3. 1982 Bald Eagle Nesting Summary, California

County	Number of Territories							No. of Fledglings	
	Not Surveyed	Surveyed	Unoccupied	Occupied, Activity Unkn.	Occupied, Not Active	Active, Success Unkn.	Active, No Success		Active, Successful
Butte		1						1	1
E1 Dorado		1	1						
Lake		1						1	2
Lassen	2	14	7	1	1	1	1	3	3
Modoc		5						4	5
Plumas		12 ^{2/}	3	1	3		1	4	7
Shasta	2	29 ^{1/}	5	1	3		5	15	25 ^{3/}
Siskiyou	1	2 ^{1/}	1	1					
Trinity		5	1				1	3	5
Totals	5	70	18	4	7	1	9	31	48

1/ Includes one territory discovered in 1982.

2/ Includes two territories discovered in 1982.

3/ One was removed for translocation.

As part of the continuing program to restore a Bald Eagle population on the California Channel Islands, 16 nearly fledged nestlings have been translocated to Catalina Island from 1980 to 1982. Most nestlings used in the program came from wild nests in Washington state, but one nestling in 1981 and another in 1982 were removed from nests in Shasta County, California.

ANALYSIS:

Job objectives are being met, although continuing problems of field data collection and reporting suggest the need for improved survey program coordination. Frequently, sites are not checked early enough in the season to determine presence of adults and early breeding attempts. Occasionally, sites do not receive adequate follow-up surveys to assess nesting success. In many instances, field data are not routinely transmitted by cooperators to the Department for statewide compilation.

Since 1977, survey coverage has generally improved annually, but in 1982, because of general program cutbacks and travel restrictions, the survey effort declined slightly.

A detailed survey report for the 1981 breeding season was specially prepared, as described in E-W-5, V-14.2. This report has been drafted, and will be published as a Department of Fish and Game Wildlife Management Branch Administrative Report in early 1983.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Continue Department support in the annual Bald Eagle breeding season surveys, and cooperate with Department personnel, other agency personnel and the California Bald Eagle Working Team to improve interagency survey coordination.

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