

STATE OF CALIFORNIA
THE RESOURCE AGENCY
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

BALD EAGLE BREEDING SURVEY INSTRUCTIONS

The breeding season of bald eagles in California extends primarily from February through July. Each year cooperating agencies, organizations, and private individuals participate in a statewide monitoring program to document nesting activities at each nesting territory. In 1997, 160 recently active breeding territories were surveyed, and the number increases yearly.

Annual breeding season surveys are an important part of the population recovery effort. Survey information is used by resource agencies to aid breeding territory management or protection activities. Additionally, population status and trends must be monitored annually to provide the data needed for assessing population recovery.

Specific assignments and scheduling of observer time are usually handled at the agency district or regional office level. In general, agencies are responsible for surveys or territories on or near their own lands, with Department of Fish and Game also surveying on private lands. Field personnel should coordinate with other agencies or volunteers to avoid duplication of effort or to arrange for survey help.

The bald eagle breeding population is increasing annually. So, it is important that suspected new nesting territories be adequately checked, especially early in the breeding season.

Territories should be checked at least three times during the nesting season, although more frequent checking is preferred. Emphasis should be placed on checking during incubation and early nesting periods.

1. **Early March (early incubation)** – Territories in northern California should be checked in the first half of March, if possible, or as soon thereafter as road or weather conditions allow. The purpose of the first check is to determine whether a territory is occupied (record presence of adults, courtship behavior, evidence of nest repair or construction, incubation).
2. **Late April or early May (early nesting period)** – This check is needed to confirm that a territory is unoccupied, or if occupied in March, to determine whether the breeding pair is still tending the nest (incubating eggs or tending young nestlings).
3. **Mid June (late nesting period)** – The main purpose of this check is to determine how many nestlings are approaching fledgling age.

Survey dates maybe modified from these recommended time periods if the territories can be checked more frequently or if particular breeding pairs are known to begin nesting especially early or late in the season.

We recommend that observers report the stage of development of nestlings in accordance with [An Illustrated Guide for Identifying Developmental Stages of Bald Eagle Nestlings in the Field](#), by G.P. Carpenter (April 1990). This booklet is available from the San Francisco Zoological Society, Sloat Blvd. At the Pacific Ocean, San Francisco, CA 94132 (415-753-7080).

SUBMITTAL OF SURVEY FORMS

Please report observations on the **CALIFORNIA BALD EALGE NESTING TERRITORY FORM (revised 4/2010)**.

Please mail all completed forms by September 1 of the survey year to:

California Department of Fish and Game
Wildlife Branch
1812 Ninth St.
Sacramento, CA 95814
ATTN: Carie Battistone

Forms will be maintained in Department files and annual survey results will be compiled on the basis of these reports. If you have any questions please contact Carie Battistone at the above address or at cbattistone@dfg.ca.gov. Electronic forms can be found at http://www.dfg.ca.gov/wildlife/nongame/survey_monitor.html.

**California Department of Fish and Game
CALIFORNIA BALD EAGLE**

NESTING TERRITORY SURVEY FORM

Revised 4/2010

Territory Code: _____

County: _____ **Survey Year:** _____

Property Owner: _____ **If USFS:** _____ National Forest

Name (or general location of territory): _____

Name of nearest water body: _____

Location of Nest Site: T ____ R ____ Sec ____ 1/4 ____ 1/16 ____

UTM E: _____ **UTM N:** _____ **Zone:** _____

No. of nests in territory - Intact: _____ **Remnant:** _____

Nest Tree: Species: _____ **Year last Used:** _____

Nest: Year last used _____

NOTE: Please attach a map showing the location of any newly documented nest tree.

Describe tree and nest condition and size, and add other remarks: _____

For each visit to a territory, note, in detail, the times, number and age of birds, behavior of birds (lying, perching, etc.), evidence of nesting (nest maintenance, courtship, incubation posture), disturbances, and other pertinent information:

Initials of Observer	Date of Visit	Observations

(Attach additional pages, if necessary)

Initials of Observer	Date of Visit	Observations

(Attach additional pages, if necessary)

General Remarks: _____

PLEASE SUMMARIZE:

A. Successful Nestings: **No. of young known fledged _____ or probably fledged _____**

B. If no fledglings were produced this season please answer the following:

How many adults were seen in the territory? _____

Was there evidence of nest repair or construction? Yes ___ No ___

Were adults seen in the nest? Yes ___ No ___

Were adults in incubating posture? Yes ___ No ___

Number of nestlings observed? _____

Failed during incubation: _____ or nestling stage: _____ .

Other remarks: _____

Observer(s) name: _____

Affiliation: _____

Address: _____

Phone: () _____ **Fax:** () _____ **Email:** _____

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