

# ***DID YOU KNOW?***

## ***Bald Eagle***

**Following a dramatic decline caused by pesticides, our national bird is now making a slow but steady comeback, and once again nests in areas where it was wiped out during the 1960s.**

**Bald Eagles are fish eaters, like Ospreys, however, when they pursue their prey they rarely enter the water as an Osprey does. Instead they snatch the fish from the surface with their talons.**

**DESCRIPTION:** Height 30-31" (76-79 cm); Life Span 25–30 years.

A large blackish eagle with a white head and tail, and a heavy yellow bill. Of the eight sea eagles, the bald eagle is among the largest and can weigh up to 14lbs with wing spans of up to 7 ½ feet, in North America. Only the California condor and the golden eagle are larger. Eagles in the southern half of North America are somewhat smaller than those from the North. Females are larger than males. With eyes almost as large as a human's, bald eagles also have color vision. They are able to fly 36 – 44 miles per hour.

Juvenile bald eagles lack the white head and tail, and resemble adult Golden Eagles, but are variably marked with white and have a black, more massive bill. They are also actually a different shape from the adults (longer tail, wider wings) and require four or five years to reach full adult plumage.

- ◆ **VOICE:** Squeaky cackling and thin squeals.
- ◆ **FOOD:** Predation and scavenging take advantage of the most highly concentrated food source for the bald eagle, meat and fish. They are able to snatch fish with their talons with their talons. Have special pads on the soles of their feet, especially designed to firmly grip a slippery wriggling fish. Each foot has four toes, three pointing to the front and one to the rear, ending with razor sharp black talons up to two inches long.
- ◆ **NESTING:** Mated bald eagles form long monogamous bonds, but they replace mates very quickly when one dies. Within a mated pairs' breeding territory, will be found their nest and perching and roosting sites, which only they can use. 2 or 3 white eggs in a massive nest of sticks usually in a tall tree, or less frequently on top of a cliff.
- ◆ **HABITAT & RANGE:** Lakes, rivers, marshes, and seacoasts. Alaska east to Newfoundland and south locally to California, Great Lakes, and Virginia also in Arizona, along Gulf Coast, and in Florida. Winters along coasts and large rivers in much of United States.