



Best Management Practices for Construction and Development Projects Bald Eagle

Haliaeetus leucocephalus

Common name • Bald Eagle
Scientific name • *Haliaeetus leucocephalus*
Federal Status • Delisted; protected under:
Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act,
Migratory Bird Treaty Act and the Lacey Act
State Status • None

Purpose and Use

The information in this document is to be used to help avoid and minimize species impacts due to construction practices. It is not intended to be used as a guide to manage habitat for a given species. If that is the goal, please contact the Department of Conservation for habitat management information. Because every project and location differs, following the recommendations within this document does not ensure that impacts will not occur to the species and additional information might be required in certain instances. Following the recommendations within this document does not complete Endangered Species Act consultation that may be necessary for species listed under the federal Endangered Species Act; please contact the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for more information.

Ecology

Bald Eagles are common migrants and winter residents throughout Missouri and are increasing breeders in the state. They require a good food base, perching areas, night roosts and nesting sites. Their habitat includes estuaries, large lakes, reservoirs, and rivers. During winter, they congregate near rivers and reservoirs with open water and often near large concentrations of waterfowl. Wintering Eagles usually occupy river habitats between November 15 and March 1 where they use large diameter trees (50-190 cm diameter and 20-60 m in height) as daytime perches and night roosts. They usually perch near open water that provides a favorable thermal environment and offers available foraging habitat. In addition to feeding on fish, Bald Eagles also feed on dead or crippled waterfowl, small mammals, snakes and carrion. During winter nights, Bald Eagles may congregate at communal roosts, sometimes traveling as far as 20 kilometers from feeding areas to roost sites. The period from January 1 to March 1 is important for initiating nesting activity; March 1 to June 1 is the most critical time for incubation/rearing of young and June 1 to August 30 for fledging young. Females lay one to three eggs per clutch, and in Missouri, usually two chicks survive to fledging.

Reasons for Decline

Historically, Bald Eagles were found in all 50 states except Hawaii and nested in 45 of the 48 contiguous states. Declines in populations of Bald Eagles took place throughout the United States from the 1950s into the early 1970s, and were primarily a consequence of the pesticide DDT that caused the birds to lay thin-shelled eggs that either broke or failed to hatch. Habitat destruction and degradation, illegal shooting, and purposeful poisoning were also contributing factors. After DDT was banned in 1972, populations of Eagles stabilized and slowly began to increase. Disruption, destruction or obstruction of roosting, foraging and nesting areas can negatively affect Bald Eagles.

Specific Recommendations

- Depending on the activity, maintain a buffer of at least 200 meters (660 feet) between project activities and the nest (including alternate nests) if the project is visible from the nest or 100 meters (330 feet) if the nest is not visible. USFWS may issue a permit when projects could result in the unintended disturbance, injury or mortality of Eagles. Contact the USFWS if nesting Bald Eagles occur in your project area to determine if there may be potential impacts, to identify buffers and need for a permit (<http://www.fws.gov/midwest/MidwestBird/EaglePermits/baeatake/index.html>).
- Avoid clear cutting or removal of overstory trees within 100 m of the nest at any time.
- Protect and preserve potential roost and nest sites by retaining mature trees and old growth stands, particularly within ½ mile from water.
- Where nests are blown from trees during storms or are otherwise destroyed by the elements, continue to protect the site in the absence of the nest for up to 3 complete breeding seasons.
- Avoid construction of dams and impoundments on rivers where Eagles occur to maintain existing habitats.
- Use and dispose of pesticides, herbicides, fertilizers, and other chemicals only in accordance with federal and state laws.

General Recommendations

Refer to Management Recommendations for Construction Projects Affecting Missouri Streams and Rivers and Management Recommendations for Construction Projects Affecting Missouri Wetlands.

If your project involves the use of Federal Highway Administration transportation funds, these recommendations may not fulfill all contract

requirements. Please contact the Missouri Department of Transportation at 573-526-4778 or www.modot.mo.gov/ehp/index.htm for additional information on recommendations.

reduce and avoid project impacts to the species, but impacts may still occur. Please contact the appropriate agency for further coordination and to complete compliance requirements.

Information Contacts

For further information regarding the species or regulations for development in rivers and streams, contact:

For species information:

[Missouri Department of Conservation](#)

Resource Science Division
P.O. Box 180
2901 W. Truman Blvd
Jefferson City, MO 65102-0180
Telephone: 573/751-4115

For species information and Endangered Species Act Coordination:

[U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service](#)

Drew Becker
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service - Rock Island Field Office
1511 47th Avenue
Moline, IL 61265
Telephone: 309/757-5800
E-mail: Drew_Becker@fws.gov

For Clean Water Act Coordination:

[Missouri Department of Natural Resources](#)

Water Protection Program
P.O. Box 176
Jefferson City, MO 65102-0176
Telephone: 573/751-1300, 800/361-4827

[U.S. Army Corps of Engineers](#)

Regulatory Branch
700 Federal Building
Kansas City, MO 64106-2896
Telephone: 816/983-3990

[U.S. Environmental Protection Agency](#)

Water, Wetlands, and Pesticides Division
901 North 5th Street
Kansas City, KS 66101
Telephone: 913/551-7307

Disclaimer

These Best Management Practices were prepared by the Missouri Department of Conservation with assistance from state and federal agencies, contractors and others to provide guidance to those people who wish to voluntarily act to protect wildlife and habitat. Compliance with these Best Management Practices is not required by the Missouri wildlife and forestry law nor by any regulation of the Missouri Conservation Commission. Other federal laws such as the Clean Water Act and the Endangered Species Act, and state or local laws need to be considered for construction and development projects, and require permits and/or consultation with the appropriate agency. Following the recommendations provided in this document will help