



HISTORY OF THE BALD EAGLE IN KAUKAUNA, WIS.

By: Ron VanderVelden

1987-88 During the winter, an adult and a sub adult were seen feeding in the open water in the 1000 Island; first occurrence of eagles in decades.

1988 Nest was constructed on south bank of river in a large cottonwood; at 1 mile south of 1000 Islands; mature male and sub adult female raised two young. Photographed by Carl Schmitt; no banding of young.

1988-89 Winter population: 4 (2 adults, 2 juveniles)

1989 Same nest as '88 used by adult pair; one young fledged the nest; again, no banding.

1989-90 Winter population: 5 (2 adults, 3 juveniles)

1990 Same nest as '88,'89 used by adult pair; 1 addled egg - removed from nest on 5/26/90. Analysis revealed 36PPM of PCB.

1990-91 Winter population; 15(2 adults, 13 juveniles); construction began previous summer after abandonment of original nest. New location on isolated island at midpoint of 1000 Islands.

Fund raiser initiated to raise funds for hiring an eagle biologist/trapper to purchase and attach a radio transmitter to one of the resident adults to determine key habitat needs. Four thousand dollars raised; Al

Bath from Northern Michigan University was hired from Feb 5 to 30 April, 1991. Trapping attempt was unsuccessful; the countless hours of observation resulted in Al's Management Plan which identified the most important features and feeding sites within the known habitat.

1991 March 13 Egg laid at new nest site; male in an incubating posture. April 24 First evidence of hatching; daily monitoring by Al Bath confirms an incubation of 42 days. This is a new U.S. record, topping the 36 day record known to Dr. Al Harmata. Effects of PCB are suspected since terns on the shores of Green Bay also experience delayed hatching. June 8 Three young banded in the nest, 2 male, 1 female, each at 47 days old. Weight:3.5-4.5 kilograms. Blood samples from 2 young were drawn. Nest dimensions: 57" x 41" deep. July 13 All young fledged. October 20 All 5 (2 adults and 3 juveniles) feeding; nest #2 blown down, probably in September. Hiked in to nesting tree; adults came in close, screaming.

1992 January 8 Both adults rebuilding nest in same tree. Maximum winter population is 9: 2 adults, 1 sub adult, 6 juveniles. March 14 Female appears to be pseudo incubating; when male arrives, female leaves; male not incubating. April 26 Both adults feeding at least 2 young; day 40 of incubation. May 30 Three young banded - all female; USFW band #'s 46-48; colored bands (black) 2LC, 2LD, 2LF; weight 3580-3660 grams. Nest is at 71' off the ground, measuring 56"x46"x34". Blood samples taken to measure toxics and to initiate DNA blueprinting. July 14 All 3 young fledged; nest rapidly deteriorating.

1993 January 2 Winter population: 14 - 2 adults, 2 subadults, 10 juveniles. March 20 Female in incubation posture; "rocks" on nest when setting down. March 21 Male incubating; female flies in at 50' away; copulation and female to nest to incubate. April 28 Intense interest by both adults on eggs - hatching?? May 2 Feeding of one young confirmed; rocking by both adults seems to indicate more eggs possible. May 17 At least two young - first time observed that young were left unattended. June 10 Three young banded - 2 males, one female; triplets are rare (only 4% of nests nationally). The Kaukauna nest is the first in the state of Wis. to produce triplets from the same nest three years in a row. USFW band numbers 62938221,222 and 223. Female - 37 days old, weighed 4.2 kilograms. Males - 40 and 42 days old. Nest - 73" off ground, measuring 51"x48"x28" deep. Tree circum. - 125". Blood samples, prey remains and a primary #8 from left wing of female collected. December 11 Population at roost: 25-6 adults, one of which had a lavender colored band with a "V" inscribed. December 26 Population - 29; Juvenile banded at the nest last spring found dead of electrocution at Thilmany Co. 1994 January 17 Adult (most likely the resident female) was observed catching a fish that was too large; it was pulled into the water and under an ice shelf in the current. February 2 Winter count - 41!! I observed 29 all at the roost at one time - many of all age classes. March 3 Continual nest building started today by an adult male and a subadult female. Due to late nest building and different female, it is likely the mortality in January was the resident female. Report of an active nest on land by Little Lake Butte Des Mortes owned by Schultz Concrete. April 3 Female in incubating posture; male flew to edge, copulation, and then female rocked and incubated. May 10 Egg appears hatched; female sits higher on nest. Male makes frequent stick runs. June 15 One young - male; 3.05 kilograms. Band #629-364 15; Black Band-4GV 36 days old - 8th primary 123 mm long. Nest 72' off the ground, measuring 42"x54"x39" deep. Blood samples and prey remains (carp, duckling, teal posterior) collected. 1995

January 2 Winter population - 14 at roost; secondary roost site located just north of Alicia Park in Appleton on land owned by Dr. Kagan (6 -8 birds). February 15 Nest building by both adults, seems to be the original male and the female of last season, identified by the sooty marks on the back of her head. Frequent copulation. March 13 First occurrence of male incubation; continual incubation by both adults. April 14 Female incubation high on the nest; seemed to feed a young (first time observed) - continual incubation.

May 2 At least 2 young confirmed; first time young were left unattended - for 2 minutes. June 1 Triplets!!

sex USFW band # weight (kg) age (days) m 62936435 3.65 49 m 62936436 n.a. 44 f 62936437 n.a. 48 Nest size and height approximately the same as last year. Prey remains included carp, bullhead and duck feathers (found in pellet). Participants included Fud (Dave Evans), Mike Meyer - DNR, Cheryl Dyckstrom (?) USFW, Ed Culhane - Post Crescent, Travis Booms - former student, and Ron VanderVelden - KHS. Note: Water rose very rapidly while by nest - notification should be given to KPD, KEW, and US Corps of Eng. prior to future research at the #2 site.

1996 January 12 First sign of nest building; male carrying corn stalk to nest. Winter count: at 12. Numbers seem to be much lower this season but is probably due to other roost areas being established, most notably in Jefferson Park in Menasha where 20 eagles roost each evening. First sign of aerial courtship display by one adult and one subadult. March 3 First sign of incubation. One at the nest. False incubation?? March 4 Incubation continues. Rocking motion when repositioning. March 10 Continued incubation by both parents. Male on the nest. April 8 Close attention being paid to egg(s) while incubating and the adult seems to be sitting higher in the nest. Pipping and/or hatching? May 1 Two chicks observed with a possible third; adults both soaring - first time observed that both were away from the nest at the same time. May 29 Banding of the young; 1 male - 8.14 lbs. #629-4046; age - @45 days; 1 female - 10.34 lbs. #629-4045; age - @50 days. Both in excellent condition. Blood samples taken for PCB/toxics analysis and DNA mapping. Nest size 47" wide x 60" long x 47" deep. Nesting sticks collected; feathers and prey remains. A pellet of probable gosling material found in the nest. Participants: Fud, the climber, Mike Meyer, DNR, Joyce Schubring, Kaukauna Times, Al Her, student KHS, Travis Booms, student UWSP, and author, Ron VanderVelden.

July 15 Immature eagle with band #629-40405 found electrocuted at the lower hydro plant, within a few yards of previous electrocution. Female chick banded at the nest. Byron Goetsch of DNR removed carcass and a representative of the USFW contacted KEW about redesigning the tops of the power poles in that area. November 5 Adult pair at nest; male mounted female. Juvenile(s) seen in area. December 23 Total of 14 mixture of adults, subadults and juveniles coming into roosting site; different location from past years, now located directly south of TPP Admin. Building. Seems more secluded than original roost, just west of nesting tree. December 26 18 individuals entering the "new" roosting site at sunset.

1997 February 23 Nest building activity for past two weeks; @ 10-12" added to original nest. Both male and female bring in sticks, though the male carries in 3-4 times as many as the female. Much squabbling about positioning of each stick. Fewer nonresident eagles in the past month. March 3 Adult incubating - pseudoincubation? 6 nonresident eagles of various ages. Frequent aerial courtship displays. March 6 Continuous incubation; probable hatching date - April 5th. April 7 Both parents incubating, though much higher in the nest. April 17 First sighting of a chick - feeding time. Only one observed - seems to be at least one week old. Adult seemed interested in another portion of the nest. Other young? April 24 Both adults feeding from a small walleye. Two chicks observed!! One is noticeably larger than the other; possible third one?? April 26 Three chicks!! Both parents feeding three young, various sizes. April 27 Copulation on branch near nest; parents now spend time away from nest. May 4 Only two chicks observed; the three observed on April 27 was definite. May 16 Chicks have their primaries; only two observed. May 31 Two young in Butte Des Mortes nest; not banded due to tree. May 31 Two young banded; Fud, Jim, Margaret, Mike Frost, Julie Jenkins and I. One male - #62940497; @47 days; 4.05 kg (8.91 lbs) One female - #62940498; @50 days; @ 9 lbs. Nest: 51x58x52" deep; circumf-128", 127" in '96; 76' off of the ground - 72" in '96; Prey remains: rabbit foot, bullhead, mallard feathers. No sign of sibling last observed on April 26. 1998 February 25 Winter population - 6; low number due to El Nino and warmth. Adult pair carrying sticks for weeks. Female on nest rearranging fine nesting materials. Pseudoincubating, no rocking when sitting.

March 3 Female on nest in incubating posture; male arrived, female moved to nearby branch; male began incubating in two minutes, rocking movement as he sat.

April 6 Adult sitting high in nest; much interest in egg(s); hatching? April 8 Both adults feeding down deep in nest. April 13 Male flew in with a fish; female ate and fed young; one chick observed. Female left nest, male gently incubated. April 22 Both adults on nest; three chicks observed. Marked differences in size. May 22 Triplets banded - all female. Band #'s - 77,78,79. Weights between 8-10 lbs. Tree height: 75'; Nest size - 70"x54"x48. Prey remains from nest: bullhead, duck, gosling carcass, pigeon, carp. Blood samples taken from young to determine contaminant levels and DNA mapping. Participants: Fud, Mike Meyer, Ken Stromberg, USFW, Tom Meyer, and author.

1999 Jan 21 Adult pair observed carrying sticks and arranging nest. Mild beginning to winter, open water; reported by Kevin Hansen that there were eight perched near Hwy ZZ. Some activity around roosting site in the evening but little concentration. Feb 10 Adults arranging smaller nesting materials from cornfield off Cnty Z. Feb 23 Adult (gender?) incubating (pseudo?) on nest; copulation observed by Lee Hammen on Feb. 22 Feb 24 Adult left nest; no incubation March 1 Male incubating; female on nearby branch. Male incubating, left the nest, perched and called. Female assumed incubating posture, rocking as she sat. Male departed. April 4 Two chicks observed by staff of 1000 Island. April 15 Adult flew off nest; two young observed. Adult returned to four minutes to feed chicks. April 20 Adult observed feeding three chicks. May 25 Three very large young banded; two males and one female. Band #'s: 629-22361 - 22363. Weights: 3.7K, 4.1k, 4.8k. Nest-same size, greater depth. Blood taken and breast feathers removed for toxin analysis and DNA mapping. Little prey remains; mourning dove feathers in nest and pellet made up mostly of waterfowl remains. Participants; Fud, Mike Meyer, Ken Stromberg, Marty Fernandez, (USFW), Lee Hammen, Dr. Tim Hansen, Frank (?) grad student and author.

2000 January 21 Eight eagles observed, mainly concentrated around old quarry site; 3 adults, 5 juveniles. January 22 Twelve eagles observed throughout 1000 islands. February 2 Adult pair at nest; copulation observed. February 3 Nest building by both adults. February 22 Adult pair around nest most of time; nest building continues. 6 - 8" additional height to nest. Past Dates of Estimated Egg Laying and First Incubating '99 Mar 1 '98 Mar 3 '97 Mar 3 '96 Mar 4 '95 Mar 13 '94 April 3 (Late nesting probably due to new female) '93 Mar 20 '92 Mar 18 '91 Mar 13 February 27 Report of copulation and nest building by a pair of adults at the Combined Locks Mill in a heron nest by Tom Meyer. February 28 Adult incubating; when repositioning, it rocked when sitting. February 29 Female incubating; male arrived and took over incubation. Rocking motion as he sat. First sign of male incubating. April 20 Date of hatching undetermined. Adult feeding young. Number ? May 1 Two young observed; female shadowing chicks from hot sun. May 26 Two female young banded in nest; band numbers: #6629223-91 and 92. Ages: 49, 42 days. Weight of oldest - 11 lbs; nest size - not measured: "about the same" - Fud. Prey remains: pigeon feathers, waterfowl feathers, catfish. Participants: Fud (Dave Evans), Ken Stromberg, technician USFW, Lee Hammen, Mike Frost, author. First year of successful nesting at Combined Locks Mill - small nest built in a previous heron rookery. Two young observed. Tree not substantial enough for climbing.

2001 Jan 12 Twenty adults and juveniles counted by Lee Hammen. Feb 18 Adults observed nest building. Feb 28 Adult sitting on the nest. March 27 Incubation continues; juveniles in courtship flight. Winter population slowly decreasing. April 8 Feeding at nest; number of young unknown. Adult found dead in river in Combined Locks. Unknown if it is one of the resident pair which is nesting. April 20 Feeding at nest observed; at least one chick. Per Tom Meyer, nest at Combined Locks has failed. Single adult only observed at nest. April 30 Two chicks observed being fed by both parents. May 29 Two young banded; male - 8.8 lbs; 57 days old: FW Band #62922329; Wi-W58; female, 51 days old - FW Band #62922330; Wi-W59; blood

drawn. Nest: 56x55x48; participants: Fud, Ken Stromberg, USFW, two technicians, Mike Frost and author. Successful nest at Little Rapids. Landowner: Arthur S. Adams, Sr. Hudson St., Gr. Bay.

2002 Jan 9 Observation of 24 eagles reported in the 1000 islands; warm winter. Feb 22 Adult flew in with stick; nest building. March 5 Adult in incubation posture; egg(s)? April 2 Adult sitting high in nest; observation of feeding behavior by Lee Hammen. May 21 Several observations of a single chick. May 29 Single young - female banded at nest; 10.89 lbs. Banded with #'s 44329 and W94. Usual blood sampling, measuring, feather removal, etc. done. Nest: 59"x54"x52". Prey remains in nest - white sucker and mallard. Personnel involved - Mark and Barb, DNR, Ken Stromberg, USFWS and assistant, Mike Frost, Ron VanderVelden, KHS.

2003 March 17 They banded the young eagles this day. We had 1 female band number 629-44533. We had 1 male band number 629-44534. 9:30 am. Ken Stromberg U.S. Fish & Wildlife Services. 920-866-1733.

2004 March 2 Our eagles have built a new nest. The new nest is closer to the overlook. We figure they are sitting on eggs now. April 4 We observed them feeding their young. Two eaglets were hatched in late April. The young were not banded due to the water level in the river.

2005 The new nest blew down. This is the first year in 17 that we had no eaglets hatched.

2006 February 2 A pair has been sighted sitting on or near the original (old) nest. Nesting was unsuccessful. No babies were hatched from the nest this year.

2007 The eagles have been sitting on the nest starting the first week of March. The first week of April they have been seen feeding the babies.