

The Eagle Has Landed



Steve Bobzien

The bald eagle is a powerful hunter catching fish and waterfowl from the lakes and reservoirs in the Bay Area.

Despite Benjamin Franklin's protests that it was a "bird of bad moral character," the bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalis*) has been our national symbol since 1787. Once abundant throughout North America, by 1973 it had become an endangered species due to eggshell thinning.

Although bald eagles had been spotted overwintering at bay area reservoirs, none nested in the area until 1991 when a young female relocated from Alaska was released at Ventana Wilderness near Big Sur. She eventually found a mate and built a large stick nest at Lake Del Valle. The nest can still be seen in a fan-shaped grey pine across from Hetch Hetchy Group Camp. This pair has since built several new nests further up stream.



Who Is Soaring Overhead?

With a nearly seven-foot wing-span, dark body, white head and tail, adult bald eagles are unmistakable. Requiring four years to attain this plumage, young eagles show a mix of scattered white and brown feathering. You may see them soaring over the hills or even nabbing a wriggling fish from the lake—a truly remarkable sight!



Joe DiDonato

With its magnificent white head and tail contrasting a dark brown body, the mature bald eagle is easily distinguished from an immature bald or golden eagle.



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Often weighing hundreds of pounds and measuring more than six feet across, an eagle's nest may be used for decades by the same pair.

