

Eagle Watching Script

The bald eagle is found only in North America, and it's the second largest raptor, or bird of prey, found here. Only the California condor is larger.

There was a time when bald eagles nested coast to coast. At the signing of the Declaration of Independence there were well over fifty thousand nesting pairs in what, today, is the lower forty-eight states. The bald eagle has been recognized as our national symbol since 1782.

Only thirty years ago there were only about eight hundred active nests nationwide. Their numbers became precariously low due to pesticides, human disturbance, and a loss of trees for nesting habitat. Today bald eagles have made a miraculous comeback. So much so that their status has been improved from endangered to threatened.

Eagles rank number one on the list of animals that Americans say they want to see in the wild. Right now, Colorado offers that opportunity. Some twelve hundred eagles winter here, and there are more than fifty nesting pairs that live here year round. Because of their fondness for fish, look for bald eagles around large rivers, reservoirs, and even fish hatcheries.

Another raptor you might see is the golden eagle. Unlike balds, they are common in Colorado. There are six to nine hundred active golden nests here. The majority of golden eagles nest in the northwest part of the state during the summer, and move to the eastern plains in the winter.

Because immature bald eagles lack the distinctive white markings, they are frequently confused with golden eagles until they mature.

With the Colorado Division of Wildlife, Jeff Butler, CBS Four News