

Bald Eagle



The bad news....

Bald eagle populations in the Lower 48 declined due to a combination of factors.

- **Pesticides** accumulated in their bodies, making them sick or thinning their egg shells.
- In many areas water pollution, over-fishing, and destruction of wetlands caused populations of the eagle's primary **prey**, fish, to decline.
- Nest sites became scarce as large old trees were cut for human uses such as lumber, firewood, and to clear the land for development.
- Additionally, many eagles were illegally shot by farmers and ranchers who feared eagles killed their livestock.

NEST SITES PROTECTED. Nesting habitat is now protected and artificial nest sites have been built where natural nest sites were limited or lost. Biologists and utility companies are working together even in Alaska to design power lines that will not electrocute eagles if they land on them.

DDT PESTICIDE BANNED. The use of pesticides such as DDT are banned. DDT thins eggshells and accumulates in tissues of adults and their prey.

The good news

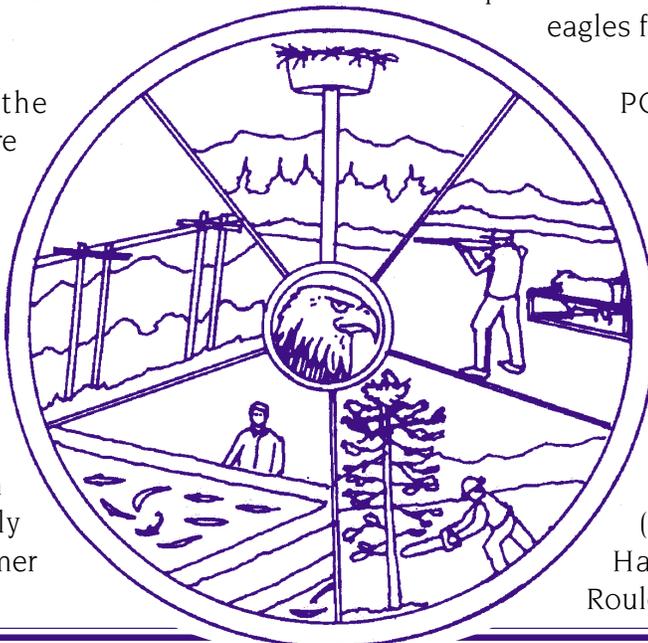
Bald eagle populations in the Lower 48 are recovering and were removed from Endangered Species listing in 1999. Many steps have been taken to ensure the survival of this bird.

LEAD SHOT BANNED. Waterfowl hunters are helping by using steel shot when they hunt instead of lead shot. Ducks and geese ate stray pellets of lead shot which poisoned eagles feeding on them.

What happened?

FEWER KILLED. As the public became more aware of the eagle's plight and strict laws were enacted, fewer eagles were killed.

ALASKA EAGLES BOOST POPULATION. Biologists captured some eagles from healthy populations in Alaska and successfully moved them to their former Lower 48 habitats.



POLLUTION CLEAN UP. Many people are working to clean up polluted rivers and lakes, protect wetlands, and restore fish populations. All these steps have helped provide a healthier environment for the eagles – and for us.

(See activities “Musical Habitats” and “Habitat Roulette” in Section 3)