



Bald Eagle Nest Etiquette



There are few sights more thrilling than a bald eagle at its nest or in action along a shoreline. Responsibilities come with this enjoyment. As you enjoy eagles, you must ensure your presence and behavior do not have a detrimental effect on the eagles or their future use of the area. Eagle nests and young eagles are easily disturbed. By causing a premature fledging, you can inadvertently cause injury or death of an eaglet that can not yet fly or defend itself. In the cold winter, energy is a very valuable commodity for eagles. Flushing eagles from a roost site or a feeding ground causes unnecessary stress and may expose the eagle to additional predators. So please keep your distance from eagle nests and roosts. Respect their space. Enjoy their presence at a distance with good optics. Please consider the following general etiquette guidelines for avoiding eagle disturbances:

Stay back! Keep at least 1,000 feet from an active nest, roost, or feeding area. Use optics like binoculars or a telescope to view the eagles at a distance.

Quiet please! If you must talk, whisper.

Cover up! Use your vehicle or boat as a blind; eagles often are more alarmed by pedestrians.

Be cool! Avoid sudden movements — and movements directly toward the eagles or the nest — while on foot or in a vehicle or boat.

No flushing! Don't make the birds fly. Flushing an eagle off a nest may expose the eggs or young eaglets to cold or wet weather or a nest predator. It also wastes precious energy and may cause them to leave a valuable meal behind or abandon a nest that they are constructing.

Pay attention! Watch how the eagle reacts to your presence — if it acts agitated, vocalizes repeatedly, or starts moving away, you are too close!

Stay out! Respect restricted zones. They protect eagle nesting areas. And you're breaking state and federal laws if you enter them.

Privacy please! Respect the privacy of the landowner. Don't tell everyone about a new eagle nest. It will attract people to nesting areas who will not use proper etiquette and other unnecessary attention to a nest. If you unexpectedly stumble onto an eagle nest, or hear an eagle vocalizing overhead, leave immediately and quietly.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation!