

Outdoor Recreation *is* Outdoor Education

Learning About New Mexico's Wildlife Bald eagle

Bald eagle

The bald eagle has rebounded in recent years from near extinction to a viable, growing population. The extent of this encouraging increase enabled the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to downlist the eagle's status from endangered to threatened in 1995.

With its dark brown body and white head and tail, the adult bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) is one of the easiest birds to identify in the field. Other identification marks include its yellow, massive beak (disproportionately large for its head), yellow ceres (nostrils), blackclawed yellow feet, bare yellow legs and lemon-colored eyes. Adult females range from 30" to 43" tall, weigh up to 14 pounds and have about an eight-foot wingspan. The male is smaller, standing 27" to 30" tall, weighing seven to 10 pounds with a six-foot wingspan. Surprisingly weak for such a large bird, the bald eagle's call is a squeaky cackle: kleeek-kik-ik-ik-ik-ik.

For the most part, New Mexico's bald eagle population is migratory.



New Mexico Department of Game and Fish
www.wildlife.state.nm.us
888-248-6866

