

BALD EAGLE MANAGEMENT ISSUES AND CONCERNS

Raised by Working Group April 14, 2004

The Working Group identified a number of issues and concerns it considered important when developing goals and objectives for management of Bald Eagles.

Policy & Legislation

- Potential loss of federal funding to monitor (trend and distribution) eagles as a result of delisting. Funding priorities are likely to shift. Opportunity for private funds?
- If Maine were to delist eagles, would that preclude relisting eagles in the future if warranted?
- Reduction of state protection when Essential Habitat dissolves - eagles could still receive protection under Maine's Natural Resources Protection Act, what about adding eagle nests to LURC P-FWs?
- Ability to review projects under the Endangered Species Act will be lost – transition to review under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act.
- “Harm and harass” under the Endangered Species Act and applicability under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act
- Express management goals in terms of protected sites rather, or in addition to, nesting pairs

Contaminants

- Hydropower/storage
- Mercury
- PCBs
- Dioxin
- Dredging projects
- Contaminants and other species groups – “ecological health” within and outside the raptor group
- Historical contamination issues and current discharges
- Contaminant links to eagle productivity

Habitat Pressures/Development/Recreation

- Need for a “habitat safety net” once eagles are delisted (easements, acquisition, management agreements, etc.).
- Forestry management plays a critical role; it can either perpetuate or set back eagles

Bald Eagle Issues and Concerns

- Permanency of woodlands at coastal sites – habitat concerns and opportunities for silviculture treatments
- Riparian/shoreline development
- Aquaculture sites
- Marinas, docks, piers
- Cutting view sheds
- Helicopter pads, aircraft landings, scenic flights
- Fragmented landscapes
- Motorized access
- Wind power – especially coastal wind resources
- Impacts to other eagle habitats in addition to nesting habitats: wintering areas, pre-breeding habitats, migration habitats, non-breeding habitats (anadromous fish runs/night roosts)
- Increasing recreational pressures and resulting disturbance (kayaks, jet skis, canoes, motor boats, etc.)
- Inland and coastal fisheries management issues and impacts to foraging opportunities

Population/Production/Distribution

- Eagles have not recovered their former range
- As the eagle population increases, conflicts with other species may also increase (gulls, eiders, etc.)
- Structuring and implementing a monitoring program (random sampling, volunteers, early warning indicators)

Human-related Eagle Deaths and Injuries

- West Nile virus and other emerging wildlife diseases
- Need for a better way of doing necropsies
- Wanton shooting of eagles and other human causes of mortality (trapping; snaring; poisoning; collisions with vehicles, towers, power lines, etc.) – need for enforcement and education; enforcement is not a top federal or state priority

Outreach

- Public complacency – “eagles are doing well, so why worry”
- Habitat/Development/Recreation – impacts and disturbance
- Human causes of mortality