

Bald eagles historically ranged across the United States, Canada and Alaska. After Europeans settled in North America, eagles were sometimes hunted for food, because they were perceived as a threat to livestock, and because they were thought to be competition for wild game.

In 1940, congress passed the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act, making it illegal to disturb or kill eagles. In 1947, the insecticide, DDT (dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane), was introduced and widely used to combat insect pests, including mosquitos. DDT is a powerful chemical that has serious environmental effects. Its by-products persist in aquatic environments long after the initial application. DDT interferes with the calcium processing of birds, resulting in deformed, brittle eggshells. Since bald eagles are at the top of the aquatic food chain and feed primarily on fish, they received concentrated doses of the chemical. Due to the deformed, brittle eggshells, many bald eagle pairs did not reproduce successfully.

DDT was eventually banned in the United States, and habitat conservation and reintroduction efforts were initiated. Scientists predicted that the ban on DDT would result in more healthy eggs and, therefore, a continued increase in the bald eagle population over the next couple of decades. In 2007, bald eagles were removed from the Endangered Species List.

Three data sets are presented below:

1. Number of nesting pairs in the lower 48 states
2. Number of nesting pairs of bald eagles in the Upper Mississippi River Wildlife and Fish Refuge, which is located along the Mississippi River in Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa and Illinois
3. Number of bald eagle pairs in the James River area of Virginia

**Note – All three data sets count active nests or nesting pairs, rather than counting individual birds, so each number represents two individual birds.**

Year	Number of nesting pairs in the lower 48 states
1963	487
1974	791
1981	1188
1984	1757
1986	1875
1987	2238
1988	2475
1989	2689
1990	3035
1991	3399
1992	3749
1993	4015
1994	4449
1995	4712
1996	5094
1997	5295
1998	5748
1999	6404
2000	6471
2005	7066
2006	9789
2007	11,040

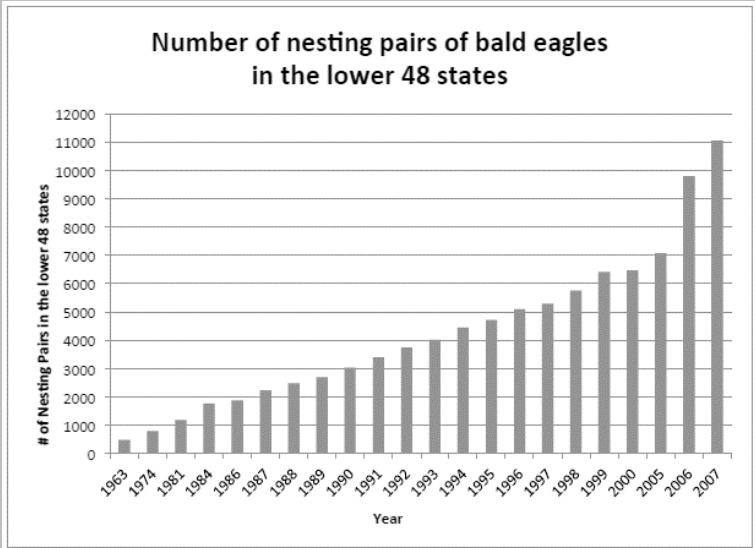
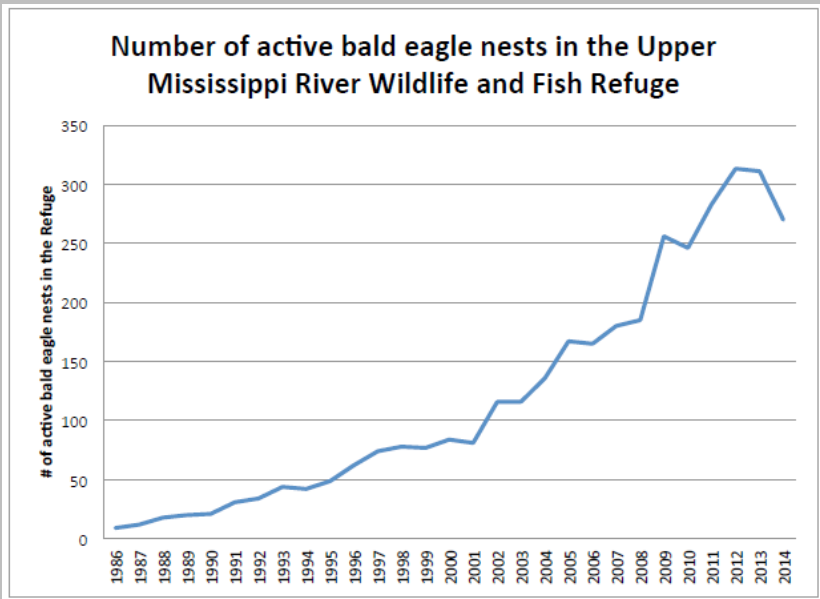


Figure 1

Year	# of active bald eagle nests
1986	9
1987	12
1988	18
1989	20
1990	21
1991	31
1992	34
1993	44
1994	42
1995	49
1996	62
1997	74
1998	78
1999	77
2000	84
2001	81
2002	116
2003	116
2004	136
2005	167
2006	165
2007	180
2008	185
2009	256
2010	246
2011	283
2012	313
2013	311
2014	270



**Figure 2**

# James River Bald Eagle Pairs

**Figure 3**

