



## Eagle Fun facts in [The Last Green Valley!](#) Teach your friends about eagles!

- Became our national emblem in 1782. Became our national emblem in 1782.
- Became very rare in the lower 48 states (including CT) by the 1960s.
- Became a federal Endangered Species in 1973.
- CT documented its first successful nesting of bald eagles since the 1950s when a pair raised 2 young in Litchfield County.
- The bald eagle's status in Connecticut was reclassified as threatened in 2010.
- The flight speed of a bald eagle ranges between 36 and 44 miles per hour.

### **Description:**

Adult bald eagles have a snow-white head and tail, and a brownish-black body. The bill, eyes, and feet are yellow. Immature eagles are uniformly grayish-brown. The distinctive adult plumage is attained at 4 to 5 years of age. Bald eagles are about 34 to 43 inches long, can weigh 8 to 14 pounds, and have a wingspan of 6 to 8 feet. The sexes are similar in appearance, although the females are larger. Bald eagles have a life expectancy of 25 to 30 years, and longer in captivity.

### **Habitat and Diet:**

Natural year-round habitat of bald eagles includes lakes, marshes, rivers, or seacoasts, where there are tall trees nearby for nesting and roosting and plenty of fish for eating.

Although bald eagles feed primarily on fish, they also are opportunistic predators and scavengers that will eat anything that can be caught easily or scavenged, such as waterfowl, small and large mammals, and livestock carrion. In addition, they have a reputation of being thieves, robbing other raptors or gulls of their catch.

Eagles kill prey by grasping it with their strong feet and sharp talons. They can carry their prey in flight but are unable to carry much more than 4 pounds. An eagle's beak is used solely for tearing flesh.

## **The breeding season:**

The breeding season in Connecticut begins in January, and most pairs lay their eggs in February and March. Bald eagles return to the same nesting areas year after year and often breed with the same mate. If something happens to either the male or female, the surviving bird will find a new mate. The nest, which sometimes measures 7 to 8 feet across, is a flat-topped mass of sticks, with a lining of fine vegetation such as rushes, mosses, or grasses. It is built in trees, 10 to 150 feet above ground. There are usually 1 to 3 (average 2) dull, white eggs in a clutch. Both the male and female incubate the eggs and feed the young. The eggs are incubated for about 35 days, and the chicks usually fledge (reach flying stage) in 12 weeks.

## **How You Can Help:**

Winter is a difficult time for any wildlife species, including bald eagles. Food is harder to find and cold temperatures cause energy stress. If you see one or more eagles feeding or roosting, leave them alone and observe them from a distance.

It is also important to stay away from nesting areas to avoid disturbing the birds. Several Connecticut bald eagle nests are located on private property where there is no public access. Respect posted areas and do not trespass on private property to view eagles.

This information and photo are from the [CT DEEP Eagle Fact Sheet](#).