

## GENERAL INFORMATION



Photograph by Cindi Bateman

The bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) is protected under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, along with the state bald eagle rule (68A-16.002, F.A.C.). This means they are protected by Local, State and Federal entities.

Protection of Cape Coral's bald eagles is important since Florida's nesting population constitutes over 80 percent of the entire bald eagle population within the southeastern United States.



Photograph by Cindi Bateman



## Description

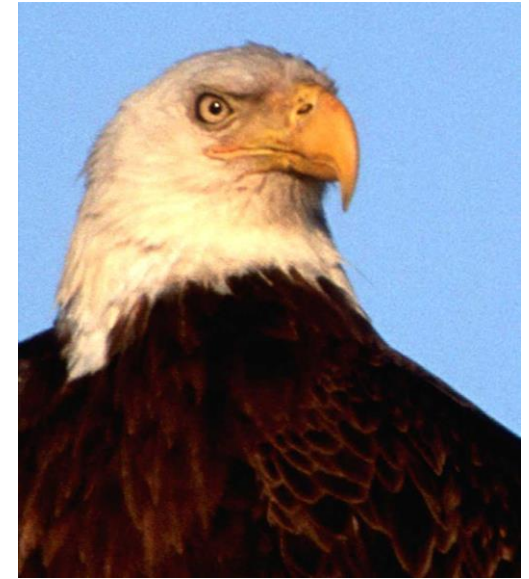
Although smaller than northern eagles, the Southern Bald Eagle weighs 8-10 pounds with a wingspan of 6-7 feet. Females are larger than males, as with most raptors. The head and tails of adult eagles are white, and their bodies are dark brown. Their eyes, feet and bill are yellow. Juveniles do not yet have the white head and tail and are brown with scattered white feathers.



Photograph by Norman Bateman

## Diet

Bald eagles are primarily fish eaters, preying occasionally on small mammals and carrion. Eagles have been seen feeding on roadside kill alongside vultures.



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## Breeding

Bald eagle nesting season runs October 1<sup>st</sup> through May 15<sup>th</sup> of the following year. Eagles mate for life and use the same site year after year, if the territory is available. In Florida, the eagles usually return in late September or early October.

One to three eggs are laid between late November and early January. The young eaglets hatch 32-34 days later and leave the nest in 11-12 weeks, usually by mid-May. The young birds wander northward as far as Canada and return by adulthood at 4-5 years of age. They find mates and initiate breeding in the vicinity where they were originally hatched.

It is not known how many eagles survive the first 4-5 years of life, but juvenile mortality is probably high as with most birds.

## Protection

The main threat to bald eagles in Florida is loss of nesting habitat due to development. The U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service and the Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission have established guidelines for protective zones around eagle nests with certain restrictions imposed to ensure continued success of those sites.



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In Cape Coral, eagles are also protected by city Ordinance 165-06 (Code of Ordinances, Chapter 23). Some of the Cape Coral eagles are somewhat “urbanized” and have had good nesting success with the regulations established. City regulations establish an eagle nest management zone that extends 1,100 feet in all directions from each eagle nest. Within any eagle nest management zone, heavy outdoor construction is prohibited during eagle nesting season (October 1<sup>st</sup> - May 15<sup>th</sup>). The City may prohibit construction at any time within 350 feet of an eagle nest.

Property owners, real estate agents and contractors are encouraged to contact the Cape Coral Planning Division at [planningquestions@capecoral.net](mailto:planningquestions@capecoral.net) with any questions regarding eagle nest management zones. It is recommended that you call **prior to filing for a building permit or obtaining a construction loan** if you believe your property falls within any such zone.

## Eagle Watch

The Eagle Watch Program provides an opportunity for the public to become involved and educate themselves about the nesting habits of the Bald Eagle while assisting the City and State in collecting valuable data. To volunteer for the Eagle Watch Program, please contact the City of Cape Coral Planning Division at 239-574-0587.

## Contacts

Malicious destruction of bald eagle nest sites or harassment of eagles should be reported to the City of Cape Coral, Planning Division at 574-0587 or FWC Wildlife Alert at 1-888-404-FWCC (3922).

If you see a sick or injured eagle, please report it to C.R.O.W. (Clinic for the Rehabilitation of Wildlife) 239-472-3644.

# Cape Coral's BALD EAGLES



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