

**NOTE to Media:** Please consider using the following press release in an upcoming story. We conducted the forth bald eagle count of the season on Saturday, March 13, 2010. Please feel free to contact me with questions. **THANK YOU!!!!**

**For Reporters Needing More Information:**

**Big Bear Lake and Lake Arrowhead**

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**Silverwood Lake State Recreation Area**

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# US Forest Service

## San Bernardino National Forest

602 S. Tippecanoe Ave San Bernardino, CA 92408



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Contact: John Miller 909-382-2788

### **BALD EAGLES SEEN IN LOCAL MOUNTAINS**

On Saturday March 13<sup>th</sup>, the fourth bald eagle count of the winter was conducted by local Federal and State biologists and volunteers around lakes in the San Bernardino and San Jacinto Mountains. This marks the 31<sup>st</sup> year that the San Bernardino National Forest has organized monthly winter bald eagle counts! Cool, windy conditions could not deter dedicated volunteers hoping to catch a view of our national symbol the bald eagle. The effort was successful in tallying the bald eagles that are spending their winter vacation at the local mountain lakes.

A grand total of eleven eagles (9 adults, 2 juveniles) were observed in the four lake areas during the 1-hour count. Five eagles (3 adults, 2 juveniles) were observed in the Big Bear/Baldwin Lake area; 1 adult eagle at Lake Arrowhead; 1 adult eagle at Lake Gregory; 2 adult eagle at Silverwood Lake; and 2 adult eagles at Lake Hemet. Juvenile eagles are distinguished by a brown head and tail; adults are recognized by the famous white head and tail - it takes 4-5 years to acquire full adult coloration. Juvenile eagles are the same size as the adults.

Approximately 146 volunteers participated in the 1-hour eagle census at the four lakes (62 in the Big Bear area; 17 at Lake Arrowhead; 12 at Lake Hemet; and 55 volunteers at Silverwood Lake). The Forest Service and State Recreation Area biologists would like to thank those volunteers for their participation!

The U.S. Forest Service and State Recreation Area biologists have coordinated counts of this federally-protected species since 1978. Data from our local count will be added to the nationwide Mid-Winter Bald Eagle census to assess recovery status of the species. We rely on volunteers to gather information during the monthly winter eagle counts. Counts are conducted for a 1-hour period from 9-10am. Forest Service volunteers stationed around lakes in Big Bear, Arrowhead, and Idyllwild record all observations of bald eagles. Volunteers at Silverwood Lake State Recreation Area conduct simultaneous counts.

Bald eagles are similar to many southern Californians in that they visit the lakes of our San Bernardino and San Jacinto Mountains for their winter vacations between November and April. Instead of vacationing here for dynamite skiing, eagles come for the plentiful food supply. As lakes and rivers up north freeze each winter, fish become unavailable under a thick layer of ice and ducks leave the frozen waters. The eagles' "grocery stores" have essentially closed for the winter. So eagles fly south looking for open water stocked with food. The lakes of the San Bernardino and San Jacinto Mountains fit the bill perfectly—they are part of the Pacific

Migratory Flyway, a migration freeway for millions of ducks. Eagles like to spend their winters here because of the abundant and tasty ducks and fish.

Our bald eagles normally migrate out of the San Bernardino and San Jacinto Mountains in late March, heading back to summer homes in Montana, Wyoming, Idaho, and Alberta, Canada. In recent years, a pair of bald eagles has remained at Lake Hemet and successfully produced several eaglets.

Catching a glimpse of our breath-taking national bird is relatively easy during the winter months. There are also some fantastic opportunities for excellent close-up photography. Just look in the tallest trees around the lakeshore. Or, if the lake is partially frozen, look for eagles perched on the ice near small groups of ducks using open water pockets.

**Remember that human presence may distract or disturb the eagles—so, try to limit your movements and do not make loud noises when nearby. If possible, remain in your car while observing eagles—the car acts as a blind.**

## BIG BEAR LAKE EAGLE COUNT SUMMARY

(Included Big Bear and Baldwin Lakes)

Year \ Month	December	January	February	March	April	Average	High Count
1978 - 79	7	27	27	18	9	18	27
1979 - 80	20	22	13	11	3	14	22
1980 - 81	11	19	25			18	25
1981 - 82	15	27	22	6	3	15	27
1982 - 83	7	27	18	11		16	27
1983 - 84	14	28	18	10		18	28
1984 - 85	27	8	3	3		10	27
1985 - 86	20	24		9		18	24
1986 - 87	20	24		9		18	24
1987 - 88	9	17	21	16		16	21
1988 - 89	12	6	4	12		9	12
1989 - 90	15	11	19	17		16	19
1990 - 91	6	16	22	17		15	22
1991 - 92	19	19	13	9		15	19
1992 - 93	6	15	3	3		7	15
1993 - 94	9	17	15	8		12	17
1994 - 95	10	10	20	No Count		13	20
1995 - 96	6	14	15	10		11	15
1996 - 97	10	15	5	9		10	15
1997 - 98	8	14 - 15	15	12		12	15
1998 - 99	8	17	15 - 17	9		11	17
1999 - 00	8	13	3	13		9	13
2000 - 01	13	13	14	12		13	14
2001 - 02	7	9	11	9		9	11
2002-03	6	13	15	9		11	15
2003-04	4	14	11	7		9	14
2004-05	6	1	4	5		4	6
2005-2006	7	4	6	No Count		6	7
2006-2007	4	8	5	5		6	8
2007-2008	4	3	6	3		4	6
2008-2009	No Count	6	No Count	5		6	6
2009-2010	4	6	9	5		6	9
<b>Average</b>	10	15	13	9	5	11.60	17.09
					Maximum	18	28
					Minimum	4	6
					Median	12	16