

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln

---

Nebraska Bird Review

Nebraska Ornithologists' Union

---

9-1998

## 1998 Midwinter Eagle Survey for Nebraska including summary tables for the 1980-1998 period from the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission

John J. Dinan

*Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, Nongame Bird Program Manager*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/nebbirdrev>



Part of the [Ornithology Commons](#), [Poultry or Avian Science Commons](#), and the [Zoology Commons](#)

---

Dinan, John J., "1998 Midwinter Eagle Survey for Nebraska including summary tables for the 1980-1998 period from the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission" (1998). *Nebraska Bird Review*. 36.

<https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/nebbirdrev/36>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Nebraska Ornithologists' Union at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in Nebraska Bird Review by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.

**1998 Midwinter Eagle Survey for Nebraska including summary tables for the 1980-1998 period from the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission. By John J. Dinan, Nongame Bird Program Manager**

Mild temperatures were prevalent in the weeks prior to this year's survey; however, temperatures cold enough to form a thin layer of ice on some reservoirs and lakes occurred between aerial surveys. Three of the aerial surveys were conducted on the 6th and 7th of January and one was conducted on the 13th. The survey route that includes the Platte River from Kearney to Plattsmouth and the Loup River was not surveyed this year because of persistent foggy conditions.

Temperatures recorded during the 1998 survey were variable, ranging from 5 to 40 degrees F. The Niobrara River was 50 to 99% ice-covered from the Newport bridge and downstream. Above the Newport bridge, ice coverage ranged from 0 to 40%. The unchanneled portion of the Missouri River was 40% ice-covered. The channelized portion of the Missouri River was 50 to 65% ice-covered with floating ice in the channel. The Republican River was open although the upper reaches had some slush. The "southwest" reservoirs and reservoirs along the Republican River had 75% "new" ice-cover that was formed the night before the survey. The Platte River west of Kearney and the North and South Platte rivers were all open as were the lakes and reservoirs along these rivers.

During the 1998 Nebraska survey, a total of 1430 bald and 9 golden eagles were observed. This is the highest statewide total for the 1980 to 1998 period of the record. The previous high was recorded in 1992 with 1292 bald eagles when observed. The bald eagle total includes 435 birds observed along the Missouri River. The 1998 total represents a 39% increase from the 1997 census of 1030 bald eagles, an 88% increase from the 1980-97 statewide average of 759, and a 64% increase from the previous 5-year average of 872. Twenty-seven percent of

the bald eagles that were identified to age (adult vs. immature) in 1998 were immature, representing a 1% increase from the previous 5-year average.

Aside from the statewide totals provided, data are also reported to the Department of the Interior's Biological Resources Division for 4 standardized reporting segments. These include; 1) the North Platte River, Keystone to Lewellen area including Lake McConaughy and Lake Ogallala, 2) the North and South Platte rivers, Maxwell to the Lincoln/Keith county line, including Southerland Reservoir, 3) the Republican River, Alma to Naponee area including Harlan County Reservoir and 4) the Platte River, Darr to Elm Creek area including Johnson and Elwood Reservoirs. Bald Eagle use of these areas was up 89%, down 39%, up 392%, and down 15%, respectively from the 1980 to 1997 average.

TABLE 1

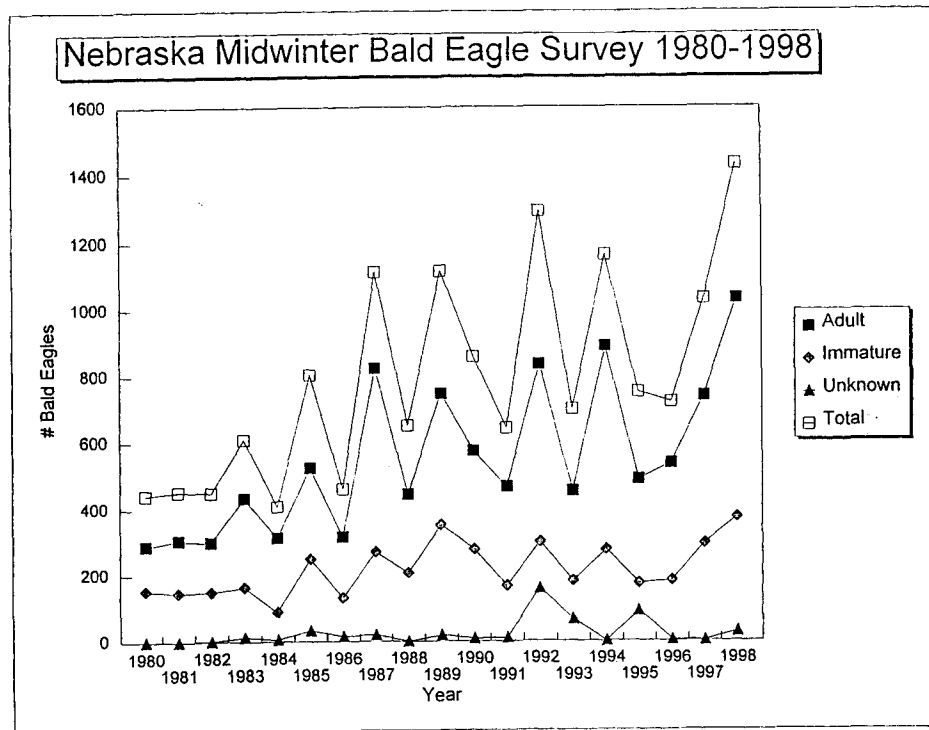


TABLE 2

## NEBRASKA MIDWINTER BALD EAGLE SURVEY, 1980-1988

## STATEWIDE EXCLUDING MISSOURI RIVER

Year	Adult	Immature	Unknown	Total
1980	279	149	0	428
1981	299	140	0	439
1982	204	120	1	325
1983	279	145	13	437
1984	271	83	6	360
1985	414	225	33	672
1986	279	127	15	421
1987	586	227	19	832
1988	322	178	0	500
1989	607	293	7	907
1990	416	223	7	646
1991	311	145	10	466
1992	653	281	19	953
1993	336	158	65	559
1994	659	221	0	880
1995	380	144	9	533
1996	379	150	2	531
1997	582	261	1	844
1998	673	294	28	995
1980-97 AVERAGE	403	182	12	596
1993-97 AVERAGE	467	187	15	669
1994-98 AVERAGE	535	214	8	757
1980-98 AVERAGE	417	188	12	617

TABLE 3

## NEBRASKA MIDWINTER BALD EAGLE SURVEY, 1980-1988

## MISSOURI RIVER

Year	Adult	Immature	Unknown	Total
1980	9	5	0	14
1981	7	7	0	14
1982	95	29	0	124
1983	154	18	0	172
1984	44	5	0	49
1985	110	23	0	133
1986	37	4	0	41
1987	238	43	1	282
1988	122	28	0	150
1989	139	58	12	209
1990	157	53	1	211
1991	155	21	0	176
1992	181	18	140	339
1993	117	22	0	139
1994	229	54	0	283
1995	107	28	81	216
1996	156	31	1	188
1997	154	32	0	186
1998	357	78	0	435
1980-97 AVERAGE	123	27	13	163
1993-97 AVERAGE	153	33	16	202
1994-98 AVERAGE	201	45	16	262
1980-98 AVERAGE	135	29	12	177

TABLE 4

## NEBRASKA MIDWINTER BALD EAGLE SURVEY, 1980-1988

## GRAND TOTAL--INCLUDING MISSOURI RIVER

Year	Adult	Immature	Unknown	Total
1980	288	154	0	442
1981	306	147	0	453
1982	299	149	1	449
1983	433	163	13	609
1984	315	88	6	409
1985	524	248	33	805
1986	316	131	15	462
1987	824	270	20	1114
1988	444	206	0	650
1989	746	351	19	1116
1990	573	276	8	857
1991	466	166	10	642
1992	834	299	159	1292
1993	453	180	65	698
1994	888	275	0	1163
1995	487	172	90	749
1996	535	181	3	719
1997	736	293	1	1030
1998	1030	372	28	1430
1980-97 AVERAGE	526	208	25	759
1993-97 AVERAGE	620	220	32	872
1994-98 AVERAGE	735	259	24	1018
1980-98 AVERAGE	552	217	25	794

**TABLE 5**  
**DISTRIBUTION OF WINTERING BALD EAGLES DURING MIDWINTER SURVEYS**  
 Number of Eagles Observed by Standardized Report Location and Location's  
 Proportion of Statewide Total (excluding Missouri River)

Year	North Platte/R Keystone-Lewellen		N. S. & Platte rivers Maxwell/Linc/Keith Co.		Republican R. Alma-Napooee		Platte River Darr-Fern Creek		Statewide		All Four Concentrations	
	#Eagles	%	#Eagles	%	#Eagles	%	#Eagles	%	#Eagles	#Eagles	#Eagles	%
1980	52	12%	21	5%	51	12%	70	16%	428	194	428	45%
1981	26	6%	8	2%	83	19%	61	14%	439	178	439	41%
1982	48	15%	12	4%	44	14%	24	7%	325	128	325	39%
1983	25	6%	29	7%	110	25%	83	19%	437	247	437	57%
1984	6	2%	71	20%	16	4%	64	18%	360	157	360	44%
1985	40	6%	205	31%	86	13%	71	11%	672	402	672	60%
1986	28	7%	27	6%	28	7%	46	11%	421	129	421	31%
1987	52	6%	31	4%	169	20%	85	10%	832	337	832	41%
1988	25	5%	55	11%	65	13%	104	21%	500	249	500	50%
1989	69	8%	127	14%	80	9%	145	16%	907	421	907	46%
1990	53	8%	49	8%	30	5%	81	13%	646	213	646	33%
1991	66	14%	27	6%	18	4%	66	14%	466	177	466	38%
1992	11	1%	14	1%	272	29%	49	5%	953	346	953	36%
1993	149	27%	64	11%	16	3%	25	4%	559	254	559	45%

Table 5 (Continued)

	North Platte/R Keystone-Lewellen		N. S. & Platte Rivers Maxwell, Inc./Keith Co.		Republican R. Alma-Neponee		Platte River Darr-Elm Creek		Statewide		All Four Concentrations	
	#Eagles	%	#Eagles	%	#Eagles	%	#Eagles	%	#Eagles	#Eagles	#Eagles	%
1994	44	5%	53	6%	114	13%	142	16%	880	353	40%	
1995	27	5%	46	9%	75	14%	17	3%	533	165	31%	
1996	23	4%	41	8%	24	5%	64	12%	531	152	29%	
1997	110	13%	57	7%	194	23%	43	5%	844	404	48%	
1998	89	9%	32	3%	403	41%	79	8%	995	604	61%	
Average 80-98	50	8%	51	8%	99	16%	69	11%	617	269	44%	
Average 80-97	47	8%	52	9%	82	14%	69	12%	596	250	42%	
Average 80-89	37	7%	59	11%	73	14%	75	14%	532	244	46%	
Average 90-98	50	8%	51	8%	99	16%	69	11%	617	269	44%	
Average 94-96	51	7%	49	7%	102	15%	67	10%	697	269	39%	
Average 95-97	53	8%	48	8%	98	15%	41	6%	636	241	38%	
Average 96-98	74	9%	43	5%	207	26%	62	8%	790	387	49%	
Max. numb.	149		205		403		145		995	604		
Max %		27%		31%		41%		21%			61%	