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## Survey of Bald and Golden Eagles in Nebraska

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#### 1997 SURVEY OF BALD AND GOLDEN EAGLES IN NEBRASKA

John Dinan, Nongame Bird Program Manager, Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, 2200 N. 33rd St., P.O. Box 30370, Lincoln, NE 68503-0370 (phone: 402/471-0641; Fax: 402/471-5528), supplied the results of the 1997 (January 1-15) Bald and Golden Eagle surveys, with six organizations and twelve individuals participating

Conditions for 1997 survey: Temperatures ranged from 8 to 35°F. The Niobrara River had 50-100% ice cover except the upper portion, which was mostly open. The unchannelized portion of the Missouri River was 90-100% ice-covered, but the channelized portion was open and was carrying floating ice below Tekamah. The Platte River had 50-90% ice cover, the North Platte River was mostly open, and ice cover on the South Platte River was highly variable (0-90%). The Loup River was 90-95% ice-covered. Lakes and reservoirs were 70-100 % ice-covered except for Lake McConaughy, which had 40% ice cover.

Golden Eagles: There were 29 Golden Eagle sightings in Nebraska during the 1997 survey, distributed as follows: North Platte River (11): Republican River (2); Sidney (1); and in the following counties: Cherry (1); Dawes (4); Dundy (1); Garden (1); Rock (1); Scottsbluff (1); Sheridan (1); Sioux (3); Wheeler (2).

Bald Eagles: The 1997 survey included 736 adults, 293 immatures, and 1 of unknown age. The total of 1030 Bald Eagles is a 43% increase over the 1996 count of 719, a 39% increase over the 1980-96 statewide average of 743, and an 11% increase over the

previous five-year average of 924. The frequency of immature individuals among age-identified birds was 28%, representing a 6% increase over the previous 10-year average. Bald Eagle numbers were reported to the National Wildlife Federation for four standardized reporting segments. Compared to the 1980-1996 average, Bald Eagle use was up 150% for the North Platte River, Keystone to Lewellen, including Lake McConaughy and Ogallala; up 10% for the North and South Platte Rivers, Maxwell to the Lincoln/Keith County line, including Sutherland Reservoir; up 159 % for the Republican River, Alma to Naponee, including Harlan Co. Reservoir; and down 38% for the Platte River, Darr to Elm Creek area, including Johnson and Elwood Reservoirs.

Bald Eagle data are given in the following tables.

Imm. (immature), NRD(Natural Resource District), NWR (National Wildlife Refuge); WMA (Wildlife Management Area).

|                                   | Adults    | Imm.      | Total      |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| <b>North Platte River, Totals</b> | <b>96</b> | <b>61</b> | <b>157</b> |
| Wyoming Line-Bayard (area lakes)  | 5         | 7         | 12         |
| Bayard-Lisco                      | 8         | 9         | 17         |
| Lisco-Lewellen                    | 4         | 2         | 6          |
| Lewellen-Keystone (area lakes)    | 68        | 42        | 110        |
| Paxton-North Platte               | 11        | 1         | 12         |

No Bald Eagles sighted from Keystone to Paxton.

|                                   | Adults   | Imm.     | Total    |
|-----------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|
| <b>South Platte River, Totals</b> | <b>8</b> | <b>1</b> | <b>9</b> |
| Big Springs-Paxton                | 2        | .        | 2        |
| Paxton-North Platte Tri-Co. Div.  | 6        | 1        | 7        |

No Bald Eagles sighted from Colorado Line to Big Springa.

|                                       | Adults     | Imm.      | Total      |
|---------------------------------------|------------|-----------|------------|
| <b>Platte River, Totals</b>           | <b>131</b> | <b>39</b> | <b>170</b> |
| North Platte-Gothenberg (lake, canal) | 31         | 2         | 33         |
| Gothenberg-Darr                       | 16         | 1         | 17         |
| Darr-Elm Creek (lakes, canal)         | 28         | 15        | 43         |
| Elm Creek-Kearney                     | 7          | 4         | 11         |
| Kearney-Shelton                       | 6          | 6         | 12         |
| Shelton-Grand Island                  | 3          | 1         | 4          |
| Grand Island-Silver Creek             | 6          | .         | 6          |
| Silver Creek-Columbus                 | 1          | .         | 1          |
| Columbus-North Bend                   | 10         | 5         | 15         |
| North Bend-Fremont                    | 6          | 2         | 8          |
| Fremont-Linoma                        | 11         | 3         | 14         |
| Linoma-Plattsmouth                    | 6          | .         | 6          |

|   | Adults    | Imm.     | Total     |
|---|-----------|----------|-----------|
| <b>North Loup, Middle Loup, and Loup Rivers, Totals</b> | <b>19</b> | <b>1</b> | <b>20</b> |
| Arcadia-mouth (Sherman Reservoir) (Middle Loup)         | 3         | 1        | 4         |
| North Loup River-Genoa (Loup R.)                        | 11        | .        | 11        |
| Genoa-mouth (Loup River)                                | 5         | .        | 5         |

| <b>Niobrara River, Totals</b> | <b>17</b> | <b>2</b> | <b>19</b> |
|-------------------------------|-----------|----------|-----------|
| Snake River-Cornell           | 6         | 1        | 7         |
| Cornell-Cherry Co. Line       | 7         | .        | 7         |
| Cherry Co. Line-Cuba          | 2         | 1        | 3         |
| Newport-Redbird/Lynch         | 1         | .        | 1         |
| Redbird/Lynch-Missouri River  | 1         | .        | 1         |

No Bald Eagles sighted for Cuba to Newport.

|   |          |          |           |
|---|----------|----------|-----------|
| <b>Snake River, Totals (Hwy 97 bridge-mouth (Merritt Res.))</b> | <b>7</b> | <b>6</b> | <b>13</b> |
|---|----------|----------|-----------|

| <b>Republican River, Totals</b> | <b>208</b> | <b>116</b> | <b>324</b> |
|---------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Alma-Naponee (Harlan Reservoir) | 129        | 65         | 194        |
| Naponee-Riverton                | 68         | 49         | 117        |
| Riverton-Guide Rock             | 7          | 1          | 8          |
| Guide Rock-Superior             | 4          | 1          | 5          |

| <b>Missouri River, Totals</b>   | <b>157</b> | <b>33</b> | <b>191*</b> |
|---------------------------------|------------|-----------|-------------|
| Missouri River                  | 3          | 3         | 6           |
| NE Line-Monowi                  | 2          | 1         | 3           |
| Gavins Pt.-Goat Island          | 7          | 1         | 8           |
| Goat Island.-Ponca St. Park     | 1          | 1         | 2           |
| Ponca St. Park-Homer            | 5          | .         | 5           |
| Homer-Decatur                   | 11         | 2         | 13          |
| Decatur-Tekamah                 | 12         | .         | 12          |
| Tek.-Mormon Bridge (DeSoto NWR) | 18         | 5         | 24*         |
| Mormon Bridge-Hwy 275           | 1          | .         | 1           |
| Hwy 275-Plattsmouth             | 3          | .         | 3           |
| Plattsmouth-Union               | 8          | 4         | 12          |
| Union-Peru                      | 30         | 4         | 34          |

(table continued on p. 39)

(Table for Missouri River continued)

|                               | Adults | Imm. | Total |
|-------------------------------|--------|------|-------|
| Peru-Indian Cave State Park   | 47     | 11   | 58    |
| Indian Cave State Park-Kansas | 9      | 1    | 10    |

\* Includes 1 of unknown age in Tekamah to Mormon Bridge area.  
No Bald Eagles sighted for Monowi to Gavins Pt (Lewis & Clark).

|                                     | Adults    | Imm.      | Total     |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| <b>Reservoirs and Lakes, Totals</b> | <b>50</b> | <b>30</b> | <b>80</b> |
| Sutherland Reservoir                | 12        | 10        | 22        |
| Lake Maloney                        | 6         | 3         | 9         |
| Enders Reservoir                    | 0         | 5         | 5         |
| Swanson Reservoir                   | 26        | 12        | 38        |
| Red Willow Reservoir                | 2         | .         | 2         |
| Medicine Creek Reservoir            | 1         | .         | 1         |
| Calamus Reservoir                   | 2         | .         | 2         |
| Walgren Lake                        | 1         | .         | 1         |

No Bald Eagles seen at Lake Babcock, Salt Valley Lakes, or Lincoln City Lakes.

|                            | Adults   | Imm.     | Total    |
|----------------------------|----------|----------|----------|
| <b>Other Areas, Totals</b> | <b>5</b> | <b>.</b> | <b>5</b> |
| Area not identified        | 2        | .        | 2        |
| Schilling WMA              | 2        | .        | 2        |
| Twin Lakes                 | 1        | .        | 1        |

No Bald Eagles seen at Sidney, Mahon Ranch, Cody Park, Sac-Wilcox WMA, Sandy Creek NRD, Valentine NWR, Frenchman, or Maloney Canal.

|                         | Adults    | Imm.     | Total     |
|-------------------------|-----------|----------|-----------|
| <b>Counties, Totals</b> | <b>38</b> | <b>4</b> | <b>42</b> |
| Boone                   | 6         | .        | 6         |
| Chase                   | 1         | .        | 1         |
| Cherry                  | 1         | .        | 1         |
| Clay                    | 1         | .        | 1         |
| Cuming                  | 1         | .        | 1         |
| Dawes                   | 1         | .        | 1         |
| Furnas                  | 9         | 4        | 13        |
| Garfield                | 4         | .        | 4         |
| Lancaster               | 1         | .        | 1         |
| Loup                    | 3         | .        | 3         |

(Table continued on p. 40)

(Table for counties continued)

|             | Adults | Imm. | Total |
|-------------|--------|------|-------|
| Madison     | 1      | .    | 1     |
| Red Willow  | 4      | .    | 4     |
| Scottsbluff | 1      | .    | 1     |
| Thayer      | 1      | .    | 1     |
| Valley      | 3      | .    | 3     |

No Bald Eagles observed in Dundy, Garden, Rock, Sheridan, Sioux, or Wheeler Counties.