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1993 MIDWINTER SURVEY OF BALD AND GOLDEN EAGLES IN NEBRASKA

National Wildlife Federation: Bald and Golden Eagles.

The 1993 survey was held January 1-15, and was coordinated and compiled by John Dinan, Nongame Bird Biologist with the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, who supplied the following information.

Temperatures during the survey period ranged from approximately 5 to 30°F. There was snow cover statewide in varying amounts, but generally deeper in the eastern third of the state. Nearly all water habitats were frozen-over weeks before the survey period. The percent of open, flowing river channel was consistently low for most rivers. While the channelized portion of the Missouri River reported the lowest percentage of ice cover (10-25%), slush and flow ice was present along its entire length.

During the survey period, 698 Bald Eagles were observed, including 139 along the Missouri River. This total is a 46% decrease from the 1992 record high count of 1292 Bald Eagles, but only a 2% decrease from the 1980-1993 average of 714 Bald Eagles. Compared with the 14-year average, Bald-Eagle use of the Platte River Darr-Elm Creek area was down 64%, and use of the Republican River-Harlan County Reservoir area was down 79%. Use of the South Platte, North Platte, and Platte Rivers-Sutherland Reservoir area was up 21%, while use of the North Platte River-Lake McConaughy area was up 224%.

There were 19 Golden Eagle sightings in Nebraska in the following reporting areas: Platte River from Shelton-Grand Island (2), Missouri River (1), Beaver Creek (2), and in the following counties: Blaine (1), Box Butte (2), Chase (2), Dawes (1), Dundy (1), Holt (1), Scotts Bluff (2), and Sheridan (4).

The data on the Bald Eagles is presented in Table 1.

TABLE 1. BALD EAGLE NUMBERS IN NEBRASKA, JANUARY, 1993 (National Wildlife Federation survey). Imm.=immature, Unkn.= unknown age.

	Adults	Imm.	Unkn.	Total
NORTH PLATTE RIVER TOTALS	71	37	60	168
Wyoming Line-Bayard (area lakes)	3	7	0	10
Bayard-Lisco	4	1	0	5
Lisco-Lewellen	0	0	0	0
Lewellen-Keystone (area lakes)	60	29	60	149
Keystone-Paxton	4	0	0	4
Paxton-North Platte	0	0	0	0

	Adults	Imm.	Unkn.	Total
SOUTH PLATTE RIVER TOTALS	7	2	0	9
Colorado Springs-Big Springs	0	0	0	0
Big Springs-Paxton	4	0	0	4
Paxton-North Platte, Tri-Co. Div.	3	2	0	5

	Adults	Imm.	Unkn.	Total
PLATTE RIVER TOTALS	81	24	1	106
North Platte-Gothenberg (lake, canal)	8	4	0	12
Gothenberg-Darr	11	3	0	14
Darr-Elm Creek (lakes, canal)	21	3	1	25
Elm Creek-Kearney	4	1	0	5
Kearney-Shelton	6	0	0	6
Shelton-Grand Island	8	3	0	11
Grand Island-Silver Creek	1	6	0	7
Silver Creek-Columbus	2	0	0	2
Columbus-North Bend	9	3	0	12
North Bend-Fremont	1	1	0	2
Fremont-Linoma	4	0	0	4
Linoma-Plattsmouth	6	0	0	6

	19	3	1	23
LOUP RIVER TOTALS	19	3	1	23
Brewster-Burwell (North Loup)	4	1	1	6
Burwell-mouth of North Loup River	2	0	0	2
Theford-Milburn (Middle Loup)	1	0	0	1
Milburn-Arcadia (Middle Loup)	1	0	0	1
Arcadia-Mouth of Middle Loup (Sherman Reservoir)	3	0	0	3
North Loup River-Genoa (Loup R.)	7	2	0	9
Genoa-mouth of Loup River	1	0	0	1

	31	7	0	38
NIOBRARA RIVER TOTALS	31	7	0	38
Snake River-Cornell	5	1	0	6
Cornell-Cherry County Line	11	1	0	12
Cherry County Line-Cuba	1	0	0	1
Cuba-Newport	4	0	0	4
Newport-Redbird/Lynch	5	4	0	9
Redbird/Lynch-Missouri River	5	1	0	6

SNAKE RIVER TOTALS [Hwy 97 bridge - mouth (Merritt Res.)]	7	1	0	8
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	Adults	Imm.	Unkn.	Total
REPUBLICAN RIVER TOTALS	11	7	1	19
Alma-Naponee (Harlan Reservoir)	9	6	1	16
Naponee-Riverton	2	0	0	2
Riverton-Guide Rock	0	1	0	1

	117	22	0	139
MISSOURI RIVER TOTALS	117	22	0	139
Undesignated area	3	2	0	5
Nebraska Line-Monowi	0	0	0	0
Monowi-Gavins Pt. (Lewis & Clark Lake)	0	0	0	0
Gavins Pt.-Goat Island	6	3	0	9
Goat Island-Ponca State Park	1	0	0	1
Ponca State Park-Homer	5	0	0	5
Homer-Decatur	13	4	0	17
Decatur-Tekamah	9	0	0	9
Tekamah-Mormon Bridge (De Soto NWR)	18	3	0	21
Mormon Bridge-Hwy 275	1	0	0	1
Hwy 275-Plattsmouth	6	0	0	6
Plattsmouth-Union	5	0	0	5
Union-Peru	12	2	0	14
Peru-Indian Cave State Park	24	8	0	32
Indian Cave State Park-Kansas	14	0	0	1

	42	27	0	69
TOTALS OF RESERVOIRS AND LAKES*	42	27	0	69
Sutherland Reservoir	33	25	0	58
Enders Reservoir	2	0	0	2
Swanson Reservoir	3	0	0	3
Medicine Creek Reservoir	3	2	0	5
Walgren Lake	1	0	0	1

No eagles were seen at Lake Maloney, Red Willow Reservoir, Calamus Reservoir, Lake Babcock, Salt Valley and Lincoln City Lakes, or Grove Lake.

	Adults	Imm.	Unkn.	Total
TOTALS OF OTHER AREAS	11	1	1	13
Mahon Ranch	1	0	0	1
Sandy Creek NRD	4	0	0	4
Beaver Creek	3	0	0	3
Valentine NWR	1	1	0	2
Frenchman Creek	1	0	0	1
Maloney Canal	1	0	1	2

* No eagles seen at Sidney, Cody Park, Sac-Wilcox WMA, Schilling WMA, Turkey Creek, or Funk WMA.
WMA=Wildlife Management Area, NRD=Natural Resources District,
NWR=National Wildlife Refuge.

TOTALS FOR COUNTIES*	56	49	1	106
Blaine	5	1	1	7
Brown	2	0	0	2
Cherry	5	0	0	5
Clay	1	0	0	1
Colfax	12	24	0	36
Cuming	10	16	0	26
Custer	1	0	0	1
Furnas	5	6	0	11
Harlan	1	0	0	1
Holt	1	0	0	1
Jefferson	1	0	0	1
Knox	2	0	0	2
Merrick	2	0	0	2
Morrill	1	0	0	1
Phelps	1	0	0	1
Scottsbluff	1	0	0	1
Sheridan	1	0	0	1
Sherman	0	1	0	1
Washington	2	1	0	3
Wheeler	2	0	0	2

No eagles seen in the following counties: Box Butte, Chase, Dawes, or Dundy.

NWF TOTALS FOR NEBRASKA, 1993	453	180	65	698
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Big Bend Audubon Society Bald Eagle Count, January 17, 1993.

The report was submitted by Robin Harding, who gave the following weather statistics: temperature 14-22° F; wind N 6-8 mph to E 6mph; cloudy skies, with haze; ground cover - snow all covered; Platte River 95% ice; Harlan County Lake 99% ice; Republican River 100% ice; Spillway 100% ice.

The data for the different locations are presented in Table 2.

TABLE 2. NUMBERS OF BALD EAGLES, KEARNEY - LEXINGTON AREA, JAN. 17, 1993

	Adults	Imm.	Unkn.	Total
TOTALS, KEARNEY-LEXINGTON & RETURN	70	8	28	106
Kearney bridge-Odessa bridge	6	1	4	11
Odessa bridge-Elm Creek bridge	9	0	1	10
Elm Creek bridge-Overton bridge	22	2	3	27
Overton bridge-Canady Steam Plant	9	3	16	28
Canady Steam Plant-J-2 Power Plant	4	0	1	5
J-2 Power Plant-East Johnson Lake	6	0	2	8
Johnson Lake-Lexington bridge	11	2	0	13
Lexington bridge-Overton bridge	1	0	1	1
Overton bridge-Elm Creek bridge	1	0	0	1
Elm Creek bridge-Odessa bridge	1	0	0	1
Odessa bridge-Kearney bridge	0	0	0	0

TOTALS FOR HARLAN COUNTY LAKE AND ENVIRONS	4	2	2	8
Harlan County Lake SW	0	0	0	0
Harlan County North	0	1	0	1
Harlan County Dam (lakeside)	2	0	0	2
Harlan County Dam (spillway)	0	1	0	1
Dam-Naponee (south side of Republican River)	0	0	0	0
Naponee bridge-Republican City (north side of Republican River)	2	0	2	4

Grand Totals for the Two Areas	74	10	30	114
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Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District: Bald Eagles

Mark Peyton and Roger Knaggs sent data on the numbers of Bald Eagles at two viewing sites, the J-2 Hydropower Plant near Lexington, and Lake Ogallala below the Kingsley Dam, during January and February, 1993.

The daily averages over the past three years were as follows:

<u>Year</u>	<u>J-2 Power Plant</u>	<u>Kingsley Dam</u>
1991	11	21
1992	8	42
1993	4	87

It is evident that Bald Eagles have been decreasing in numbers at the J-2 Plant, but increasing significantly at Kingsley Dam. The daily numbers and totals are given in Table 3.

TABLE 3. NUMBERS OF BALD EAGLES AT TWO VIEWING SITES, 1993

<u>Date</u>	<u>J-2 HYDROPOWER PLANT NEAR LEXINGTON</u>		<u>LAKE OGALLALA BELOW KINGSLEY DAM</u>	
	<u>January</u>	<u>February*</u>	<u>January</u>	<u>February</u>
1	NA	NA	64	135
2	6	NA	68	124
3	5	1	76	121
4	NA	NA	93	114
5	NA	NA	86	53
6	NA	NA	153	42
7	3	NA	181	31
8	8	NA	113	31
9	NA	NA	164	11
10	NA	0	162	20
11	NA	NA	170	13
12	NA	NA	168	23
13	NA	NA	103	17
14	3	NA	167	12
15	2	NA	102	8
16	5	NA	78	18
17	5	6	162	8
18	2	NA	175	30
19	NA	NA	168	24
20	NA	NA	171	37
21	5	NA	151	9
22	2	NA	176	8
23	4	NA	106	12
24	4	0	130	6
25	4	NA	184	18
26	NA	NA	148	8
27	NA	NA	160	5
28	4	NA	176	5
29	3		162	
30	6		136	
31	3		58	
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Totals	74	7	4,211	943
Ave./Day	4.11	1.75	135.84	33.68
Total Ave./Day	3.68		87.36	

* The J-2 Power Plant viewing center was closed on February 1 in order to repair the generator at the plant. Weekly observations were made from the plant at 10:00 a.m. CDT.

NA = not available.