



## Welcome to the Southwest Florida Eagle Cam!

Thank you for watching & supporting the Southwest Florida Eagle Cam. Below are a list of common questions we receive about the nest, eagles and area. If your question has not been answered below, feel free to join us during an open chat to learn more!

### **QUESTIONS ABOUT THE NEST**

#### **Where is the nest located?**

The nest is located in North Ft. Myers on private property owned by Dick Pritchett Real Estate. The surrounding area is approximately 135 acres and includes a horse pasture, small pond, and the office of Dick Pritchett Real Estate.

#### **How large is the nest?**

The nest is approximately 6-7 feet in diameter and is approximately 6 feet deep and was built in 2016.

#### **How long have the eagles used this nest?**

The eagles have been using the Slash Pine tree since 2006. In March of 2016 the original nest built in 2006 began to fall apart. By the time E7 left the area there were only a couple of sticks left in the tree. Harriet and her new mate M15 began building a new nest in the same tree the end of August 2016.

#### **Are there nearby water sources available for the eagles?**

There is a pond on the property where the eagles bathe and drink, but they don't usually fish there. This pond is not stocked. There are a number of ponds within half a mile of the nest where the eagles have been observed fishing. The Caloosahatchee River is approximately one mile away and may serve as one of their primary food sources.

### **QUESTIONS ABOUT THE SWFEC EAGLES: HARRIET & M15**

#### **Are the adult Bald Eagles at SWFEC named?**

The female eagle is called "Harriet". She and her first mate (Ozzie, who passed away September 29, 2015) were given those names by locals when they were first spotted in the area. The first nest on the Pritchett's property was built in 2006. Harriet's new mate is referred to as M15 (Male 2015). M15 was first seen in the territory shortly after Ozzie was injured in March of 2015 and has remained with her since.

#### **Why don't M15 and the eaglets have names?**

It was decided not to give human names to the wild eagles at SWFEC in season 2 after E3 died before names were chosen. Since that time the eaglets have been given the designation E (Eagle) and the number in order of hatch since the cameras have been streaming.



### **How old are the adult eagles?**

The adults are not banded, so there is no way of knowing their exact age. Based on local viewers who have watched the pair nesting over the years Harriet is at least 19 years of age. She has been seen at this nest since 2006. If she is the same female that nested across the street she could be in her 20s. It generally takes five years before an eagle is mature and ready to raise a family. M15 is approximately 7-8 years old. When he first arrived at the SWFL nest he still had some darker plumage in the white feathers and his eyes are still a bit darker in color. These are both signs of a newly mature Bald Eagle.

### **How can you tell Harriet and M15 apart?**

Harriet is larger than M15. M15's supraorbital ridge (bone over the eye) has more feather cover than Harriet's. M15's eyes are slightly darker in color. When viewing from above M15's feathers have a more gradual change from brown to white feathers (making it look speckled).

### **When do Harriet and M15 usually lay eggs?**

Typical nesting season for Bald Eagles in Florida extends from October 1 through May 15 - nest building and courtship taking place as early as September. Egg-laying extends from October through March. In the North Ft. Myers area the eagles usually lay eggs the latter part of November. Harriet usually lays eggs mid to late November.

## **QUESTIONS ABOUT EAGLES IN GENERAL**

### **Why do they call the eagle "bald"?**

The word bald as it relates to Bald Eagle is derived from an Old English term 'balde' which means white.

### **Is the bald eagle endangered?**

The bald eagle is no longer listed on the Endangered List, however they are still protected. Bald Eagles are federally protected under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act and Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

### **Why can't you possess an eagle feather?**

The possession of any migratory bird feather is a violation of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. There is and has been a significant illegal market for such items. There is no way to tell if the feather came from an illegally killed animal or off the ground.

### **How many feathers does an eagle have?**

A bald eagle has approximately 7,000-7,200 feathers. However, that depends on when the feathers are being counted. When going through molts eagles have less.

### **How long before the juvenile eagles look like the adults?**

It takes five years for the eagle to attain the signature look of a mature adult bald eagle.



### **What is the life expectancy of a bald eagle?**

It's possible for bald eagles in the wild to live longer than thirty years, however the average lifespan in the wild is 20-30 years.

### **What is the wingspan of an adult bald eagle?**

An adult's wingspan is approximately 6-7 feet wide.

### **How fast can an eagle fly?**

During level flight, a bald eagle can achieve speeds of about 30 to 35 mph and can dive at 100 mph.

### **How much does an adult bald eagle weigh?**

Their average weight is between 6-13 pounds (depending on the gender or location). Males are smaller and weigh less than the females.

### **Why do they have their mouths open?**

Eagles do not sweat, so they use other cooling methods such as perching in the shade, panting, and holding their wings away from their body.

### **What do bald eagles eat?**

Bald eagles eat mostly fish, but will also feed on a variety of small mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians. They will also feed on carrion, especially during the winter months.

### **How much do bald eagles eat each day?**

They eat approximately 1 to 2 lbs per day depending on how much energy they have to expend. Eagles may eat every day, but can store food and go several days without eating if they need to.

### **What is the crop?**

The crop is a "pantry" or storage area located below the chin that is filled when some birds (not all) eat. It is an expandable section of the esophagus that is used to store and soften food and regulates the flow of food through the digestive tract.

### **How many eggs do bald eagles lay?**

Bald eagles usually lay from 1-3 eggs. There are 4 egg clutches reported, but they are rare. The average number of eggs laid is 2.

### **Why do the eagles "roll" the eggs?**

The adults roll the eggs in order to keep the temperature even throughout the egg and to prevent the embryo from adhering to one side of the egg.



### **How long do they incubate the eggs?**

It takes approximately 34-39 days for an eagle egg to hatch.

### **Why do some eggs not hatch?**

Some eggs aren't viable simply because biological systems aren't always perfect. The egg may never have been fertilized, the embryo can suffer a fatal developmental defect at any time, extreme weather can occur, or environmental contamination, etc.

### **How big are the hatchlings?**

A hatchling is approximately 3 inches long and weigh about 2 ounces.

### **Why don't they feed the hatchling right after it hatches?**

Prior to beginning to hatch the young bird absorbed all of the remaining yolk and doesn't need to eat for some time after hatching. It takes a while for the chick to gain control of its head movements in order to eat.

### **Why is one eaglet so aggressive to the others?**

Sibling rivalry varies between nests - depending quite a bit on the amount of food provided and the genders. When food is in short supply the less dominant eaglets may not survive. Even when food isn't a problem, it isn't uncommon to see some sibling rivalry – lessons learned which will help them cope when they are on their own. As they get older, you will see less of the sibling rivalry.

### **Is it normal for the adults not to be on the nest with their young?**

The first two weeks the hatchling(s) are not able to regulate their temperature and the adults will keep them warm. After two weeks (and depending on the ambient temperature) the eaglets might be seen 'alone' on the nest at times, but one of the parents is usually perched on a nearby branch or tree.

### **When do the eaglets stand up?**

When the eaglets are about 6 weeks old they should be able to stand up on their feet. This development indicates increased balance and muscle strength.

### **When do the eaglets begin to feed themselves?**

At about five weeks of age the eaglets usually will make attempts to eat on their own.

### **When do the eaglets leave the nest?**

From the time they hatch till first flight (fledge) is approximately 10-13 weeks (average 80 days).

### **When do the fledglings leave the area?**

After fledging the juveniles remain in the area for another 1-2 months practicing their flying skills and return to the nest for food which the adults will continue to provide. The juveniles at SWFEC usually leave the nest area in May.