



Nesting Bald Eagles in the City of Vancouver 2005

Urban Eagles in Burrard View.
Photo Josie Padro

In Partnership With:



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The 2005 Bald Eagle Nesting Season in 100 words

The Stanley Park Ecology Society monitored twelve bald eagle nests in the City of Vancouver in 2005: four nests in Stanley Park, three in additional City of Vancouver parks, two in green spaces and three in residents' yards. Ten nests produced a total of thirteen eaglets. Two nests were unsuccessful and abandoned. Eagles throughout the City of Vancouver continue to raise their young on a bird-based diet. Crows, rock doves, gulls and cormorants were the most common prey or scavenged species of the eaglets' diet. The nests were monitored from February until August 2005. 6 nests were monitored in 2004.

Bald Eagle Nests in this Report



NESTS

- | | |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| 1) Merilees Trail | 7) Strathcona Park |
| 2) Pipeline Road | 8) Burrardview Park |
| 3) Cathedral Trail | 9) Burrardview |
| 4) Dining Pavilion | 10) Imperial Road |
| 5) Jericho | 11) Kerrisdale |
| 6) Vanier Park | 12) Dunbar |

Stanley Park Nest Summaries

Each of the 4 nests in Stanley Park is located in the upper portions of a Douglas-fir tree. Three are in comparably low human usage areas of the park while one overlooks a busy area. Park visitors expressed their admiration and interest in the nesting eagles throughout the season and spent a good deal of time positioning themselves for a clear view. Stanley Park Ecology Society volunteers invested more than 150 hours monitoring the eagle nests in Stanley Park, observing and documenting the eagles nest building, incubating, feeding and flying.

1) Merilees Trail Nest

2005 was the first time this nest was successful! After much pacing in the nest, an eaglet eventually fledged from the nest in between Siwash Rock and Prospect Point. Humans would most likely suggest that the nest on Merilees Trail has the best view of all of the nests in the City of Vancouver. It is at the top of a Douglas-fir tree and overlooks the waves of Burrard Inlet and the mountains of the North Shore. The nest was built in 2004 and is in close vicinity to the previous nest the pair used.

2) The Pipeline Road Nest

This nest was the last to produce an eaglet in 2005, and not surprisingly it was also the last eaglet to fledge in mid August. The nest is at the top of a Douglas-fir tree just off Pipeline Road in the centre of Stanley Park. The adult pair can often be seen flying or perched near Beaver Lake or on any of numerous perch trees near Pipeline Road. These eagles have included picnic leftovers in their primarily bird-based diet, as scavenged steak bones were found amongst the eagle's food remains in each of the last 2 years.

3) The Cathedral Trail Nest

For the first time in recent memory, this nest did not produce any eaglets. A pair of adults were very active at this nest in spring, including making a series of raids on nests in the nearby Great Blue Heronry in Stanley Park in May, but no eaglet sightings or vocalizations were ever observed. The pair of adults abandoned the nesting process in June. The nest, which is situated at the top of a Douglas-fir tree is the oldest active eagle nest in Stanley Park.

4) The Dining Pavilion Nest

One eaglet fledged from the most visible of the four eagle nests in Stanley Park, located at the top of a Douglas-fir tree in between the Dining Pavilion and the Malkin Bowl. The eagles have a birds-eye view of concerts and plays for much of their time in the nest. The tree is in a grassy, maintained area of Stanley Park and frequently has sun-bathers and picnics on the grass beneath the nest. There is also a regular supply of prey feathers scattered on the ground – most of them were from crows, gulls and rock doves. Two eaglets successfully fledged from this nest in 2004.

Nests outside of Stanley Park

The Stanley Park Ecology Society's monitors invested more than 165 hours observing 8 nests outside of Stanley Park in various locations and habitats of the urban landscape. Some of these nests are located in parks with heavy sports and recreational usage, others are in small belts of forest and, most surprisingly, 3 are located in trees in people's yards. Some of these nests, already in non-traditional environments, are in unusual locations, in the comparably lower branches of deciduous trees in areas with a high volume of people and cars. Eaglets from these nests hatch with the sounds of fire trucks, car alarms, backyard parties and other events in the background. They are the ultimate urban eagles.

5) Jericho Nest

The Jericho nest had perhaps the most dramatic story of 2005. The adult eagles abandoned their traditional nest in a Douglas-fir tree in a small, forested section of Jericho Park and built a nest in a Cottonwood tree near a busy road and baseball diamond in March. For the 3rd time in 4 years, this nest produced 2 eaglets, but ... there was drama. Both of the eaglets, though having grown to adult size, were out of the nest before they could fly. The older one ended up on the ground below, while the younger chick was stranded on a branch below the nest and was unable to make the upward flight "home". The grounded bird was contained by a group of dedicated nest monitors until it could be collected by wildlife rehabilitators and transferred to their facility. The younger eaglet remained stranded on the branch for a period of days, before eventually flying, with growing grace and intermittent tumbles, to various trees. After several days, it returned to the nest, where parent and food were waiting.

6) Vanier Park Nest

The Vanier Park Nest produced a pair of eaglets for the first time in the 2 years it has been monitored. The nest is in the lower branches of a Cottonwood tree and usually had a generous amount of prey underneath its branches. The eaglets from this nest had a larger amount of cormorants in their diet base than the average Vancouver eaglet in 2005, though remnants of the urban eagles' diet staples of crows, gulls and rock doves were ever-present. The nest can be seen from the Burrard St. Bridge and overlooks the Children's Festival, Bard on the Beach and the Seawall leading from Granville Island to Kitsilano Beach.

7) Strathcona Park Nest

The nest in the branches of a Cottonwood tree in Strathcona Park could do with some good luck. For the 2nd time in three years the eaglet was out of the nest before being able to fly, this year finding itself on the ground in the midst of a soccer camp. Though the eaglet was the same size as its parents, it had not yet developed the flight skills or strength to gain lift off the ground. It was collected by a Vancouver Park Board Wildlife Technician and transferred to a rehabilitation facility. No eaglets were produced in this nest in 2004.

8) Burrardview Park Nest

This nest produced one eaglet in 2005 and it was the first of the eaglets in this study to fledge. Just like the nest at Vanier Park, the eaglet in this nest had more cormorants in its diet than the average Vancouver eaglet. The nest overlooked Burrard Inlet from the top of a Douglas-fir tree that is in a residential area, with houses on either side of it.

9) Burrardview Nest

This is thought to be the first year this backyard nest was active, and certainly the first year in which an eaglet was produced. The nest is in a Douglas-fir tree directly in a back yard and overlooks roads, homes, pedestrians, children playing and yards. The eaglet in this nest had the very urban diet of the "*basic 3*": Gulls, Crows and Rock Doves.

10) Imperial Road Nest

This nest did not produce any eaglets in 2005 and was abandoned by the adults early in the mating and nesting season. The nest is in a Douglas-fir tree in Pacific Spirit Park and the parents could have moved to another, yet to be discovered location, in the Park.

11) Kerrisdale Nest

This front yard nest produced a pair of eaglets in 2005, and left plenty of evidence of their activity underneath it – feathers and regurgitated eagle pellets were common findings on one sidewalk in Vancouver. The nest, located in a Douglas-fir tree, was also successful in each of the previous 2 years.

12) Dunbar Nest

This nest is said to have produced an eaglet in 2005 and is in a conifer tree in a green belt near Dunbar. The nest has been active for several years. The pair of adult eagles benefit from the proximity of the nest to the Fraser River.

Recommendations

- The City of Vancouver become a partner in the Wildlife Tree Stewardship Program (WiTS), a project dedicated to documenting and conserving trees that provide valuable wildlife habitat. WiTS operates with federal, provincial and municipal government partnership as well as with community groups such as the Federation of BC Naturalists and the Stanley Park Ecology Society. The nests mentioned in this report have been entered on the Wildlife Tree Stewardship Atlas. The atlas is on an easy to use website that can inform government agencies of the presence of wildlife trees and the provincially protected nests in them when different development or zoning projects or proposals are being considered.
- The Stanley Park Ecology Society continue to partner with different levels of government, NGO's and the public in the search and documentation of nests in the City of Vancouver and continue to increase public awareness of this emerging urban species.