



Nesting Bald Eagles in the City of Vancouver 2006

Urban Eagle at Strathcona Nest
Photo Robyn Worceser

In Cooperation With:



The 2006 Bald Eagle Nesting Season in 100 words

In 2006 the Stanley Park Ecology Society monitored 15 bald eagle nests in the City of Vancouver: 4 nests in Stanley Park, and the rest in other City of Vancouver parks, green spaces and in residents' yards. There were 15 nests that produced a total of 12-16 fledglings. One nest was not used at all and 3 to 5 nests were used early in the season by the adults but were suspected to be unsuccessful and were abandoned.

Eagles throughout the City of Vancouver continue to raise their young on a bird-based diet. Crows, rock pigeons, gulls and cormorants were the most common prey or scavenged species of the eaglets' diet. Most nests were monitored from February until August 2006. In 2005 and 2004, 12 and 6 nests were monitored respectively.

Bald Eagle Nests in this Report



NESTS

- | | |
|---------------------|------------------------------|
| 1) Merilees Trail | 9) Burrardview |
| 2) Pipeline Road | 10) Imperial Road – PAC |
| 3) Cathedral Trail | 11) Kerrisdale |
| 4) Dining Pavilion | 12) Dunbar (Musqueam Park) |
| 5) Jericho | 13) Tower Beach |
| 6) Vanier Park | 14) SW Marine Dr (Westbrook) |
| 7) Strathcona Park | 15) SW Marine Dr (Argyle St) |
| 8) Burrardview Park | |

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. Three Stanley Park Ecology Society volunteers invested many hours monitoring the eagle nests in Stanley Park, observing and documenting the eagles nest-building, incubating, feeding and flying.

Merilees Trail Nest

Although there were sightings of adult eagles in the area throughout the summer, there were no confirmed eaglets sighted at this nest. It is not surprising that this nest was not successful, as it only had its very first success last year. Located between Siwash Rock and Prospect Point in Stanley Park this nest has an excellent view of Burrard Inlet and the mountains of the North Shore. The nest was built in 2004 with sticks the eagles had moved from the previous nest site less than 100m away. **(This nest tree fell during the December 15th 2006 windstorm).**

The Pipeline Road Nest

The nest is at the top of a Douglas-fir tree just off Pipeline Road in the center 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. They were observed incubating and a large eaglet was sighted in late June. By mid-July the eaglet had already tested its wings, as it was spotted perched on a branch near the nest. The eaglet is presumed to have fledged from the nest.

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 right through to June but no confirmed sightings of eaglets were confirmed. These eagles were the pair that made a series of raids on nests in the nearby Great Blue Heronry in Stanley Park in 2005, but there were no confirmed eagle attacks at the heronry this year. This nest, which is situated at the top of a huge (over 500 year old) Douglas-fir tree, is the oldest and largest active eagle nest in Stanley Park. It was ultimately unsuccessful in 2005 as well.

The Dining Pavilion Nest

These adults were first observed incubating eggs in early April, and the chick was first seen being fed in early May. A week or so later a second eaglet was confirmed. The eaglets were quite surprised when two squirrels came running up the tree and past the nest in June. They spent most of their time escaping

the hot sun by hiding in the shade of the tree trunk. The eaglets started testing their wings in early July, and they left the nest tree sometime in late July. This is the most visible of the four eagle nests in Stanley Park, as it is located at the top of a Douglas-fir tree in between the Dining Pavilion and the Malkin Bowl. One eaglet successfully fledged from this nest in 2005 and two in 2004.

Summaries of select nests outside of Stanley Park

Nine Stanley Park Ecology Society monitors invested many hours observing 11 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 are in unusual locations in non-traditional environments, such as 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.

Jericho Nest

The Jericho nest had a dramatic story in 2006. A late June storm swept the eagles' nest from under the nestlings and both eaglets fell out; one fell to the ground but the other managed to stay on the tree. Since they were not yet ready to fly, the one that landed on the ground had to be transported to wildlife rehabilitators, and the other eaglet managed to stay in the nest tree until it was ready to fly. A similar story happened in 2005, as both eaglets fell out of their nest too early and had to be raised by wildlife rehabilitators. For the 3rd time in 4 years, this nest produced 2 eaglets.

Strathcona Park Nest

The nest in the branches of a Cottonwood tree in Strathcona Park could do with some good luck. Although a chick was successfully produced in 2006, the nest fell out of the tree during the autumn. In two of the last four years eaglets were out of the nest before being able to fly: one year an eaglet found itself in the midst of a soccer camp and had to be transported to wildlife rehabilitators. No eaglets were produced in this nest in 2004.

Burrardview Nest

Although this was only the second year that this backyard nest has been active, it was a great success. Three eaglets were observed well in to July and are thought to have fledged. The nest is in a Douglas-fir tree directly in a back yard and overlooks roads, homes, pedestrians, children playing and yards. The eaglets in this nest had the very urban diet of gulls, crows, pigeons and starlings. These eaglets were also able to use neighbouring roofs as their starting point for fledging.

Kerrisdale Nest

This front yard nest produced a pair of eaglets in 2005 but only one in 2006. These urban eagles seem to have a little more natural diet, as both duck and fish bones were found underneath the nest. The nest, located in a Douglas-fir tree, has been successful for the previous 3 years.

Vancouver Bald Eagle Nest Summary

Nest	Adult Activity	Eaglets	Fledglings
Merilees Trail (Stanley Park)	yes	0	0
Pipeline Trail (Stanley Park)	yes	1	1
Cathedral Trail (Stanley Park)	yes	0	0
Pavilion (Stanley Park)	yes	2	2
Jericho Beach	yes	2	1 +1*
Vanier Park	yes	2	2
Strathcona Park	yes	1	1
Burrard View Park	yes	2	?
Burrard View	yes	3	3
Imperial (Pacific Spirit Park)	no	0	0
Kerrisdale	yes	1	1
Dunbar (Musqueam Park)	yes	2	1-2*
Tower Beach	yes	0	0
SW Marine (lookout)	yes	1	0
SW Marine (Westbrook)	yes	?	?
Total	14/15	17	12 to 16

(?) Represents uncertain/undocumented outcomes .

(*) Represents fledglings that were sent to wildlife rehabilitators.

Recommendations

The City of Vancouver may benefit from becoming 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 atlas is 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, zoning projects or proposals are being considered.

The Stanley Park Ecology Society should continue to partner with different levels of government, NGOs 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.

All nests will be located with GPS and entered into the Community Mapping Network.

Robyn Worcester, Robert Boelens, Marian Coope, Helmut Urhahn, Yvonne Van, Martin Gebauer, Allan Jensen, Rex Kenner, Kate Brunton, Josie Padro, Monica Schroeder, Lynann Burton, and David Curror participated in this study.

For further details or questions please contact Robyn Worcester at coyotes@stanleyparkecology.ca or 604 681 9453.