

GEHR Watershed Minute #14

Bald Eagle: (184 words)

The adult Bald Eagle with its white head, black body, dark brown tail, and its 7 to 8 feet wing span, is our national symbol. Today, there are at least three breeding pairs along the Great Egg Harbor River, and as many as 22 Bald Eagles were observed wintering, feeding, and migrating through the watershed on one day in April of 2008.

These large birds require a nesting location that is safe from the threat of human disturbance, so they typically choose a very large tree in a remote location that is taller than the trees immediately surrounding it. Bald Eagles typically eat fish, but they also consume small mammals, waterfowl, and dead animal matter.

After being pushed to the brink of extinction in the 1970s from habitat destruction, shootings, poisonings, and chemical pollution, the Bald Eagle has made an incredible recovery, with the help of caring people. Down to only one nesting pair here in New Jersey in 1982, dedicated state biologist and volunteers helped these birds to rebuild a population of 60 pairs of nesting Bald Eagles in the state by 2007.