
USING CITIZEN SCIENTISTS TO MONITOR BALD EAGLE AND OSPREY NESTS IN WESTERN MONTANA

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Montana has witnessed a remarkable recovery of Bald Eagles (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) following Endangered Species Act protection. With over 600 territories to monitor, managing agencies currently struggle to collect data on territory occupancy, productivity, and range expansion. In 2013, the Bitterroot Audubon Society initiated a Citizen Science effort to assist Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks in Bald Eagle monitoring efforts. Because of an overwhelming public interest, we also used volunteers to collect information on Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*) nests. Volunteers ranged in age from 8 to 80. Most had little or no birding experience prior to project participation. Volunteers collected information on 35 Bald Eagle territories, documenting nest occupancy, phenology, cause and timing of failures, and productivity. Volunteers mapped and observed behavior at over 100 Osprey nests throughout western Montana. Bitterroot Audubon plans to continue and expand this project during the 2014 breeding season.