

Subject: Re: Hudson River Bald Eagle Breeding Success

Date: Fri, 25 Feb 2000 14:49:10 -0500

From: "Peter Nye" <penye@gw.dec.state.ny.us>

To: <helen@bcsnet.it>

CC: <Anne_Secord@fws.gov>

Helen,

Anne is right, and not unexpectedly, GE puts their own spin on eagle numbers along the Hudson. Matter of fact, based upon our winter survey conducted on 15 January past and the large numbers (record) of eagles we counted, I'm sure we'll see the next River Watch making great claims about that too. There is no doubt that eagles have returned to the Hudson after a long hiatus, and appear to still be increasing. We have had mixed nesting results since eagles began nesting again on the river in 1992, and I'm sure we will see more variability as the years go by. We have been collecting eagle serum, prey and unhatched eggs for several years now for analysis, and hope to develop a solid picture of contaminant loads throughout the eagles ecosystem over the next few years. Early results from only two samples are high enough (PCB's) to be of concern; it will be very interesting to see future results and to see if any manifestations in the breeding success are witnessed.

I am not sure what 1999 report you are referring to, or what the contradiction might be, but as Anne said, data do change from year to year and can get very confusing when relayed (esp over the phone as apparently happened between Salatas and I if the passage below is his recount. It is close, but not perfect. Here is the breeding data for the Hudson:

Year	#occupied territories	#active(egg laid)	#successful	#yg fledged
1992	1		0	
0	0			
1993	1		0	
0	0			
1994	1		1	
0	0			
1995	1		0	
0	0			
1996	2		1	
0	0			
1997	2		1	
1	1			
1998	3		3	

2	4	
1999	3	3
3	5	

I already believe we are looking at at least 4 occupied territories along the river (all below Albany) going in to the 2000 breeding season.

All eagles now breeding in NYS are the result of our or others direct release/restoration programs (either the releasees themselves or their progeny).

Let me know if you have other questions.

--Pete--

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>>> Helen Chernoff <helen@bcsnet.it> 02/25/00 05:29AM >>>

Dear Dr. Nye,

I am trying to clarify whether bald eagles are successfully breeding along the Lower Hudson River for the USEPA Hudson River PCBs Reassessment-

Ecological Risk Assessment. General Electric has included the following information in a comment letter to EPA on the risk assessment,

based on a personal communication with you (telephone conversations with

J. Salatas, Exponent on April 21 and 29, 1999).

"The Hudson River bald eagle population has become reestablished in recent years. The first bald eagle nesting attempt on the Hudson River in over 100 years occurred in 1992 along the Lower Hudson River, but no fledglings were successfully produced at this nest until 1997. Since then, three bald eagle territories have been active on the Lower Hudson River. Four eaglets were fledged from these territories in 1998, including three from a single nest in Columbia County. Four eaglets were

also fledged in 1999, including three from a single nest in Green County."

Could you please verify that the information cited by GE is correct. It appears to contradict information contained in 1999 USGS Report that you

worked on with Anne Secord and others (Organochlorine Contaminants in Biota from the Hudson River, New York), which states that two established breeding pairs along the Hudson have not been successful in producing offspring.

Also, are the bald eagles found along the Hudson River the result of a reintroduction program, naturally returning to the area, or a combination of both?

Thanks for your assistance in clarifying these issues.

Sincerely yours,

Helen Chernoff
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and

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