



Frequently Asked Questions

Bald eagle revised draft management plan

Why does the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) recommend de-listing the bald eagle?

In April 2005, the FWC adopted rigorous scientific standards for classifying Florida's imperiled species. Using these standards, a biological review panel of scientists from the public and private sectors and universities concluded the bald eagle is not at risk of extinction and recommended its removal from Florida's imperiled species list.

The bald eagle was included on the federal Endangered Species List in 1967 because of dramatic population declines. The pesticide DDT, which caused eagles to lay eggs too fragile to survive, was a major reason for the decline. Eagle populations have made a remarkable recovery due to banning of DDT and habitat protection.

What does it mean if a species is de-listed?

It means it no longer has a significant risk of extinction but still requires careful management.

If the bald eagle is de-listed will it result in less protection?

No. Bald eagle conservation is a priority of the FWC. The FWC's bald eagle management plan will ensure that bald eagles will be protected and thrive in Florida. The federal Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act also will protect the bald eagle.

What is the goal of the management plan?

Although the bald eagle will be de-listed, the goal of the management plan is to provide protections to maintain a stable or increasing population across the state in perpetuity.

What management actions will take place?

The FWC will survey and monitor to track bald eagle populations to ensure numbers are not decreasing. Other specific actions described in the plan include habitat management, land acquisition, law enforcement, and offering private land incentives that include "green" certification and expedited permit review. Permits will be required in fewer situations since they are only necessary when activities are planned that cannot follow FWC habitat management guidelines. The FWC will provide training, education and outreach and continue research in the future.

Has the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) de-listed the bald eagle?

In 1999, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced a proposal to remove the bald eagle from the endangered species list completely. In July 2007 the USFWS published its intent to de-list the bald eagle on August 8, 2007.



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When the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service de-lists the bald eagle, will it still be protected?

Yes. Florida's bald eagle management plan proposes policy and rule changes to ensure Florida's bald eagle population continues to thrive. The federal Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act, and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act also will continue to protect bald eagles.

Why is the FWC developing a management plan for bald eagles?

A well-developed management plan ensures a healthy, viable bald eagle population for future Floridians. A primary element of the state's new guidelines for listing or de-listing imperiled species requires a species-specific management plan to guide future recovery efforts. The plan is required before a classification can change for any species. The FWC places a high priority on public input in developing and implementing management plans.

What is the draft bald eagle management plan?

The draft bald eagle management plan is a blueprint for future conservation efforts to ensure a viable bald eagle population in Florida. The draft plan, developed with input from government partners, stakeholders, and the public, proposes policy and rule changes and describes management actions necessary to ensure Florida's bald eagle population continues to thrive.

What is the goal of the draft bald eagle management plan?

The goal of the plan is to maintain a stable or increasing bald eagle population throughout Florida in perpetuity by maintaining the number of territories, reproductive levels and the current statewide range of the species.

What does the draft management plan propose to achieve?

The draft plan outlines four conservation objectives to help meet the plan's goal. These objectives have been achieved but must continue to be met to prevent re-listing of the eagle:

- Maintaining a minimum of 1,020 active territories annually for the next 24 years.
- Maintaining an average of 68 percent of the active territories producing at least one nestling annually.
- Maintaining an average reproductive success of 1.5 fledglings per active nest.
- Maintaining the current area of occupancy of at least 770 square miles and an extent of occurrence of 52,979 square miles of bald eagles statewide.



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What policy and rule changes does the bald eagle management plan propose?

Policy changes include:

- Bald eagle nests still will be regulated inside a 660-foot buffer around the nest.
- FWC will issue permits for activities that violate the eagle rule, in accordance with the permitting framework.
- The draft management plan establishes a new section within Chapter 68A, Florida Administrative Code, specifically for nongame birds.

The draft management plan proposes adoption of a new rule to protect bald eagles: “No person shall take, feed, disturb, possess, or sell, or attempt to engage in any such conduct, any bald eagle or parts thereof, or their nests or eggs except as authorized by specific permit.”

Permits will be issued based on whether they will advance management plan goal and objectives. Under specific circumstances listed in the management plan, federal authorization may serve as state authorization.

The plan also incorporates USFWS Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act draft management guidelines for activities in buffer zones, and USFWS nest-monitoring guidelines.

How can I review the draft bald eagle management plan?

The plan is available online at MyFWC.com under Quick Clicks.

How do I comment on the draft bald eagle management plan?

The public comment period for the revised draft bald eagle management plan is from Aug. 6 through Sept. 14. Send written comments to: **Bald Eagle Management Plan, 1239 SW 10th St., Ocala, FL 34474-2797**, or submit email comments to eagle_plan@myFWC.com.

FWC will host a public workshop on the revised draft management plan in Ocala with a video conference in Tallahassee on Aug. 22.

What happens after the public comment period closes in September?

FWC staff will read and consider all the comments and make further improvements to the plan. Staff will ask FWC Commissioners in September if they can bring the final plan to them for consideration and approval at the December Commission meeting in Key Largo.

When will the bald eagle be de-listed?

When FWC Commissioners approve the final bald eagle management plan, the bald eagle will be de-listed. Bald eagles will still require careful management to ensure that they don't ever need to be re-listed.



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What is the status of the bald eagle population now?

The bald eagle is listed by Florida as a threatened species. Surveys found only 88 active nests in Florida when monitoring began in 1973. In 1981, the number of known eagle nesting territories was 359. In 2005, the number was 1,133.

What is the greatest risk to bald eagles today?

The continued loss or degradation of nesting or foraging habitats is arguably the greatest threat to bald eagles.

How does the draft bald eagle management plan propose to minimize these risks?

The plan proposes several measurable conservation objectives to continue protecting bald eagles and their nests. It also requires continued monitoring of bald eagle nests to ensure the plan's objectives are met.

How long has the bald eagle been listed in Florida?

It was one of the original species listed as endangered in 1972 but in 1974, the status was reclassified to threatened.