



PROTECTION MEASURES

- **Nesting Season** occurs from October 1 through May 15
- **Do not enter the 6.3-acre nest protection area during the nesting season**
- **Avoid standing in direct view of the eagle nest or in close view of the eagles.**
- **Avoid loud noises around the nest protection area during the nest season**
- **Leash Pets**
- **The recommended viewing distance is at least 330 feet from the nest during the nesting season.**
- **Do not harass or feed**
- **No use of fireworks with 1/2 mile of the eagle nest, during the nesting season (1st Oct to 15th May, includes Christmas and New Year's Eve.)**

Epperson North, LLC has developed and submitted a Bald Eagle Management Plan to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (USFWS) Migratory Bird Permitting Office. USFWS issued Permit MB-90821C for this development. All conditions of this permit must be closely followed. Conditions of this permit have been summarized in this document.

CONTACT INFORMATION & IMPORTANT NUMBERS

Please immediately contact Tampa Bay Raptor Rescue at **727-798-2385 or 813-205-1851**, to coordinate transportation of any injured eagle.

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's FWC's Wildlife Alert Hotline at **888-404-3922**

For Protection Measure violations please contact Applied Bionomics, LLC at **813-625-1463**

Applied Bionomics, LLC Fair and Thoughtful Environmental Solutions

 **Phone:** 813-625-1463

 **Website:** www.ABenv.com

 **E-mail:** afuddy@ABenv.com



PROTECTING EPPERSON'S EAGLES FOR GENERATIONS TO COME

There's much more to living at Epperson beyond being part of a great community with neighbors, recreation, amenities and schools. As a homeowner, you've also inherited a jewel in Pasco County and part of Florida's history. North Epperson features King Lake and Eagle Park, a picturesque, natural habitat for dozens of wildlife species from sandhill cranes and great blue herons to red-bellied woodpeckers and our very own bald eagles.

STEWARDSHIP

Eagle Park, which borders King Lake, has been the site of an active bald eagle nest for decades. For four generations, the Epperson family preserved this 320-acre lake and its 250 acres of surrounding wetlands for their family's enjoyment and the wildlife who called it home. When Metro Development Group acquired the land for the development of Epperson, through United States federal statute that protects this species, Metro and its future residents became stewards of the Epperson nesting eagles. Great care and investments have been made to date to preserve the eagle's habitat including adding natural buffers and limiting development plans to preserve the 6.3-acre eagle nesting protection area so that the eagles may continue to thrive. Working within the federal and local regulations and with the guidance of environmental consultants, a host of Metro's development and construction team members have followed strict guidelines, which have included over 100 eagle monitoring sessions since construction commenced. As you will read, eagles are particularly sensitive during the breeding season (October 1st to May 15th) and a number of federal protection measures are in place to minimize their disturbance.



NATIONAL SYMBOL

The bald eagle is a treasured symbol of our nation, and it is a privilege to have eagle habitat in our community. Few developments offer the amount of wildlife diversity that live in and around the King Lake area. It requires education and an adherence to the legal protection measures that are required to coexist with native wildlife as part of Florida's natural beauty for residents to enjoy. Bald eagle nests, eggs, and young are protected under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (BGEPA) and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA). It is also important that you are aware of the laws and protection measures that are required for the success of the eagle nest.

As home sites transform into homes for our residents, and Eagle Park continues to take shape, we invite you and your family to learn more about these beautiful creatures to understand the work to date, your stewardship role, and to help spread the word about how everyone can participate in their care and protection for the next generation. Once development is complete, it will be up to our residents to ensure the Epperson eagles' legacy continues.

“In Florida, we have the honor to be the preferred region for bald eagles to nest and raise their young. We have the densest concentrations of nesting bald eagles in the lower 48 states. It was only 40 years ago when the bald eagle was on the brink of extinction. But, with diligent planning and a caring and concerned public, the species has been able to recover their numbers. It is important that the stewardship of the species continues so that future generations can enjoy their magnificent power and beauty.” – Andrew Fuddy, Applied Bionomics



A February 2021 aerial photo shows the Epperson bald eagle nest located just east of King Lake.

Living With Bald Eagles

Epperson North - Bald Eagle Information on Protection Measures and Penalties
The Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (16 U.S.C. 668-668c), prohibits anyone, without a permit issued by the Secretary of the Interior, from “taking” or disturbing bald or golden eagles, including their parts, nests, or eggs. The Act provides criminal penalties for persons who “take, possess any bald eagle, alive or dead, or any part, nest, or egg thereof.” The Act defines “take” as “pursue, shoot, shoot at, poison, wound, kill, capture, trap, collect, molest or disturb.” “Disturb” means: “to agitate or bother a bald or golden eagle to a degree that causes, or is likely to cause, 1) injury to an eagle, 2) a decrease in its productivity, by substantially interfering with normal breeding, feeding, or sheltering behavior, or 3) nest abandonment, by substantially interfering with normal breeding, feeding, or sheltering behavior.”

Disturbing an eagle to a degree that interferes with or interrupts normal breeding, feeding, or sheltering habits, and causes injury, death or nest abandonment is a violation of the Act can result in a fine of \$100,000 (\$200,000 for organizations), imprisonment for one year, or both, for a first offense. Penalties increase substantially for additional offenses, and a second violation of this Act is a felony.

Appearance

The adult bald eagle is a large dark brown bird with a white head and tail and yellow bill, eyes, legs and feet. The female is larger than the male by as much as 25 percent. The juvenile bald eagle is mostly dark brown with dark brown eyes and a gray or black bill, but has white patches or spots on its tail, belly and under its wings. Full adult plumage for bald eagles typically appears in their fifth year.

Habitat

Florida has one of the densest concentrations of nesting bald eagles in the lower 48 states. An estimated 1,499 nesting pairs were recorded in Florida in 2014, compared to only 88 active nests in 1973. Bald eagles and their nests are protected by state rule and federal law. Their nesting territories are concentrated around inland lake and river systems in peninsular Florida. Bald eagles use forested habitats for nesting and roosting, and expanses of shallow fresh or salt water for foraging. Nesting habitat generally consists of mature

Behavior

Bald eagles in Florida return to nest territories in the fall to begin nest building or repair. Their breeding season may extend to late April or May when their young are able to fly. Their nesting season is between October 1st through May 15th, or when the nest is in use. Eagles typically produce one brood per nesting season, but may re-nest if the first clutch is lost. Nests are quite large and typically located less than two miles from water. Their nests are spaced apart to ensure sufficient food for nestlings and to raise young without disturbance from other eagles. In Florida, females typically lay a clutch of 1-3 eggs between December and early January, with incubation lasting about 35 days. Nestlings in Florida fledge, or become able to fly, at about 11 weeks but remain with their parents near the nest for another 4 to 11 weeks. Sub-adult, non-breeding eagles migrate out of Florida starting in spring and summer and return in Fall and Winter. A bald eagle in the wild may live up to 28 years.

canopy trees located along habitat edges, providing an unobstructed view of surrounding areas. Daytime roosts are in the highest trees and adjacent to shore-lines. High quality foraging habitat for bald eagles has a diverse and abundance of prey and requires access to shallow water and tall trees or structures for perching. They feed on a wide variety of prey, mostly on fish such as catfish but also on birds and small mammals. They may harass other birds in flight to drop their fish and scavenge roadkill or other available carcasses.



Eagle nests are the largest of any bird in North America. A July 2020 photo of the Epperson eagle’s nest above was recorded at 4’ wide by 3.5’ deep.

Helpful Links

Learn more about the amazing bald eagle and how you can help its survival.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service: www.fws.gov/birds/management/managed-species/bald-and-golden-eagle-information.phpw

Florida Nature Trackers:
www.floridanaturetrackers.com/backyard

Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission
www.myfwc.com/wildlifehabitats/profiles/birds/raptors-and-vultures/bald-eagle

Florida Wildlife Federation:
www.floridawildlifefederation.org