

LOCALNEWS

Number of nesting eagles in VNP down

Two sites on Kab closed to protect nesting areas

JOURNAL STAFF REPORT

The number of bald eagles incubating at nests this year in Voyageurs National Park is down, according to park biologists.

But the severe and long-lasting effects of winter may play a role in the decline, a VNP news release said.

Land and waters around the nesting areas are temporarily closed to visitor use during the critical nesting period.

People play a very important role in protecting nesting eagles and other birds. Individual eagles differ in temperament and tolerance to human and natural activities. Some are easily displaced by human/eagle interactions, whereas others are more accustomed to close interactions with humans. April, May and June are particularly sensitive periods for nesting eagles. Overall, reducing the potential for sustained close human/eagle interactions has been documented to allow greater nesting success of eagles throughout the United States.

“We appreciate the public’s assistance in protecting the bald eagles of Voyageurs National Park,” Superintendent Mike Ward said. “Reducing the potential adverse impacts at eagle nesting areas ensures that we are successful at sustaining the VNP eagle population.”

Voyageurs National Park biologists located 67 bald eagle nests within the park



FILE PHOTO

Two areas around active eagle nests in VNP are temporarily closed.

boundary on April 15 while conducting the 42nd consecutive spring aerial survey to determine the number and location of nesting pairs present.

The survey has been conducted each year from 1973.

Winter conditions were severe and continued late into April, reported park officials. On May 11, there was still much ice on most of the major lakes making navigation hazardous and impossible.

“It is likely that a significant number of previously occupied breeding territories with incubators in 2013 (35) were not occupied on April 15, 2014,” stated a release from the park. A second occupancy survey is planned for late May to locate more occupied breeding territories and late incubating pairs.

Adult pairs were observed on April 15 incubating at 27 nests, compared to 35 in 2013, 34 in 2012, and 37

nests in 2011.

Active incubation occurred at one park nest on Crane Lake, 12 on Kabetogama Lake, three on Namakan Lake, seven on Rainy Lake, three on Sandpoint Lake and one on an interior lake. Two non-incubating pairs also occupied nests in breeding territories — one on Kabetogama Lake and one on Namakan Lake.

One new park nest was found and six other nests blew down or the nest trees fell over since the 2013 breeding season.

The park follows the recommended conservation management actions of the Bald Eagle and Golden Eagle Management Act. Each year since 1992, the park has temporarily closed the land and water areas around active bald eagle nests to visitor use during their critical nesting periods. Some eagle pairs nest in late March and early April; others may not have initiated nesting until

late April or early May.

The closed areas are marked with closure signs and buoys. Specific management recommendations from a two-year research study on the effects of watercraft on bald eagles nesting in Voyageurs National Park are also being applied for the 12th consecutive year.

Park managers are asking motorized and non-motorized watercraft users not to travel within 200 meters, or about 650 feet, of nests where bald eagles are actively nesting during the closure period — early May through mid-August. Boaters are also encouraged not to stop on the water within the 200 meters near active nesting sites.

The breeding areas around two of the park’s 27 sites occupied by breeding pairs are temporarily closed to campers and other human activities. After the young leave the nest, these temporarily closed park areas will be reopened for public use.

Two of the park’s 291 developed day use, camping and houseboat sites are affected by the temporary closures. The closed developed areas are on Kabetogama Lake:

■ Happy Landing Campsite (K-11) is on the park’s new reservation system and will be closed until further notice.

■ Camelback Island Campsite (K-3).

If more breeding areas are found with actively nesting pairs that fall within conservation management guidelines after this news release is issued, more park areas may be posted closed.

Rainer City Council discusses water rates

BY SPENSER BICKETT
Staff Writer

RANIER- The Ranier City Council Wednesday listened to citizen concerns regarding the water and sewer rates in Ranier and International Falls.

Barry “Woody” Woods addressed the council about Ranier citizens’ water and sewer rates, which he said he believes are unreasonably high. In a letter Woods read to the council, he called for a committee of citizens to be created to look into the water and sewer rates, and try to find out why they are what they are.

In the letter, Woods also said the city should hire a forensic accountant to look into the sewer and water rates, in order to find what Woods called “unreasonable or questionable fees.”

If some of these fees are found, Woods wrote, then

the city of Ranier can move forward on addressing the concerns.

“If the accountant finds unreasonable or questionable fees than hire an expert engineer to address the concerns and back him up if need be, so Ranier can litigate against the offending party and maybe get back some of our money back,” Woods wrote.

In other business, the council approved the hiring of one additional part-time employee for the summer to help with maintenance in the city of Ranier.

The council also heard an update from Mary Ann Kasich about the Ranier Rainy Lake Sunsets program, which starts June 21. The program is a weekly get-together on Saturday nights during the summer, Kasich said, where vendors can set up tables at the Spruce Street Dock, and where people can come out

and enjoy the sunsets and entertainment.

Eric Johnson of the Heart of the Continent Partnership also gave a presentation to the council about the HCOP’s effort with National Geographic. The group is seeking nominations for a geotourism map, he said, which will compile unique resources like trails, lakes,

restaurants, lodging, and more into an interactive map of the region.

Potential tourists will be able to use the map to plan their trips to the Heart of the Continent, which encompasses the Arrowhead region of northern Minnesota. Nominations can be submitted at www.traveltheheart.org.

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Thurs.	Blueberry Pancakes w/eggs & sausage or bacon
Fri.	Biscuits & Gravy w/eggs & hashbrowns
Sat.	Cinnamon Swirl French Toast with ham & eggs
Sun.	Blueberry Cream Cheese Crepes with eggs & ham

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