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FUN FOR KIDS

A COOPERATIVE PROJECT OF THE SANTA BARBARA NEWS-PRESS AND THE EDUCATORS' ROUNDTABLE, PUBLISHED MONTHLY TO PROMOTE LEARNING AMONG YOUNG READERS IN NATURAL SCIENCE, HISTORY, TECHNOLOGY AND ART

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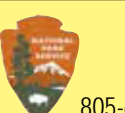
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## This Month's Theme: Bald Eagles Are Back!

Have you ever seen a bald eagle soaring over your head? Over 150 years ago, bald eagles lived and nested throughout California and across the United States. Sometimes they were seen in Santa

Eagle populations have been affected by people collecting their eggs, and by the growth of cities. Also, when people thought eagles were eating their livestock, they shot them. The main reason eagle populations declined was the chemical insecticide, DDT or dichloro-diphenyl-trichloroethane. DDT kills insects that can carry diseases and harm food crops. It was used in the US from the 1940s-1960s. In some countries it is still used to kill mosquitoes that can carry malaria.

DDT was entering streams, getting into the food web, and building up in the

Barbara or on the Channel Islands. Over the next hundred years, there were fewer and fewer bald eagles and then they were put on the Federal Endangered Species List. What happened?

bodies of fish. When bald eagles ate contaminated fish, this made the shells of their eggs very thin. The eggs cracked, dehydrated (dried out), and failed to hatch. Finally, in 1972, when there were only about 418 pairs of bald eagles in the lower 48 United States, DDT was banned. In 1973, bald eagles were put on the Federal Endangered Species List. After they were protected they started to make a come-back and today there are more than 7,000 pairs!

## Eagles Return To Nest In Santa Barbara County



Photo by Larry Jon Friesen, Saturdays.net.

In 1989, a pair of bald eagles built a nest near Lake Cachuma. They were the first pair to nest in Southern California since the 1950s. People at the lake nick-named them Harry and Harriet. Here they are together in the photo to the left. Bald eagles have also been seen recently at Lake Casitas.

In 2002, a five-year project began to bring bald eagles back to the northern Channel Islands.

Eight-week-old eagles from Alaska and the San Francisco Zoo are brought to the islands. Sixty have been hacked (raised and released by humans into the wild) on the northern islands and about 43 of them still live on Anacapa, Santa Cruz, Santa Rosa, and San Miguel Islands.

The eagles are tracked with the use of special "backpacks" that tell their location anywhere in the world. One eagle flew away from Santa Cruz Island to live at Yellowstone National Park! Visit "Track an eagle" at www.iws.org to follow the journeys of another eagle, A-46.

On April 13, 2006, a bald eagle chick hatched on Santa Cruz Island. This is the first successful nest on the northern islands since 1949. The young eagle fledged (left the nest) at 1:00 p.m. on July 14, 2006. A live eagle cam allowed people to watch the growing chick. Viewers named her Cruz, although her tagging number is A-49. For more information on Cruz go to [http://chil.vcoe.org/eagle\\_cam.htm](http://chil.vcoe.org/eagle_cam.htm).



Photo by Institute for Wildlife Studies.

Young A-49 with one of her parents



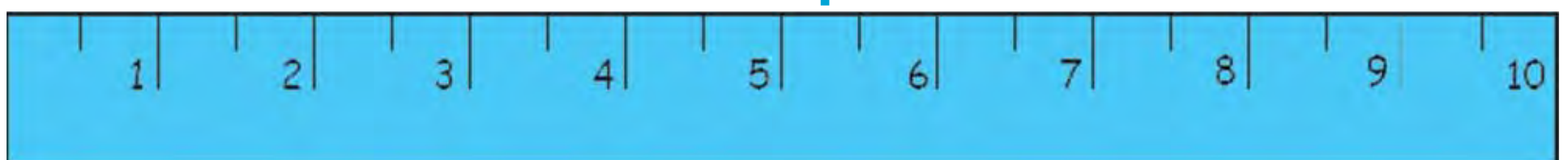
Juvenile eagles, including A-49, sharing a fish.

Photo by Institute for Wildlife Studies.

### BRIGHT IDEA Activity: Measuring up to an eagle

How big is your wingspan compared to a bald eagle's? Using a real ruler or the ruler on this page, measure and cut a piece of string 7 feet long, and tape it to a wall, horizontally. Stand at one end and spread your wings over the string. Now measure your wingspan with a tape measure. How many inches wider is the eagle's wingspan? Now look below at the chart of some common local birds. How do you and your family members measure up? Are there any turkey vultures in your family??

<b>Bald eagle</b>	80 inches (6 feet, 5 inches)	<b>Western gull</b>	58 inches
<b>Turkey vulture</b>	67 inches	<b>American crow</b>	39 inches
<b>Red-tailed hawk</b>	50 inches		



### BRIGHT IDEA Activity: How far does an eagle fly?

How far will a bald eagle fly if it leaves Prisoners Harbor on Santa Cruz Island, visits Cachuma Lake and Lake Casitas, and then returns to Prisoners Harbor? You can find a map of Channel Islands National Park at [www.nps.gov/carto](http://www.nps.gov/carto) that will help you. See if you can find the two lakes northwest of Santa Barbara and northwest of Ventura.

Answer: Prisoners Harbor to Cachuma Lake—40 miles/63 km; Cachuma Lake to Lake Casitas—32 miles/52 km; Lake Casitas to Prisoners Harbor—32 miles/52 km. Total—104 miles/167 km.

Page prepared by Carol Peterson, Channel Islands National Park and Liz Mason, Santa Barbara County Parks, Cachuma Lake.

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