

2103 Duke Farms Eagle Cam Updates

2/20/13 - The first egg was laid on 2/14 and now there might be two eggs. Statewide there are 56 pairs of eagles that are currently incubating. Stay tuned for more updates!

Hatching!

3/26/13- There are two chicks in the nest. They were seen sticking their heads up when the adult left for a brief period this morning.

There was some drama at the nest this past Sunday the 24th the cam recorded a red-tail hawk swooping into the nest while the male eagle was sitting on the eggs/chicks. The male attacks and kills the hawk. To see this footage go to:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2s8anVG-o_I

Since the camera doesn't give a view into the nest we don't know if there is a third egg or chick.

4/3/13

The two chicks are now around 1&1/2 half weeks old. The exact hatch dates are unknown but both were confirmed on 3/25. Eagles lay their eggs a few days apart so the chicks are a few days apart in age. At this age the chicks aren't able to regulate their own body temperatures so one of the parents stays on the nest keeping the chicks warm and protecting them from predators. You can catch a glimpse of the chicks when they are being fed or sometimes sticking their heads up from underneath the adult. You also might have seen some sibling aggression between the chicks. This is normal as the oldest chick is larger and more developed and attempting to dominate for food and the adult's attention. The younger bird learns to lay low and wait until the older sibling is done feeding. There is no shortage of food being brought into the nest so there is plenty for both chicks.

4/11/13

The chicks are more actively moving about the nest and attempting to stand though still clumsy they are a little over two weeks old. While an adult is still always at the nest they are no longer sitting on the chicks to keep them warm. With the warm weather the last few days the adults were spreading their wings out to provide shade to the chicks. When the chicks stand up you can see the crop which when bulging out means they had plenty to eat. The crop is located on the chest at the bottom of the neck. The crop is an out pouching of the esophagus that acts as a storage area when the stomach is full.

I've seen the adults bring fish into the nest so far. It'd be neat to keep a list of what prey items are brought to the nest this season. So if you see any prey being brought in besides fish e-mail me at: Larissa.Smith@conservewildlifenj.org

4/18/13

The eaglets are over three weeks old and their feet and legs are almost the size of adults. Eagle chicks grow fast and can add one pound of body weight every four to five days. The chicks have their second coat of gray down called thermal down. The first coat of down, which they hatch with, is called natal down and isn't a very good insulator. This is why the chicks are brooded by the adults to keep warm. The second coat replaces this first coat around when the chicks are 10 days old. This coat acts as an insulator and by 15 days the chicks are able to regulate their body temperature themselves. In another week or so the juvenile feathers will start emerging first on the head and back.

4/29/13

The eagle cam is experiencing technical difficulties. The staff at Duke Farms are working towards a solution to the problem. Thank you for your patience.

5/1/13

The cam is back up and running thanks to the technical staff at Duke Farms. Enjoy the show!

5/2/13

The eagle chicks are now five weeks old feathers have started coming in on their heads and backs. You'll notice that the adults aren't spending as much time in the nest. Even though you can't see them one is most likely perched close by out of range of the camera keeping any eye on the chicks. The chicks learn to feed by watching the adults and have been starting to peck at food brought into the nest. They will learn to tear their own food and begin feeding themselves over the next few weeks.

Some cam viewers have asked if we will band the nest this year and the answer is "no". ENSP biologists came to the conclusion that due to the height of the tree the amount of time it would take to climb would increase the stress to the chicks and adults.

5/21/13

The eagle chicks are now eight weeks old and feathers have replaced much of the secondary coat of down. Juvenile eagles have dark brown eyes which will gradually change to the pale yellow eye color of an adult and the beak which is a dark black color will become the yellow beak of an adult. Juvenile bald eagles are actually larger in size

than full grown adult eagles. The reason for this is that the juvenile's feathers are longer and thicker than adults. Adult eagles have fewer, shorter feathers which make them more streamlined

Over the next few weeks the chicks will start to strengthen their wings by flapping and stretching in preparation for their first flight. They will also start to "branch" which means they'll walk out onto branches to perch. Several eagle chicks in New Jersey have already fledged (taken their first flight).

We are often asked, "where do the juveniles go when they leave the nest?". To answer this question satellite transmitters have been placed on four eagle chicks at the Merrill Creek eagle nest in Warren County since 2011. Two of the transmitted birds have died and one is currently in Maine. On May 31th, 2013 a transmitter was placed on a chick at the Merrill Creek nest and once it fledges its movements can be tracked. To see their movements and stories go to <http://www.merrillcreek.com/eagletracking.html>.

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6/6/13

The view of the nest is now obstructed by leaves but when the wind is blowing you can get a glimpse of the chicks in the nest. They are 10 weeks old and are now feeding themselves when the adults bring food into the nest. In just a week or two they could take their first flight. After fledging the juveniles will still stay in the area of the nest for a month or so while they learn to hunt.

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It appears that both young have fledged sometime over the weekend of June 15th & 16th.