

Maine News

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Camera gives close-up
view of nesting eagles

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PORTLAND, Maine — Bird watchers around the world have been able to watch loons, puffins, Arctic terns and other birds in Maine over the Internet.

Now they can add bald eagles to the list.

For the next several months, people will be able to watch a pair of eagles nesting 70 feet above the ground in a white pine in coastal Hancock County.

BioDiversity Research Institute, a nonprofit in Gorham, has set up a camera that shows the eagles on the group's Web site. The first egg was laid on March 6, and the first eaglet is expected to hatch in April.

The camera was installed early this month to heighten awareness about eagles as the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service considers removing the birds from its endangered species list. There are 385 nesting pairs of eagles in Maine, up from just 30 pairs in the early 1970s.

When the eagle is delisted, there will be less regulatory protection of the birds, essentially making citizens caretakers of eagles, said Wing Goodale, the institute's research biologist.

"It is vitally important that people become personally connected to these birds so that they understand what they're going through," Goodale said.

BioDiversity Research in recent years has set up other cameras showing loons, puffins and other birds in Maine.

The eagle camera is also helping biologists Charlie Todd of the state Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, Mark McCollough of the federal wildlife service and Bucky Owen, former state wildlife commissioner, better understand how eagles hatch and care for their young.

Todd, McCollough and Owen have 85 years of experience among them with eagle recovery in Maine. But the eagle camera is offering them their first, uninterrupted view of an eagle nesting season as it unfolds, Todd said.

The camera shows still shots that are refreshed on the Web site every 30 seconds and live video feeds available over high-speed connections.

On the Net:

Biodiversity Research Institute: <http://www.briloon.org>