

Egg opens season two of eagle nature show ; The feathered family's fans watch online as a Webcam trained on the treetop nest records the new arrival.

JOHN RICHARDSON Staff Writer. Portland Press Herald. Portland, Me.:Mar 7, 2007.

Abstract (Summary)

MAINE'S BALD EAGLE CAM THE EAGLE CAM Is operated by the BioDiversity Research Institute in Gorham and the images can be seen at www.briloon.org. The Web site updates a photo of the nest every 15 seconds. It also includes biologists' descriptions of what's happening in the nest, and postings of viewers who watch the eagles virtually around the clock.

A steadfast base of fans has watched the nest all fall and winter, but the buzz started growing again when the eagle laid her first egg of the season Monday afternoon. Biologists confirmed it after the eagle stayed on the nest all night long.

The two young eagles flew from the nest in August and haven't been seen since. But many viewers kept watching the empty nesters, and some watched as the eagles mated and prepared the nest during the past week. With the infrared camera on all night, some fans haven't been sleeping much, [Goodale] said.

Full Text (545 words)

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A mother bald eagle put on a display of Maine stoicism Tuesday as she sat dutifully on a new egg, despite frigid winds buffeting her nest 70 feet above the Hancock County coast.

The eagle laid low and kept her head down as wind chills dipped to about 15 below zero. But if she was thinking she picked the wrong week to start a new family, she wasn't letting on.

"It's just amazing to think that bird has to be stuck there in this exposed place. But they've evolved to nest at this time of year," said Wing Goodale, biologist with the BioDiversity Research Institute in Gorham.

The lives and times of the eagle and her mate are the subject of a 24-hour online nature show - now in its second season - captured by a camera posted in a nearby pine tree. The institute operates the Webcam to learn more about the lives of Maine eagles and promote understanding of the animals and everything they go through.

The pair of birds chosen for the project have spent years nesting and raising young in the same tree.

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"They have to stay on that egg," Goodale said. Eventually the male will take some turns on the egg so the mother can leave the nest.

The eagle is expected to lay one or two more eggs over the next few days. Eaglets hatch after a 35-day incubation period.

The bald eagles made national news last spring when scientists and Internet viewers saw that three eaglets hatched instead of the usual two. Then the eagle family drama took a dark turn when the largest eaglet killed the littlest one in an apparent demonstration of the fittest improving its odds of survival.

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Beverly LaPoint of Augusta has been watching since last April when the eaglets hatched. She keeps a journal and reports her observations on the Web site, and she's excited about the first egg.

"I almost feel like a Grandma, as I feel very close to these two," LaPoint said in an e-mail Tuesday. "I can't imagine sitting in that cold wind today, and these eagles are just about the most fantastic parents I have ever seen, in humans as well."

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