

Eagles at Snake River Farm

Cindy took this photo.

It is an immature Bald Eagle lifting off of a white oak tree.

This tree overlooks the field where we feed fresh bison skulls and other offal to predators and varmints of many species.

This eagle was born and raised in a huge nest which overlooks a pond just a mile north.

About ½ mile into the Sherburne Wildlife Refuge.

That nest has been occupied for a couple of decades.

The Refuge has numerous nesting pairs.

That eagle pair produce one or two offspring each year.

That might not seem like a lot, but because eagles mate for life and live up to 30 years, the eagle population, especially in Minnesota is growing fast.

The annual rate for Minnesota is 10% or greater.

There are now between 500 and 1,000 breeding/nesting pairs in Minnesota.

Minnesota and Wisconsin have the highest eagle populations in the lower states.

Probably because of the many bodies of water in our two states.

Eagle nests are always close to a river or lake.

Alaska has an incredible number of eagles.

Eagles get their white head at 4 to 6 years of age.

This youngster may be several years old. It is eagles' not yet Bald but getting whiter.

The **second photo** was taken in winter.

It shows the 75-foot-high raptor perch that we built about 25 years ago.

I fashioned the top to be like a broken white pine tree.



That is the favorite nesting/perching place for eagles in the Boundary Waters.
There are skulls and parts of carcasses in the snow beneath the perch.
We feed the predators in all seasons but especially in winter when their food sources are bleak.
Vultures use the perch in summer when the eagles are not.
There have been as many as 14 vultures perched there at one time.
That are majestic in flight, or from a distance.
Quite ugly up close.
All manner of omnivorous birds, including eagles, crows, ravens, owls, hawks, blue jays, all types of woodpeckers dine on the carrion we leave for them.
Many small birds that are not usually considered flesh eaters also take advantage of the concentrated calories.
Coyotes, fox, racoons, possum, mink, weasels, rodents and many other four-footed mammals also eat there.



The **third photo** was also taken by Cindy in winter. (She takes the good ones.)
It shows an eagle carrying a possum carcass.
That might explain why possums tend to forage at night.
Eagles can kill their own dinners but are equally adept at eating carrion.



The **fourth photo** is of poor resolution but shows how close eagles will come for farm-yard chickens. This eagle is under Gail's cloth lines.



The fifth photo is of the local breeding pair, perched in a dead oak near the pasture perch. We get to see them almost every day. They may leave for open water in the months of December and January but are always back by March.
Best regards. Tom, 2021