

Fourth eagles nest found

HARRISBURG — A fourth nest of bald eagles has been found in Pennsylvania; the first new nest in many years.

The new nest is located on State Game Lands in the Pymatuning/Conneaut Marsh area in Crawford County. It is in the same area as the previously-known bald eagle nests.

Fred Brown of the Game Commission's Pymatuning staff discovered the nest while working on game lands maintenance.

"My first reaction was to wonder if it was possible," George Palahunik, waterfowl management assistant at Pymatuning, said. "But then I

realized that Fred was serious. We're all pretty excited about it around here."

Subsequent observations by Game Commission personnel revealed that there was an eaglet in the nest.

Game Commission personnel have been tracking down rumors of additional bald eagle nests in the Pymatuning area for the past two years.

Michael Puglisi, the Game Commission's coordinator for threatened and endangered species, said, "We expected to find an additional nest in the area, but we were looking for it farther south. Either the birds moved north, or there may be another nest that we still don't know about."

Game Commission officials are also uncertain about the origin of the new eagles. They may be birds that were raised in the Pymatuning/Conneaut Marsh area sometime in the past, or they may be from some other area.

There is no way of determining where the birds came from since the Game Commission began banding young eagles only last year.

Eaglets have been raised in three nests in the Pymatuning/Conneaut Marsh area for a number of years, although in many of those years only one or two eaglets survived.

Four eagles, a modern record, were produced in nests in the Pymatuning/Conneaut Marsh

area last year, but these birds are not yet old enough to nest. Bald eagles do not reach maturity until they are four or five years of age.

The Game Commission is continuing to monitor the state's other three bald eagle nests. In at least one of the nests, and possibly in the second, the birds are believed to have had some hatching success.

The third pair of eagles, those whose nest can be observed from the Game Commission's waterfowl museum on Ford Island, lost their first set of eggs earlier this spring.

However, the loss of the eggs, believed to have been thinselled, did not cause the birds to abandon their nest. They remained in the vicinity, and were periodically observed carrying material to the nest.

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