

Bald eagle numbers growing in 48 states

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Having just completed the fifth annual Midwinter Bald Eagle Survey, the National Wildlife Federation hopes the count will indicate an increase in eagle populations in the United States.

The bald eagle, the country's national bird, is an endangered species throughout most of the nation. After a drastic decline in the 1960s, bald eagle populations in some areas are beginning to make a comeback, according to the Federation's biologists.

In 1979, the first year of the survey, the Federation counted 9,815 bald eagles. The count has been increasing each year since then, and last year 13,804 eagles were sighted.

The 1983 Midwinter Bald Eagle Survey, taken from Jan. 2-16, was compiled by volunteers working with coordinators in the 48 continental United States.

Counts were also conducted in two Canadian Provinces. The results are expected to be tabulated by this summer.

Considered to be the most

complete midwinter bald eagle count available, the National Wildlife Federation survey provides eagle experts with data on where the birds live during the winter and the habitat they need to survive.

"The annual survey is taken during the winter, when the numbers of bald eagles in the lower 48 states are at their peak," said Brian Millsap, raptor biologist at the National Wildlife Federation and coordinator of the survey. "During January, survey conditions are close to ideal because there is less eagle movement than at other times during the fall and winter."

Last year's bald eagle survey counted 13,804 bald eagles in the lower 48 states, a slight increase from the previous year's total of 13,710.

Jay D. Hair, executive vice president of the Federation, said reasons for the continuing increase are "speculative, because although there is evidence that bald eagle populations in some areas are increasing, there is also

a continuing increase in the thoroughness of our survey.

"In either case, it is encouraging that we continue to count more eagles each year."

According to the 1982 survey, the largest bald eagle population was in the state of Washington, which registered 1,378 birds. The next largest population was in Utah, with 1,001, followed by Florida with

920, California with 872, and Missouri with 779.

Coordinators in North Carolina and Rhode Island counted only one bald eagle in each state, and none was reported in Vermont.

In addition to counts in the United States, 82 bald eagles were counted in Nova Scotia and five were counted in Ontario.

Pennsylvania reported ten adult

bald eagles, and three immature bald eagles in the survey. This is a drop from the 1981 figure which totalled 26.

In the neighboring state of Maryland, 49 adult bald eagles were reported, along with 59 immature birds. Their count was up from a year ago when the total number of bald eagles equalled 85.

Water outlook good for most of West

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Prospects are favorable for adequate to abundant water supplies in most of the West this summer, the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration reports.

Peter C. Myers, chief of USDA's Soil Conservation Service, says his agency's first snowpack surveys of the season indicate that most rivers in the region should receive normal to above normal runoff when snowmelt begins in the spring.

Myers adds that Jan. 1 soil moisture conditions in high mountain watersheds are favorable and that snowpack is normal to much above normal over much of the West.

Reservoir storage is excellent, with most of the major reservoirs holding more water in storage than normal for this date.


Streams in central California, Nevada, Utah and most of Oregon are forecast to flow at 130 to 190 percent of normal.

Myers says this early assessment could be modified later, since only about 40 percent of the snow season had passed.

The Soil Conservation Service surveys snowpack and monitors snowmelt throughout the West and reports each month from January through May.

USDA specialists, in cooperation with the National Weather Service of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce, analyze the data and issue monthly forecasts of runoff and water supplies.

Snow accumulated during winter and spring provides about 75 percent of the western water supply.

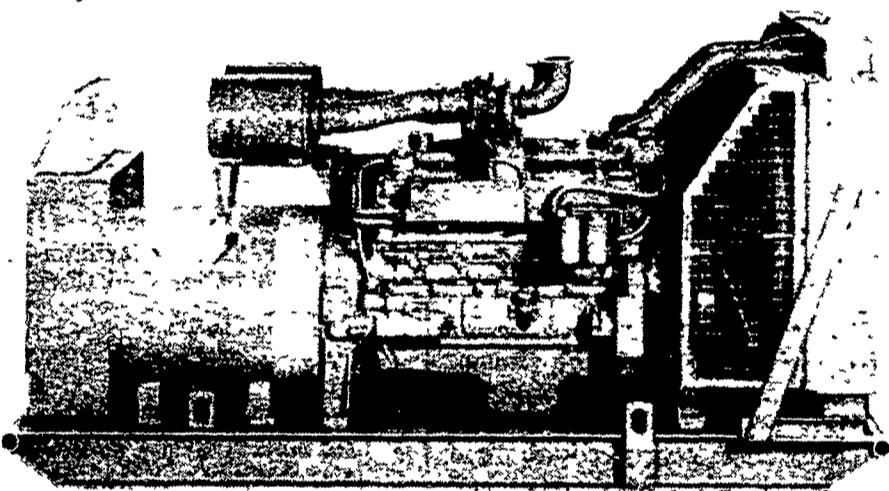


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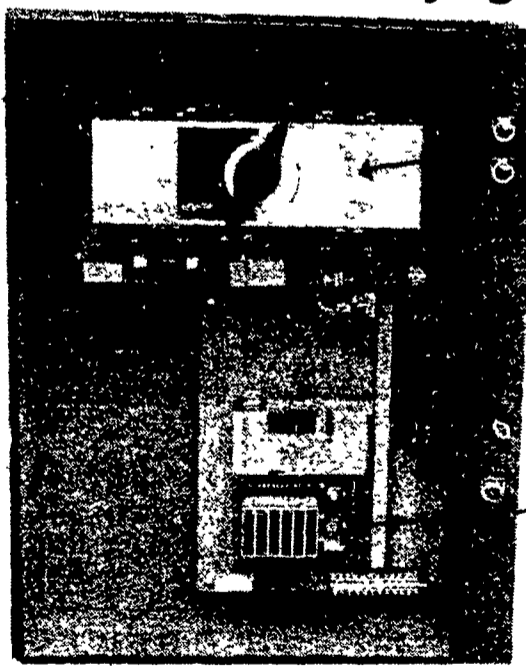
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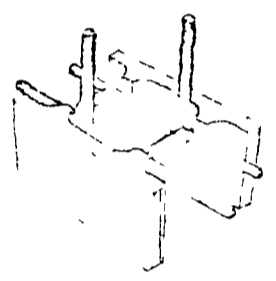
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