

Wildlife Tree Stewardship Program (WiTS)

EAGLE NESTING CHRONOLOGY

Doug Carrick, a volunteer monitor on Hornby Island, compiled these dates from 13 years of observing approximately 15 different breeding territories.

RETURN FROM MIGRATION (DISPERSAL) – October 2, give or take 3 days.

MAJOR NEST BUILDING TIME - From October 20 to November 15. Eagles bring branches to the nest, large ones around the outside and fine twigs on the inside.

WINTER SURVIVAL TIME - November 15 to January 31. With shorter and colder days, nest-building stops. Much of their time is spent getting food, mostly fish but also winter-weakened birds and ducks.

MATING - Think of St Valentine's Day, February 14 (a suitable time for mating) – but include the two weeks before and after this date – in other words, the whole month of February. Eagles are also seen mating in the first half of March, just a week or two before laying eggs, but at no other times in the year.

FINAL NEST PREPARATION - A second flurry of nest-preparation takes place from mid-February to mid-March – adding more branches, followed by soft materials like dry grass and moss.

EGG LAYING - March 25, plus or minus one week. A second egg 2 or 3 days later.

BROODING – The male and female take turns sitting on the eggs for approximately 35 days – from March 25 to May 1, plus or minus one week. One could consider the month of April as the “brooding” month.

CHICKS HATCH - May 1, plus or minus one week.

CHICK DEVELOPMENT - Peeps can be heard by June 10
- Sitting on edge of nest by June 20
- Flapping wings by June 25
- Flapping and Jumping by July 10

FIRST FLIGHT - July 25, plus or minus one week. (85 days after hatching)

MIGRATION (DISPERSAL) OFF ISLAND – from mid-August to September. This migration includes adults, newly fledged chicks and any other non-breeding eagles. All eagles go.

ADULT EAGLES (ONLY) RETURN TO ISLAND - October 2, plus or minus one week

IMMATURE EAGLES STRAGGLE BACK TO ISLAND - One or two arrive back in November, a few in December and increasing numbers in the next few months.

Dates will be earlier in southern Vancouver Island and the Fraser Valley and later in northern Vancouver Island and up the coast