
PHOTO ESSAY

FIRST RECORD OF NESTING BALD EAGLES AT LAST MOUNTAIN LAKE NATIONAL WILDLIFE AREA

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In the summer of 2012, a pair of Bald Eagles (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) attempted to nest high in a mature cottonwood tree within the Last Mountain Lake National Wildlife Area and Migratory Bird Sanctuary (LML NWA/MBS). The Bald Eagle pair had sub-adult plumage but appeared to be incubating for more than a month. This was the first known nesting attempt within the LML NWA. The pair was first noticed while PT was showing RD his new spotting scope at the Last Mountain Bird Observatory.

On 15 May 2013, Renny Grilz observed a pair of adult Bald Eagles from a distance (800m). They appeared to be nesting in the same location as in 2012. On 27 June 2013, nesting was confirmed and at least 2 chicks were seen by Renny Grilz, Scott Campbell and LV (Canadian Wildlife Service). Unfortunately, the photos on this date were taken with a camera phone and are thus blurry. The photos in this essay were taken on July 3, 2013.

The nest location is close to a colonial bird nesting island where they were seen occasionally, possibly scavenging. The colony

includes Double-crested Cormorants, American White Pelicans, and Ring-billed Gulls. Other potential scavengings and prey in the area include Common Carp, Muskrats, crippled Snow Geese and dead deer.

Bald Eagle is a large raptor that nests across Canada along coasts, rivers, and large lakes.¹ Currently, nesting records are common from lakes and rivers in boreal Saskatchewan, but very uncommon in the prairie ecozone.² Previous records show one successful nest in Southern Saskatchewan near Estuary in 2005.³

1. Buehler DA (2000) Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*), The Birds of North America Online (A. Poole, Ed.). Ithaca: Cornell Lab of Ornithology; Retrieved from the Birds of North America Online: <http://bna.birds.cornell.edu/bna/species/506>

2. Smith AR (1996) Atlas of Saskatchewan Birds. Nature Saskatchewan.

3. Zazelenchuk D (2005) Bald Eagle nest with young in southern Saskatchewan. *Blue Jay* 63:127-129.



An eaglet in the nest.



Top: Location of nest in tree.

Bottom: Closer view of eagle nest.



*Top: Close-up of eagle nest.
Bottom: Adult eagle leaving nest.*



Adult eagle preparing to land.

-Lowell Strauss



Last Mountain Lake adjacent to eagle nest.

