

**The eagles have landed:
Nesting in the Great Bay area for first time in decades**

By Scott E. Kinney

May 13, 2011

NEWINGTON — Nature lovers are celebrating as a pair of winged visitors have decided to take up residence in the area for the first time in roughly 70 years.

A Great Bay National Wildlife Refuge volunteer recently spotted an American Bald Eagle's nest within the refuge during a routine wildlife survey. Eagles have been seen with more regularity in the area of the refuge, but this is the first time a pair has built and settled into a nest.



Courtesy photo A pair of American Bald Eagles like those pictured here have recently been spotted nesting in the Great Bay Nature Reserve. It is the first time the eagles have nested in the area in approximately 70 years.

Word of the nesting eagles came as great news to conservationists who have been working together in a 30-year partnership to bring back endangered birds of prey to Great Bay and the State of New Hampshire. Biologists with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, New Hampshire Fish and Game Department, New Hampshire Audubon, and other partner organizations have all played a significant role in reversing the plight of the eagle.

"This new nesting pair of bald eagles is real cause for celebration in New Hampshire," said Glenn Normandeau, executive director of the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department. "The birds and their young will be well-supported in the estuary; they have the Great Bay NWR, the Great Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve and a healthy network of conservation lands put together by the Great Bay Resource Protection Partnership."

The 1100-acre national wildlife refuge provides a safe harbor for nesting eagles, which are easily disturbed by human activity.

"Because national wildlife refuges are established first and foremost for wildlife conservation, Great Bay NWR plays a key role in the return of our national symbol to the local region" said Graham Taylor who, as manager of the Parker River National Wildlife Refuge, located in Newburyport, Mass., also has management responsibility for the refuge in Newington.

Matt Poole, visitor services director for Parker River National Wildlife Refuge, said the sighting bodes well for the future of American Bald Eagles in Great Bay.

"Eagles come back to the same nest year after year," he said. "Also called an 'Aerie,' the nests continue to get bigger with the larger size weighing upward of a ton."

The bald eagle experienced a dramatic decline across most of its range during the 1950s and '60s due to the widespread use of the pesticide DDT. Recovery efforts eventually paid off, and the species was removed from the Endangered Species List in 2007.

http://www.fosters.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20110513/GJNEWS_01/705139966