

# Golden Eagles and Forestry

Wildlife in Managed Forests:  
Reference Series

Golden eagles (*Aquila chrysaetos*) and their habitat are protected in Oregon by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act. In addition, some nest sites are protected under the Oregon Forest Practices Act (FPA).

Golden eagles (GOEAs) are the largest raptor in Oregon. Their wingspan measures up to seven and a half feet in females and seven feet in males. They are distinguished from other dark raptors by their large size and massive bill. It can be difficult to distinguish immature bald eagles and GOEAs from a distance.

GOEAs are most abundant east of the Cascades. However, a breeding survey conducted by Frank Isaacs from 2011 to 2013 found nesting GOEAs in southwest Oregon, Eastern Oregon, and a few in northwest Oregon and the Willamette Valley.

GOEAs are found in many habitats, including open ponderosa pine and mixed conifer/deciduous forests. Nests can be found on cliffs or in trees. Nests are massive (sometimes greater than 10 feet in diameter) and are used year after year. GOEAs primarily eat jackrabbits (when available), but are known to consume a wide variety of prey, including ground squirrels, marmots and other birds. They will also eat domestic sheep and lambs and carrion, and will take prey from other raptors.

## WHAT IS MOST LIKELY TO DISTURB A NESTING GOEA?

- Human activity nearby (such as hiking and rock climbing)
- Road construction
- Timber harvest



Photo by USFWS



Photo by Frank Isaacs

Critical nesting period:  
Feb 1 - Aug 1

## SOURCES & MORE INFORMATION

Cornell Lab of Ornithology

Golden eagles nesting in Oregon,  
2011 - 2013 annual report

[www.fws.gov/pacific/eagle/](http://www.fws.gov/pacific/eagle/)

Oregon Forest Practices Act:  
<http://www.oregon.gov/odf/Pages/lawsrules.aspx>

## WHEN DO GOLDEN EAGLES NEST?





Photo by Tony Hisgett

### WHAT THREATENS THE GOEA?

Power line poles are often used by GOEAs for roosting. GOEAs are electrocuted if they touch two lines. There are new designs that minimize this problem and many are or have been replaced.

### WHAT DOES THE FPA REQUIRE?

Protect the resource site (active nest tree and any identified key components). An active nest tree is one that has been used by GOEAs in the recent past. Key components include forested areas around the nest trees that has perching, fledging and replacement trees.

### HOW DO I PROTECT THE RESOURCE SITE?

Your local ODF office has the responsibility for maintaining inventories of resource sites. ODF will notify you if there is a known GOEA near your planned operation when you submit your written Notification of Operation form.

A conflict may exist if an operation has the potential to modify or destroy the resource site, cause nest abandonment or failure, or reduce productivity of the resource site. Conflicts are solved by working with ODF and may include measures such as:

- Conducting a site inspection with ODF and applicable wildlife agencies
- Implementing timing restrictions for forest operations (outside of the nesting season Jan 1 - Sept 30).



### ABOUT OFRI

The Oregon Forest Resources Institute was created by the Oregon Legislature in 1991 to advance public understanding of forests, forest products and forest management and to encourage sound forestry through landowner education.

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