

Continued from p. 12

Midwinter Bald Eagle Survey On Upper Mississippi

The wintering population of bald eagles along the Upper Mississippi River appears to be stable, according to recently tabulated results of the Midwinter Bald Eagle Survey conducted by Eagle Valley Environmentalists (EVE) on February 2 and 3, 1980. EVE's survey is a continuation of the midwinter counts run for nearly two decades by Elton Fawks, of East Moline, Illinois.

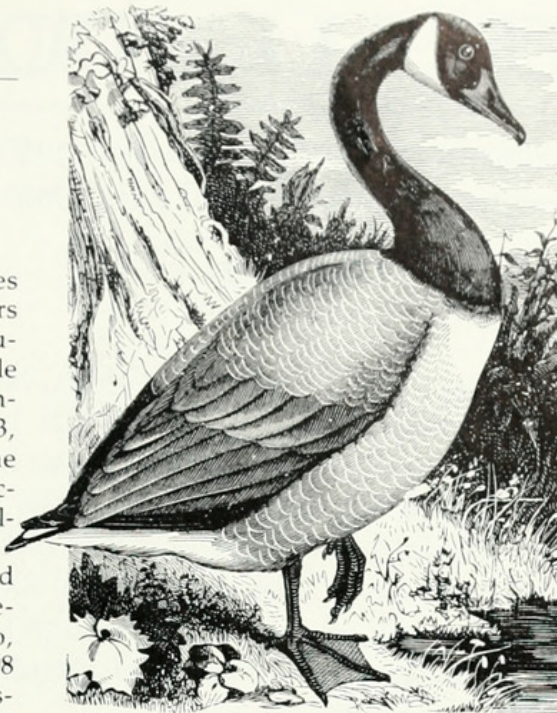
EVE's two-day count tallied 875 bald eagles along the Mississippi River between Minneapolis-St. Paul, and Cairo, Illinois. 649 of the birds were adults, 198 were immatures, and 28 were not classified. These figures compare to 922 bald eagles counted in the 19-day survey sponsored by the National Wildlife Federation in January. The January count included 668 adults, 208 immatures, and 46 unclassified.

"We believe the EVE figures present a more accurate picture of the wintering population along the Mississippi River," stated Terry Ingram, EVE's executive director. "A count made over nearly three weeks will have inaccuracies because of the tremendous mobility of these birds. Many might be counted more than once, and some are bound to be missed. Also, there was a heavy southward migration in January, whereas in early February the population was more settled. A two-day count also provides stronger data on concentrations in feeding areas."

Regarding the mobility of bald eagles, Ingram noted the difference between counts taken two days apart at Cassville, Wisconsin. "On January 3, an aerial survey made by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service showed 19 adults and three immatures in the Cassville area. On January 5, I counted 56 adults and four immatures in the same area while leading a bus tour."

Two concentrations of bald eagles shown in both counts merit special attention. There were large numbers of eagles in the vicinity of Cordova, Illinois—194 in EVE's February count, and 119 in the NWF January count. Both surveys revealed that most of the birds (160 in February) were upstream from the nuclear power plant near Cordova and thus not feeding in the open water downstream from the plant.

"We don't know why so many birds are concentrating above Cordova," said Ingram. "Obviously there's a major food source. But we've seen only small patches of open water upstream from the power plant. It might be that these large numbers are the result of an increased number of



observers in the area. There may be an increase in the fish population attracting the eagles. Or there may be fish kills taking place—that stretch of river is heavily industrialized. If fish kills are occurring because of pollution, we need to find the source of the problem, because the eagles may be picking up toxic substances in their food."

The second major concentration of wintering bald eagles was along the Illinois River, where 460 eagles were counted in January. The February count along the Illinois River had to be cancelled at the last minute.

Ingram noted that the same reasons for the concentrations at Cordova—more observers, a larger food supply, or fish kills—may explain the large number of eagles along the Illinois River. "It may also be part of the Mississippi River population temporarily shifted over to the Illinois River."

Though the wintering population appears to be stable, Ingram cautioned that large numbers don't necessarily mean dangers to the eagles' survival have ceased to exist. "We need to know more about historic wintering sites so we can continue to identify and set aside land these birds need to help them survive the stresses of winter," he said. "And we need to know more about what and where they are eating, in order to find out whether or not they're picking up poisons that might affect reproductivity."

The Living Tree: Nature's Own Air Conditioner

It may be more energy-wise to plant trees than to add a few inches of insulation, says a director of the American Society of Home Inspectors. Research in New En-

gland determined shade trees on the south-southwestern side of a home could save as much as \$50 a year in cooling costs. A large-leaved deciduous tree's shade equals a half ton of air-conditioning capacity.

Every day, 2,000 acres of land in the United States are taken from rural uses and converted into urban areas. With populations increasing, a good question to ask is: how much landscape and trees do we need per person? Recommendations by the University of Utah's Environmental Impact Office are 200 square feet of live plant area per person, including one tree for every two people, plus one tree for every car in use. Every fifth tree should be an evergreen.

Algae for Food and Fuel

Algae, among the humblest and most abundant of earth's organisms, may hold a solution to two of the world's most pressing scarcity problems: food and fuel. According to *Environment* magazine, Israeli scientists who have been cultivating the plant in salty desert ponds say it could be the "soybean of the future," thanks to its high protein content and ability to thrive in environments that are hostile to other forms of life. And an Australian report predicts that algae refined to produce methane gas or ketones could shortly supply 60 percent of that nation's motor fuel needs.

Cobra Venom May Yield Effective Snake Antivenin

Researchers at the University of Idaho say their studies of cobra venom may lead to vaccines capable of protecting humans and animals against all forms of snakebite.

Zoologists Ken Laurence and Darwin Vest say they have succeeded in protecting animals against the lethal effects of cobra venom with a single vaccination prior to injecting the venom.

A by-product of their research they say, is a faster method of producing antivenin to counteract effects of snakebites on victims. The new antivenin appears to be more effective and less dangerous than the variety now on the market, they report.





1980. "Cobra Venom May Yield Effective Snake Antivenin." *Field Museum of Natural History bulletin* 51(8), 25–25.

View This Item Online: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/20812>

Permalink: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/partpdf/376342>

Holding Institution

University Library, University of Illinois Urbana Champaign

Sponsored by

University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

Copyright & Reuse

Copyright Status: In copyright. Digitized with the permission of the Chicago Field Museum.
For information contact dcc@library.uiuc.edu.

Rights Holder: Field Museum of Natural History

This document was created from content at the **Biodiversity Heritage Library**, the world's largest open access digital library for biodiversity literature and archives. Visit BHL at <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org>.