



Alagnak

Aniakchak

Katmai

Kenai Fjords

Lake Clark

Bald Eagle

Resource Brief

Importance

Bald eagles are important predators on bird and fish populations and hence serve a vital ecological role in freshwater and marine coastal systems in SWAN parks. Their occurrence and reproductive performance may be influenced by weather conditions, toxic contaminants, food availability, human-related impacts, and climate. Thus, nest occupancy and reproductive rates of bald eagles may be useful indicators of both current condition and long-term change of freshwater and marine coastal systems. Katmai NPP (KATM), Kenai Fjords NP (KEFJ), and Lake Clark NPP (LACL) contain large breeding populations of bald eagles.



NPS

Bald Eagle nesting pair, LACL, May 2009.

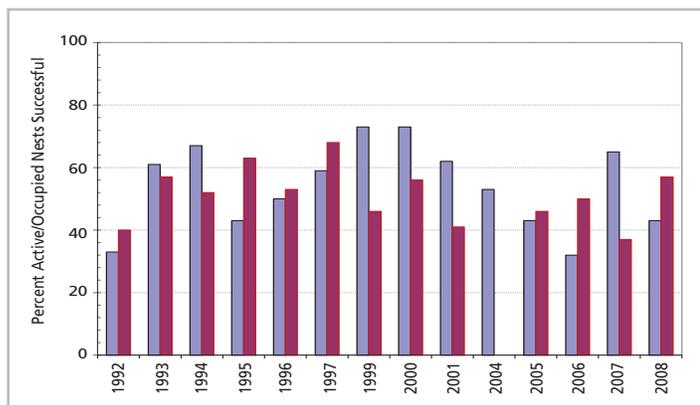


Figure 1. Percent nest success (producing at least one young) for bald eagles in LACL. Light blue indicates interior sites and dark red indicates coastal sites. Surveys were not conducted in 1998, 2002 or 2003.

Status and Trends

Biologists from LACL have successfully adapted US Fish and Wildlife Service protocols to conduct annual surveys of bald eagle nests in the park's interior and coast. Average nest success and number of young produced per active/occupied nest was 54% and 0.78 in the park's interior, and 51% and 0.70 along the coast for most years during 1992-2008 (Fig. 1 and 2). Current data are not available on nest occupancy or productivity of bald eagles in KEFJ (last survey in 1998) or in KATM (last survey in 1994).

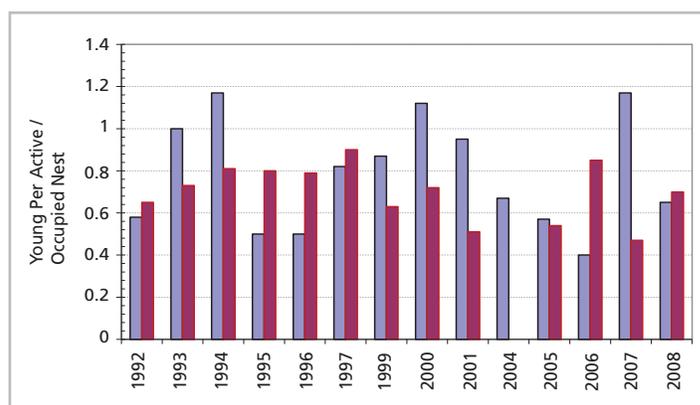


Figure 2. Bald eagle nest productivity (number of fledglings) in LACL. Light blue indicates interior sites and dark red indicates coastal sites. Surveys were not conducted in 1998, 2002 or 2003.

Discussion

Bald eagle populations are under continuing threat from the human-related impacts of ecotourism, sport and commercial fishing, timber harvest, potential mining activities, and potential oil spills or other accidents along marine coastlines. Protocol development in SWAN park units will be focused on evaluating the latest US Fish and Wildlife Service survey technique for monitoring bald eagles. This technique will be field tested in KEFJ, spring 2009 and in KATM, spring 2010.

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