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Bald Eagles soaring into opaque cloud.—Recently Heintzelman and MacClay (1974, Auk 91: 849) reported Turkey Vultures (*Cathartes aura*) ascending on thermal currents into opaque clouds. Few reports of this phenomenon have been published, as noted by Griffin (1973, Proc. Amer. Phil. Soc. 117: 118). This note describes soaring Bald Eagles (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) entering opaque clouds, and comments on the possible function of such behavior.

On 4 February 1974 at 1320 I watched two adult and two subadult Bald Eagles at an altitude of approximately 500 feet above the ground soaring below a large cumulus cloud at the junction of Bacon Creek and the Skagit River, northeast of Marblemount, Washington. The base of the cloud was at least $\frac{1}{2}$ mile across and its vertical height could not be determined. One eagle of unknown age was also seen just as it disappeared into the base of this cloud. As the eagles gained altitude, two of them flew laterally out of the thermal formation beneath the cloud, and descended out of sight. The two eagles still soaring disappeared into the bottom of the cumulus cloud at 1327. I estimated the bottom of the cloud to be 3000 to 4000 feet above the valley floor. I continued to watch the sky for more than an hour with 9 \times binoculars, but saw no eagles descending from the cloud.

Cumulus clouds are associated with vertical air currents. The speed of the updraft beneath the cloud can be judged by the fact that the eagles ascended approximately 2500 to 3500 feet in 7 min.

The fate of the eagles that entered the clouds is unknown, but as the local wintering eagle population was declining at this time these eagles may have initiated a migration path over the Cascade Range to another drainage. An eagle trying to cross the North Cascade Range in this region would have to attain an altitude of several thousand feet. It is possible that these eagles ascended vertically through the cumulus cloud and left it after gaining enough altitude to be above the mountains. Another possible advantage of gaining such altitude is better visual orientation in the clear sky above the clouds.

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