

## BALD EAGLE LONGEVITY RECORD FROM SOUTHEASTERN ALASKA

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Abstract.—In November–December 1965, 39 Bald Eagles (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) were banded along the Chilkat River, approximately 30 km north of Haines, Alaska. One of these eagles, an adult female, was recovered within 20 km of the banding site on 28 May 1993 at a minimum estimated age of 28 yr 0 mo, a new longevity record for this species.

### REGISTRO DE LONGEVIDAD PARA INDIVIDUO DE *HALIAEETUS LEUCOCEPHALUS* DE ALASKA

Sinopsis.—Durante noviembre y diciembre de 1965, se anillaron 39 individuos del águila *Haliaeetus leucocephalus* a lo largo del Río Chilkat, aproximadamente 30 km al norte de Haines, Alaska. Una de estas águilas, una hembra adulta, fue recobrada el 28 de mayo de 1993, a unos 20 km. del lugar en donde se anilló originalmente. Se estima una edad mínima de 28 años, un nuevo registro de longevidad para la especie.

From 11 Nov.–9 Dec. 1965, Fred Robards trapped and banded 39 Bald Eagles (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) along the Chilkat River, approximately 30 km north of Haines, Alaska. Cain (1986) recaptured one of those eagles, an adult male, at its nest site near Bear Creek on Admiralty Island, 20 km west of Juneau, Alaska, on 16 May 1984, at the estimated age of 21 yr 11 mo, assuming a hatching date of 1 June (Clapp et al. 1982). This note documents the second recovery from that group of eagles and a new longevity record for this species.

Hikers picked up a debilitated adult female eagle along the Chilkat River 10 km north of Haines within the Alaska Chilkat Bald Eagle Preserve on 28 May 1993. Bill Zack, a ranger with Alaska State Parks and Outdoor Recreation, sent this eagle to the Juneau Raptor Rehabilitation Center for treatment, but it died two days later on 30 May. The eagle weighed 5.5 kg at the time of death. Its measurements were: culmen without cere, 56.8 mm; bill to gape, 86.5 mm; bill depth, 37.7 mm; and hallux length, 45.8 mm. The eagle had been banded by Robards in the early winter of 1965 with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service band number 519-20151, a monel lock-on band as described by Cain (1986). As with the eagle recovered in 1984, the band showed little wear and appeared new.

Robards died in the 1980s and left few details of the 1965 banding project. The only data available for this eagle at the time of banding were a weight of 5.5 kg and a wing span of 2.29 m. There is no record of its age at the time of banding. Assuming it hatched on 1 June of the same year of its initial capture (Clapp et al. 1982), it died at the minimum age of 28 yr 0 mo, a new longevity record. It is probable that the eagle hatched earlier than 1965. Studies on the Chilkat bald eagles found that more

than 70% of the population along the river in November and December was comprised of adults (Hansen et al. 1984). Assuming survival rates comparable to elsewhere in Alaska (Bowman et al. 1995) and equal production of nestlings each year, substantially more than twice as many immatures would be 2–5-yr-old than in the first year class. With these assumptions, less than 15% of the Bald Eagles along the Chilkat would be birds that hatched that year.

With the recovery of the second eagle from the handful of birds marked along the Chilkat River 30 years ago, one must wonder how many are still wandering the coasts of southeastern Alaska. Banders marked only 2147 Bald Eagles prior to those marked by Robards, but more than 18,000 Bald Eagles have been banded since then (Bird Banding Laboratory, Laurel, MD, unpubl. data). As these marked birds age, additional eagles of extended longevity may be recovered, supplanting this record and contributing to our knowledge of bald eagle longevity in the wild.

#### LITERATURE CITED

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