

## Bald Eagles



Another name for the bald eagle is the American eagle because the bald eagle is a national symbol for the United States of America. An eagle is a raptor which is another word for bird of prey. Raptors or birds of prey, such as eagles, hawks and owls, catch and eat small animals or other birds. Early American pioneers felt that birds of prey needed to be destroyed because they ate birds, fish and animals that were food for the settlers. Unfortunately the idea that raptors need to be destroyed continued into the twentieth century.

During World War II, the pesticide DDT saved thousands of human lives by killing lice that carried the disease typhus and mosquitoes that carried malaria. In the 1940s, farmers across the United States began spraying DDT on vast acres of crops to kill insects and raptors were seriously affected. DDT caused the shells of bald eagle eggs to be too thin for baby eaglets to hatch, causing eagle numbers to decline. Eagles were eventually placed on the endangered species list. Since DDT was banned in 1972 because of its negative impact on the environment, the number of eagles and other birds is finally increasing but has not yet reached the pre-World War II levels.

The American Eagle Foundation is one group that is working towards increasing the number of bald eagles. Since 1985 the American Eagle Foundation has worked from the Dollywood theme park at Pigeon Forge, Tennessee. The Foundation is dedicated to restoring the eagle population and protecting wild eagles.

Dollywood and the American Eagle Foundation rehabilitate raptors that have been injured and provide a permanent home for those that cannot be safely released into their natural surroundings. The American Eagle Foundation's facility at Dollywood sponsors a successful breeding program. To date the program has released nearly ninety eaglets at a special release site in Tennessee. All released eagles are tagged and one was spotted living in Canada.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Multiple Choice Questions

Circle the correct answer.

1. Which of the following birds is NOT a raptor?
  - a. Eagle
  - b. Vulture
  - c. Owl
  - d. Hawk
  
2. DDT was a helpful pesticide during World War II because
  - a. It stopped the spread of typhus
  - b. It killed mosquitoes that carried malaria
  - c. Both a. and b. above
  - d. None of the above
  
3. DDT lowered the eagle population because
  - a. Eagles died from eating fruit sprayed with DDT
  - b. Eagles died from eating insects sprayed with DDT
  - c. Both a. and b. above
  - d. None of the above
  
4. DDT was banned in 1972 because
  - a. Insects became resistant to the pesticide
  - b. It was having a negative impact on the environment
  - c. Both a. and b. above
  - d. None of the above
  
5. One group that is working to restore the eagle population is
  - a. American Eagle Foundation
  - b. Eagles Unlimited
  - c. American Eagle Association
  - d. Foundation for American Eagles
  
6. Which theme park includes an eagle sanctuary?
  - a. Six Flags
  - b. Sea World
  - c. Dollywood
  - d. King's Island

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Short Answer Questions

1. Explain why a regular bird feeder is unsuitable for a raptor.
2. Explain why the pesticide DDT was popular right after it was invented in 1939.
3. Explain why DDT was banned in 1972.
4. What caused eagles to be placed on the endangered species list?
5. State three functions of the American Eagle Foundation.
6. Why do you think that the Dollywood theme park sponsors the American Eagle Foundation and provides support for an eagle sanctuary at the park?
7. Would you like to work with the American Eagle Foundation? Explain why or why not.

## Answer Key

### Multiple Choice

1. b.
2. c.
3. d.
4. b.
5. a.
6. c.

### Short Answer

1. A regular bird feeder is designed for smaller birds to eat seeds. Raptors eat small animals and other birds.
2. During World War II, the pesticide DDT saved thousands of human lives by killing lice that carried the disease typhus and mosquitoes that carried malaria.
3. DDT was banned in 1972 because of its negative impact on the environment especially on birds.
4. DDT caused the shells of bald eagle eggs to be too thin for baby eaglets to hatch, causing eagle numbers to decline.
5. (1) The American Eagle Foundation is one group that is working towards increasing the number of bald eagles. (2) The American Eagle Foundation rehabilitates raptors that have been injured and (3) provides a permanent home for those that cannot be safely released into their natural surroundings. (4) They sponsor a successful breeding program and (5) release birds into the wild.
6. Individual response
7. Individual response