

# Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*)

## Conservation Status Rank Summary

January 23, 2025

For details on assessment and ranking methodology, see: [Conservation Status Assessment Definitions, Process, Rank Factors, and Calculation of State Ranks for Montana Species](#)

### Rarity and Trends

Rank Factor	Date Assessed	Value	Score	Data Source	Comments
<b>Rarity</b>					
Range Extent	2023-12-26	Y: 380530.8 km <sup>2</sup>	4.710	MTNHP Range Maps	None
Area of Occupancy	2023-12-26	6613   4km <sup>2</sup> cells	4.810	MTNHP Modeling	None
Number of Occurrences	2023-12-26	2074	5.500	MTNHP Databases	None
Population Size			-		Factor not used in ranking.
# of Occurrences in Good Condition			-		Factor not used in ranking.
% of Area Occupied in Good Condition			-		Factor not used in ranking.
Environmental Specificity	2012-03-24	Narrow	-	MTNHP Species Rank Data Table	Factor not used in ranking. Narrow Specialist. Need suitable nest sites near riparian foraging areas.   Methodology: NS (2003)   Original Score: B
Rarity is calculated by averaging weighted factor scores: $((4.71 \times 1) + (4.81 \times 2) + (5.50 \times 1)) / 4 = 4.96$					
<b>Trends</b>					
Short-term Trend	2023-12-20	-1.1%	0.000	IMBCR	IMBCR trend in population estimates for Montana. "-Point Estimate"
Long-term Trend	2012-03-24		[-0.070, 0.070]	MTNHP Species Rank Data Table	Populations declined after European arrival and then dramatically after the introduction of DDT. However, populations have rebounded and are probably best recognized as stable within +/- 25% since European arrival at this point.   Methodology: NS (2003)   Original Score: E
Trends score is calculated by summing weighted short and long-term trend scores: $((0.00 \times 2) + ([-0.07, 0.07] \times 1)) = [-0.07, 0.07]$					

## Threats

Rank Factor	Date Assessed	Value	Score	Data Source	Comments
<b>Threats</b>					
<b>Overall Threat Impact</b>		High	1.830		Encroachment of human development on nest sites, contaminants, collisions with vehicles at road kill sites, and electrocutions all represent threats to populations in Montana.
<b>Intrinsic Vulnerability</b>	2012-03-24	Moderately vulnerable	-	MTNHP Species Rank Data Table	Factor not used in ranking. Moderately Vulnerable. Species exhibits moderate age of maturity, frequency of reproduction, and/or fecundity such that populations generally tend to recover from decreases in abundance within 5-20 years or 2-5 generations. Species has good dispersal capabilities such that extirpated populations generally become reestablished through natural recolonization.   Methodology: NS (2003)   Original Score: B
Threat score is calculated from Overall Threat Impact when available or Intrinsic Vulnerability if not: <b>( 1.83 ) = 1.83</b>					

### Individual Threats Data

Threat Category	Date Assessed	Impact Score	Scope	Severity	Immediacy	Comments
<b>Residential &amp; Commercial Development</b>	2023-12-26	Low	Large	Slight	High	Development of riparian corridors and nest habitat
<b>Transportation &amp; Service Corridors</b>	None	Low	Large	Slight	High	Warning: Auto-rolled multiple Level 2 threats to Level 1
<b>Biological Resource Use</b>	2023-12-26	Low	Pervasive	Slight	High	Lead exposure through contaminated gut piles left by hunters
<b>Invasive &amp; Other Problematic Species, Genes &amp; Diseases</b>	2024-01-09	Medium	Pervasive	Moderate	High	Avian Influenza
Threat Tally: 0 - Very High, 0 - High, 1 - Medium, 3 - Low Overall Threat Impact* = High						

\*See [Conservation Status Assessment Definitions, Process, Rank Factors, and Calculation of State Ranks for Montana Species](#) for calculation of Overall Threat Impact based on the number and impact of individual threats.

## Conservation Status Rank Calculation

### Raw score

Rarity:  $(4.96 \times 70\%)$  + Threats:  $(1.83 \times 30\%)$  + Trends:  $([-0.07, 0.07]) = [3.95, 4.09]$

Calculated Rank: S4

<b>Accepted Rank</b>	S4
<b>Date Approved</b>	2025-01-23
<b>Approval Authority</b>	MTNHP Staff
<b>Rank Justification</b>	Species is now uncommon to common in suitable habitat across much of the state. It suffered severe declines during the 20th century but has made significant progress toward recovery and generally populations appear stable. It faces threats from habitat loss due to development, exposure to lead from foraging on carcasses shot with lead bullets, and disease.

## Supplementary Information

Montana Natural Heritage Program. 2021. Conservation Status Assessment Definitions, Process, Rank Factors, and Calculation of State Ranks for Montana Species. 18 p.

[https://mtnhp.mt.gov/docs/Montana\\_State\\_Rank\\_Criteria\\_20211201.pdf](https://mtnhp.mt.gov/docs/Montana_State_Rank_Criteria_20211201.pdf)

Montana Field Guide Species Account:

<https://fieldguide.mt.gov/speciesDetail.aspx?elcode=ABNKC10010>

Predicted Suitable Habitat Model:

<https://mtnhp.mt.gov/resources/models/?elcode=ABNKC10010>

## Information Needs

Information needs are assessed by considering the availability of factors used to assess species status as well as the quality of these assessments. Current information availability and quality to inform Conservation Status Rank for this species are highlighted.

Rank Factor	Assessment Category	Value	Criteria
General Status	Status Quality	Adequate	Calculated rank has low uncertainty and is represented by a single rank (e.g. S3); accepted rank may be adjusted to a range rank (e.g. S2S3)
		Poor	Rank assessed as SU or calculated rank has notable uncertainty and corresponds to a range rank with 2 or more values (e.g. S2?, S1S3, or S4S5)
Rarity	Range Quality	Adequate	Range polygon adequately represents area of probable occupancy and does not include substantial unoccupied areas; range may be adequately defined and still include areas of unsuitable habitat (e.g. mountain ranges for plains species)
		Marginal	Range polygon defined, but may include or exclude notable areas where the species may or may not occur on the landscape
		Poor	Range polygon not defined
	Habitat Quality	Adequate	Species-habitat relationship is well-defined (e.g. relevant literature or robust habitat model available)
		Marginal	Understanding of species-habitat relationship is adequate among some but not all habitats (e.g. literature covers similar habitats outside of Montana or habitat model performance is only somewhat adequate)
		Poor	Species-habitat relationship is not well understood
Threats	Threat Quality	Adequate	Threat Impact is a single value (including "Unthreatened")
		Marginal	Threat Impact assessed at more than one value (e.g. "High - Medium")
		Poor	Threat Impact is Unknown but Intrinsic Vulnerability is assessed
		Unknown	Threat Impact is Unknown and Intrinsic Vulnerability is not assessed
Trends	Recency	Current	Short-term Trend assessment date less than 10 years old
		Out of Date but Adequate	Short-term Trend assessment date is more than 10 years old or Unknown, but species is Unthreatened
		Out of Date	Short-term Trend assessment date more than 10 years old
		Not Available	Short-term Trend data are not available
	Trend Quality	Sufficient	Short-term Trend assessed at a single value or multiple values with a minimum trend greater than -10% (stable or increasing)
		Unknown but Sufficient	Short-term Trend is Unknown, but species is Unthreatened
		Poor	Short-term Trend is less than -10% (in decline) with two or more values selected
		Unknown	Short-term Trend is Unknown

### Summary of Information Availability

Data are adequate to rank this species.

### Summary of Information Needs

No further information is needed.

## Additional Threat Details

The table below contains the complete threats assessment for this species. While the Conservation Status Rank Calculation is based on cumulative, broadly categorized (Level 1) threats data, threats are assessed and tracked for more specifically categorized (Level 2) threats when available.

Threat Category	Date Assessed	Assessed By	Data Source	Scope	Severity	Immediacy	Comments
Residential & Commercial Development - 1	2023-12-26	None	None	Large	Slight	High	Development of riparian corridors and nest habitat
Transportation & Service Corridors - 4.1 - Roads & Railroads	2023-12-26	None	None	Large	Slight	High	vehicle collisions on roads
Transportation & Service Corridors - 4.2 - Utility & Service Lines	2023-12-26	None	None	Large	Slight	High	Electrocution/ collision with powerlines
Biological Resource Use - 5.1 - Hunting & Collecting Terrestrial Animals	2023-12-26	None	None	Pervasive	Slight	High	Lead exposure through contaminated gut piles left by hunters
Invasive & Other Problematic Species, Genes & Diseases - 8.2 - Problematic Native Species/Diseases	2024-01-09	None	None	Pervasive	Moderate	High	Avian Influenza