



Promoting a fishable, swimmable Hoosic River!

Our National Symbol: Secure in the Watershed By Gordon Batcheller, Certified Wildlife Biologist®

Bald eagles like open water. It's their source of food, primarily fish, scavenged from shorelines, caught in open water, or taken from ospreys. When lakes freeze up, bald eagles head for the rivers or coast. The Hoosic River, however, is open winterlong and bald eagles may be seen virtually every day from fall to spring. Not long ago, bald eagles began breeding in the watershed, and I know of active nests not far from my home in New York. Today, it's possible, even probable, to see a bald eagle any day of the year on any section of the River in our tri-state watershed.

And they are worth seeing. A large, powerful bird, they are unmistakable once you understand several key differences between bald eagles and other large, soaring birds, such as turkey vultures and red-tailed hawks, two common birds in our area. When they are together at a single viewing, bald eagles dwarf other soaring birds. Their wingspan is 6-7 feet, and they hold their wings outstretched and flat, like a straight board. Even though a turkey vulture's wingspan approaches 6 feet, they hold their wings in a distinctive 'V' or dihedral. Although red-tailed hawks also hold their wings flat like a bald eagle, their wingspan is under 5 feet. While there are other large soaring birds occasionally seen in the watershed, such as golden eagles and black vultures, it's the other two that are more common and may cause initial confusion. (An adult golden eagle is uniformly brown and not mottled; a juvenile golden eagle has prominent white patches near the ends of their wings, and a white band at the base of the tail. They are more likely to be seen during the winter.)

Seeking artists

to participate in HoorWA's
Music & Poetry
Along the River Project

contact office@hoorwa.org
with sample of work:
poem, song, or instrumental piece

\$100 stipend to participating artists



Mass
Cultural
Council

"This program is supported in part by a grant from the
Cultural Council of Northern Berkshire, a local agency which
is supported by the Mass Cultural Council, a state agency."



Hoosic River
Watershed Association

Hoorwa.org



Bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*)
Photo: Lou Buscher, NYS DEC

Bald eagles reach full maturity at 5 years, and both sexes have the prominent white head and tail that is truly iconic. Juvenile bald eagles (1-5 years) have a brown body, and white mottling on the wings and tail. They look like an unfinished painting, but still are as large as an adult. Both juveniles and adults have a massive beak (dark in juveniles, yellow in adults) that seems out of proportion to their head, and even at long distances may be a diagnostic feature, especially when compared to the small, unfeathered head of a turkey vulture. When perched, bald eagles stand tall, just shy of 3 feet.

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Incoming BOD: Welcome Jean & Justin!



Justin Adkins is a local business owner of Wild Soul River on Cole Ave in Williamstown and is currently President of the Taconic chapter of Trout Unlimited. He is passionate about our local watershed and is an avid fly-fisher. He has been an environmental activist

since his early teens advocating that cannabis will save the world, which he still believes. He has always interwoven his passion for the conservation of the planet with his work. He co-founded the ROOT pre-orientation program at Williams College (looking at the intersections of identity and sustainability) when he worked at the Davis Center and has co-founded multiple community garden projects across the country. If not at his business, he is most likely found along the river either fishing or learning more about wild edible and medicinal plants.

Jean Noel has an Associate's Degree in Business and has been in banking for over 40 years. She has been with Greylock Federal Credit Union for 22 years, currently Vice President, Market Manager overseeing the Northern Berkshire Branches in Adams, North Adams and Williamstown. Jean has been a member of the Rotary Club of North Adams for over 20 years, including time serving as President. Previously she served on the Northern Berkshire United Way Board for more than 10 years and on the Allocations Committee for several years. She loves the ocean, travelling to Caribbean locations and spending time with family, friends and her "furry" boys. Jean resides in Pownal with her husband, Keith.



North Adams' Aging Flood Control System: an Update from Hoosic River Revival

By Judy Grinnell, President

For as long as people have been living in western MA, the Hoosic River has been a vital part of daily life, providing food, nourishing crops, creating power for mills, and a diverse fount for recreation. Unfortunately, that same power for mills has often been a dangerous, damaging torrent going through our valley.

In the 1940s the City of North Adams asked the Federal Government to 'save the city'. The response was a 2.5 mile, three-sided, 40' wide concrete sluice which does 'save the city', but it totally destroyed the quality of the water, created a 'food desert' for wildlife, prevented community access, and additionally looks like a concrete scar going through downtown.

Fortunately, the City now has an opportunity to modernize its aging, 70 year old flood control system. Funded by local, state, and federal government entities, the U. S. Corps of Engineers will begin a three year \$3 million dollar Feasibility Study. In deliberations with the City, they will determine how best to create a healthy, accessible, attractive system that will also ensure 21st Century climate resilience and flood mitigation. The goal is to produce a plan for the city to consider.

Watch for upcoming community events highlighting the history of the river, options for modernization, and opportunities to share your ideas, concerns, and hopes for the future Hoosic River in North Adams.

For more information contact:
info@HoosicRiverRevival.org
www.HoosicRiverRevival.org

For your pleasure along the River
Click on "Recreation" at hoorwa.org
for activities to do along the Hoosic River.



Learning Wild Edible & Medicinal Plants & Fungi
Walks in the Hoosic River Watershed
with Arianna Alexandra Collins & Justin Adkins
Join us third Thursdays, 5:30-6:30pm
April-October
a different location each month
Register at wildsouriver.com



Guided Hike: Haley Brook & Waterfall
Sunday, June 18, 9-11am
Register at rurallands.org



Learning Wild Edible & Medicinal Plants & Fungi
Walk-about at The Clark Art Institute
with Naturalist Arianna Alexandra Collins
Join us fourth Tuesdays, 5:30-6:30pm
May-September
Register at clarkart.edu 413-458-2303





For such a regal bird, their voice or call is rather puny and weak, a series of high-pitched whistling or piping notes. There are many recordings of their calls available on-line. A great resource for learning more about bird songs and calls, including the bald eagle, is at the Cornell University Laboratory of Ornithology, allaboutbirds.org.

As I noted, I know of two bald eagle nests in the watershed. But I won't disclose exactly where because bald eagles may be sensitive to excessive disturbance, so their nests are best viewed at a distance. And what a nest! A long-lived bird, capable of living more than 30 years, they also form permanent pair bonds, and often return to the same area and even the same nest tree year after year. This means that their nests are replenished regularly with woody vegetation. Typically secured in a large tree along the banks of the river, the nests are huge and bulky. They may span 6 feet across, and as much deep. Because of these sizes, their nests are often in very large cottonwood or white pine trees. Like many large, long-lived birds, they have only 1-3 eggs each year. The eaglets hatch after about 5 weeks incubation and fledge at about 12 weeks. Today, those eggs have a better chance of hatching than an earlier time in our history, and that explains their recovery as a federally endangered bird.

Fully protected by both state and federal laws, bald eagles were greatly harmed by the use of the pesticide DDT, which caused their eggshells to thin, leading to repeated nesting failure. With the banning of harmful pesticides, and active management to grow their populations, the bald eagle got on a road to population security. In 2007, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced the recovery of the bald eagle and removed them from the list of threatened and endangered species list. (There are other federal laws that continue to fully protect bald eagles, along with state laws.)

As noted, their food comes largely from the River, either caught, scavenged, or stolen. They also scavenge mammals, including road-killed animals. I once was very startled to round a bend on one of our roads, and to nearly collide with a bald eagle scavenging roadkill. I am a very avid fly fisherman and deer hunter. I now use nontoxic/nonlead weights in my trout flies, and I also now use copper bullets. As scavengers, there are plenty of documented cases of bald eagles dying from lead poisoning when they scavenge gut piles from hunter-killed deer. Switching to non-lead means that I am assured I am not contributing to sickening any wildlife, including bald eagles. Happily, nonlead bullets and fishing weights work just as well as the toxic versions.

Bald eagles are considered recovered, their populations secure. Indeed, they can be seen nearly any day near or along the Hoosic River. Soaring hundreds of feet in the air, they are awesome, and we are fortunate. The next time you are in the watershed, and you see a large soaring bird, take time to carefully observe and enjoy what easily could be our National Symbol, the regal bald eagle. Enjoy them in their recovery, but don't take them for granted. The conservation of wildlife is a permanent commitment.

HooRWA Seeking Business Sponsors

HooRWA recently kicked off our request for business sponsors. We have 2 projects we are seeking financial assistance with: Water Quality Monitoring and Music & Poetry Along the River. If you are a business and would like to support HooRWA's work, please contact office@hoorwa.org today. Levels:

Stream Advocate \$100
Watershed Guardian \$250
River Steward \$500
Ridgetop Society \$1000

**Thank you to our business sponsors!
We appreciate your support!**

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HooRWA is dedicated to the conservation, habitat restoration and enjoyment of the Hoosic River and its watershed, through education, research, and advocacy.

www.hoorwa.org
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