

About Iowa Eagle Nests

Iowa bald eagle nest size ranges from 4.5-7 feet across and 3-10 feet deep. First year nests are usually smaller, and the nest size will increase each year as eagles re-use the nest and add sticks to it. Some eagle pairs build an alternate nest (usually within ¼ mile from first nest) within the eagle territory, and the pair may take turns nesting between these from year-to-year. When an eagle nest blows down, the eagle pair will usually build another nest nearby. A number of Iowa eagle nests have been used regularly for over 10 years, and one prime eagle territory in extreme NE Iowa has been active almost 30 years. Because some eagle nests are so large, it is not unusual to be able to spot these nests with a naked eye from a mile away.

Iowa eagles often start building their nest, or adding sticks to an old one, in October or November. Some pairs stay in the vicinity of their nests year-round; others leave the area during the harshest winter weather. The nest is typically placed in a very large tree, usually a Cottonwood; but in northeast Iowa eagles seem to prefer nesting in large White Pines. Most nests will be placed about ¼ to 1/3 down from the top of these large trees.