



A bald eagle takes care of eagle chicks at Lake Junaluska.
Photo courtesy Joseph A. Thomas/ CarolinaPhotoArt.com

Eagles at Lake Junaluska

Lake Junaluska has been a haven for a wide variety of bird species for many years, and we welcome and invite bird watchers to spend time here. At the Bethea Welcome Center, visitors can pick up a list of more than 100 bird species to look for on property. Eagles have been spotted at Lake Junaluska over the years. About two years ago, a pair of bald eagles built a nest and took up residence. We became aware there were chicks in the nest this April that could have been as old as four weeks at that time.

Where can I see the eagles?

- The eagles are often seen fishing or flying around Lake Junaluska, so enjoying the 2.3-mile walking trail around the lake is the best way to catch sight of them.

Where is the nest at Lake Junaluska?

- The nest is high in a tree in a wooded area on the east end of Lake Junaluska. We are asking visitors not to search for the nest. The N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission advises based on the National Bald Eagle Management Guidelines to maintain a minimum 330-foot buffer from the nest. Normal resident activity near the nest, however, should not disturb the eagles.

Why are people encouraged to stay far from the nest?

- Unexpected disturbances by people near the nest increase the risk of adults not feeding the chicks or warming or shading them as often as they should, or leaving the nest too early, which could affect the birds' health and survival.

How did someone get video footage of the nest?

- Local photographer/videographer Joseph Thomas of Carolina Photo Art used a powerful long-distance lens to capture footage of the eagles at the nest and shared his footage on YouTube (Search "Lake Junaluska eagles"). He and his video clips also were featured on WLOS. Junaluska Gifts & Grounds gift and coffee shop at Lake Junaluska carries some of his work.

How soon will the eaglets start to fly? Will they stay at Lake Junaluska?

- The eaglets are expected to fly at 10 to 12 weeks old and may remain in the vicinity of the nest for several weeks
- Eagles often re-use nests year after year.

Information Sources: National Bald Eagle Management Guidelines, N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission