



Bird's-eye view

Webcam lets you spy on bald eagles

The eagle has landed — in The Times-Tribune newsroom. When my editor recently discovered a live, streaming webcam focused on a nesting pair of bald eagles in Hanover, production in the newsroom ground to a halt. All eyes focused on the crystal-clear video of the two beautiful — and large — birds of prey tending their nest.

They appear to come and go in shifts. When one leaves, the other moves sticks around the nest, or just stares off into the distance. Occasionally, you'll see the returning bird bring home a treat for its mate. Usually it's an unidentifiable clump of bloody fur or feathers.



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InSites

Actually, the eagle can land in your room as well if you like. The Pennsylvania Game Commission, HDOnTap, Comcast Business and Friends of Codorus State Park have teamed up to bring you the webcam at www.pgc.state.pa.us. Click on the Bald Eagle Live Stream link (it has a photo of two eagles on it) to get to the camera page.

Love is in the air

Codorus State Park consists of 3,490 acres surrounding 1,275-acre Lake Marburg and is located south of Harrisburg near the Maryland state line. The nest there is emblematic of the success of the state's eagle reintroduction program. There were only three known bald eagle nests in Pennsylvania 30 years ago. The state game commission teamed up with the Canadian government and several other agencies to bring eagle chicks into the state, raise them and release them into the wild. Today there are



This screen shot is from the Pennsylvania Game Commission's bald eagle live streaming camera in Codorus State Park, Hanover, which shows the comings and goings of the nest 24 hours a day.

more than 250 nests across the state.

The newsroom staff has watched the eagles for several weeks now. On Valentine's Day, appropriately enough, someone noticed an egg in the nest. A few days later, another egg was visible.

Flight of fancy

The pair takes turns brooding. While one sits on the eggs, the other flies off to stretch its wings and catch a meal. They get off the eggs to eat and stretch their legs. Then they flip the eggs, hover over them for a second or two, and lower themselves back down in a sideways rocking motion.

Other than that, there's not a lot of action. They seem to spend a lot of time just sitting, surveying the landscape and looking fierce as their nest sways gently in the wind. Every now and then, they'll rearrange a few sticks, just to break the monotony.

Despite the long periods of nothing happening, it's fascinating to watch. The birds seem to communicate via telepathy. They silently trade duties without any discussion, like an old married couple that knows what their mate is going to do before they do. Evolution and experience have programmed routines into these creatures that have served them well for thousands of years.

While the live video of the eagles is the most interesting thing on this part

of the game commission's website, there is some good supporting material. Just below the live feed is a video player where you can watch time-lapsed clips of the nest from days past. A link at the bottom of the player takes you to other live-streaming cameras around the world. You can watch great horned owls in Georgia, hippos in Africa or waves breaking in Hawaii.

Further down the page, you can view a 20-minute documentary about the reintroduction of bald eagles in Pennsylvania. It's fairly well done with lots of good information and footage of eagles.

At the bottom of the page is a list of links to more eagle-related pages. One page gives tips on identifying large birds in flight from a distance by comparing characteristics such as wingspan, shape and posture. Another has bald eagle fast facts. Others have tips on where and how to watch bald eagles in the wild.

The voyeuristic webcam is captivating, and the rest of the page functions well, with easy, intuitive navigation. The appearance of the page, however, is a bit dated. The tabs, links, colors and typography all look like they're from an earlier era of website design.

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