

COUNTY OF MERCER

McDADE ADMINISTRATION BUILDING
640 SOUTH BROAD STREET
P.O. BOX 8068
TRENTON, NEW JERSEY 08650-8068

BRIAN M. HUGHES
COUNTY EXECUTIVE

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MEDIA CONTACT: Julie Willmot
(609) 278-7137

PARK COMMISSION OFFERS IN-PERSON AND VIRTUAL PROGRAMS TO HELP PUBLIC KEEP ‘EYES ON EAGLES’

WEST WINDSOR -- The Mercer County Park Commission announces the third year of “Eyes on Eagles” programming to celebrate the four pairs of bald eagles that nest in Mercer County, including two pairs that have chosen County parks for nest sites. The Park Commission, Conserve Wildlife Foundation of New Jersey (CWF) and the Wildlife Center Friends are partnering to host both in-person and virtual eagle viewing programs throughout the spring nesting season.

In-person public nest viewing programs will be held at the West Picnic Area at Mercer County Park. Naturalists and guides will be on hand to help the public safely view bald eagles with spotting scopes for a closer look. “Eyes on Eagles” in-person nest viewings will be held on the second Sunday and fourth Friday of the month, from 1 to 3 p.m., through May 9. Masks and social distancing are required. Space is limited and pre-registration is required.

Two virtual “Eyes on Eagles” panel discussions will offer an even closer look at life in the nest on April 29 and June 3 at 7 p.m. The Park Commission will air up-to-date video footage of the nest featuring two important stages in eaglet development. During the Zoom-based program, expert panelists will supply commentary on eagle behavior, biology and conservation.

Registration is required for these free public programs. Those interested can register at <http://mercercountyparks.org/#!/activities/eyes-eagles>.

The Park Commission’s two recent eagle nests provide wildlife enthusiasts with a rare opportunity to view eagles in nature, but for the safety of the eagles, all viewing will be done from a distance. Bald eagles and many bird species are sensitive during their nesting season. Park patrons must remain on marked trails at all times; disturbance to wildlife will cause harm, where they may refuse to return in the future. Public programs will provide important tips to park users on “eagle etiquette,” including information on federal regulations prohibiting the disturbance of bald eagle nests.

Local and regional wildlife photographers are encouraged to share their images of the breeding eagles through email or social media. Images can be emailed to parksinfo@mercercounty.org with the

photographer's name, or shared through social media by tagging or mentioning the Mercer County Park Commission on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. If posting pictures of eagles in Mercer County parks, tag the Park Commission and use the hashtag #capitalcountyeagles. Credit will be given to the photographers if outside photos are shared.

CWF is a private, nonprofit organization dedicated to the protection and preservation of New Jersey's endangered and threatened wildlife and their habitats. Wildlife Center Friends is a supportive partner of the Mercer County Wildlife Center, a facility of the Mercer County Park Commission.

To learn more about bald eagle programming opportunities, please visit www.mercercountyparks.org or www.conservewildlifenj.org.

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Photo Caption: Nesting bald eagles return to the capital county. (Photo by Kevin Buynie)