

Bristlecone Audubon



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Bald Eagle Come Back

While in the late 1700s our Country's founding fathers quibbled over which native bird would best represent the Nation, Benjamin Franklin suggested the wild turkey be made our *National Symbol* . While a noble bird in its own right, probably the wild turkey has never contemplated snaring fish on wing, soaring motionless 4,000 meters above the earth, nesting on sea cliffs far above breaking surf. Perhaps like some of us, Franklin's first memory of a bald eagle was that of a scavenger hopping gingerly behind a running Hereford cow that had only recently given birth; her blood-engorged placenta dragging behind as bait. Can we really blame him for his impertinence?



Adult Bald Eagle perched near the Goshute Mountains, Elko County, Nevada, 27 December 2010.

(Photo Courtesy of Chris A. Crookshanks)

At one point in our history, our National Symbol was listed as endangered in 43 states, including Nevada. Once the use of DDT was banned in 1972, the bird's fortunes changed. Today, the bald eagle population is in its fourth decade of recovery and is one of the great testaments to the efficacy of our nation's Endangered Species Act. Now perhaps, we can work on recovering California's State Symbol.

A few of us, perhaps only a very few us, wonder if one of our favorite birds, the turkey vulture, was ever considered for symbol status. It cleans up our environment. It's gregarious, seemingly good-natured, never aggressive, hostile, warlike.



Turkey Vultures and a Common Raven doing what they do best, with Old Man of the Mountain looking on, Elko County, Nevada, 12 September 2010. (Photo Courtesy of Celia McGinty)

Tentative Calendar for early 2011

March 16 Commensal Symbiosis: Red-naped Sapsuckers and Silver-haired Bats 6:30pm NDOW

April 2 Buzzard Saturday BBQ Lamoille

May 28-30 Birds Gone Wild Ruby Lake

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Natural History: Start looking for turkey vultures returning from their Argentine vacations any day now.

