



# APSLEY VOICE

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## Osprey or Eagle?



**On the Watch**  
June Hitchcox

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Last month, I received an e-mail from Melanie Jefferson, who shared the following story:

*"It was a very hot night and my Mom decided that we were going to eat outside as the cottage was too hot!! As we were eating, down in the furthest cottage in Winter's Bay, about half way through dinner we thought that we had seen our bay's resident osprey Upon closer watch, my mom declared that it wasn't the*

*osprey, but a bald eagle! There had been reports of an eagle in the area and we sat amazed at getting to see it for ourselves. When I told my parents and my grandparents it was a bald eagle, they didn't believe me. We haven't seen a bald eagle at the cottage, EVER, so we turned the binoculars into a sort of telephoto lens and took the pictures through the binoculars! What an amazing sight after so many decades of decline and battles to prevent these eagles from extinction. It was amazing to see one in the wild. Thanks, Melanie"*

It's just wonderful that you and family saw a Bald Eagle, Melanie. Several Ontario birding articles have reported seeing a very few since the early 1900's. They were certainly on their way to extinction not so long ago. Experts say DDT in run-off waters from field crops was the main culprit. The favourite food of these Eagles is fish. Whether an Eagle saw a fish, plunged feet first into a lake and caught it with its strong talons or ate dead fish on the shore, the fish were contaminated with DDT and this, after eating many fish, would finally poison the Eagles. DDT was banned in 1972 and along with Ontario's Law protecting eagles, the number of Bald Eagles soon began to increase.

These Eagles are not mature enough to nest until they are at least 4 years old so they do not produce young as quickly as most other birds. Another reason for the decline in numbers is said to be loss of habitat due to growth in the number of cottages. Hopefully, Eagles will get used to us and we will be able to live happily together. Eagles must nest along waterways. Their nests are 60' to 100' off the ground and up to 6' across so the nest is easily seen from a boat. To recognize a Bald Eagle, look for a feathered white head (bald where the name comes from) and neck (they are not bald) and white on the tail; a black body. They ride the wind currents on stiff, flat wings - unlike the Turkey Vultures wings that are held in a slight V).

For the rest of our readers: Keep an eye out and you may be lucky, as Melanie and family have been!

**Editor's Note:** *Melanie's grandmother is Marilyn Pringle in Winter's Bay on Chandos Lake. Photo below by Melanie through binoculars - Bald Eagle on Winter's Bay!*



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