

Kerr Canyon 18-IC-01

Breeding Area History. K. Rice observed two adult bald eagles carrying nest material up Kerr Canyon on 4/14/86. A nest was not located in that year, but in August a fledged juvenile was seen with the adults on Ashton Reservoir. On 7/18/87, R. Jones and K. Rice located nest number one, with two defensive adults, but the nest had blown out of the tree, and no young were located. In subsequent years, the rebuilt nest number one was notably unstable; much nest material fell to the ground before the young were fledged. In the last few years, this nest structure has stabilized. Known nesting in this breeding area has always been in the same Douglas fir up Kerr Canyon.

The Kerr Canyon breeding area has been a very consistent producer of young in every year since establishment. Over the years 1986-1996, an average of 1.45 advanced young/year were produced in the 11 years when productivity was known (Table 5). Nestlings were banded at Kerr Canyon in 1988 (2), 1989 (1), 1991 (1), 1992 (2), 1993 (2), 1995 (2), and 1996 (1). No young banded at this site have been subsequently recovered. The adult female from the Kerr Canyon nest was noted as wearing a USFWS silver band on her left tarsus in 1991, on 6/7/92 and 6/16/96.

On 8/2/93, an adult female banded Green with a White stripe (Snake Wyoming) was seen perched on the northwest edge of the Bay where Kerr, Box, and Rattlesnake Canyons enter the reservoir. This was the third adult seen on this date in the Kerr Canyon area, evidence that there may be another nest in the area. Local rancher C. Atchley remembers a nest site up Rattlesnake Canyon, to the west of Kerr Canyon, but did not find that nest during a survey in 1997. K. Rice has also seen extra adults on Ashton Reservoir during the nesting season.

**Table 5. Known productivity at the Kerr Canyon bald eagle breeding area since re-establishment of nesting pairs.**

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>NESTING STATUS</u>	<u>NUMBER YOUNG FLEDGED</u>	<u>NEST NUMBER</u>	<u>COMMENT</u>
1986	Active, successful	1	1	Adults, 1 juvenile. Nest not located.
1987	Active, unknown	?	1	Nest located 7/18, nest blown out.
1988	Active, successful	2	1	Banded 06/11, est. age 49 days.
1989	Active, successful	1	1	Banded 06/16, est. age 56 days.
1990	Active, successful	1	1	Nest blowdown. Young fledged.
1991	Active, successful	1	1	Banded 05/24, est. age 41 days.
1992	Active, successful	2	1	Banded 06/07, est. age 63 days
1993	Active, successful	2	1	Banded female (Snake Wyo.) w Kerr.
1994	Active, successful	2	1	Not banded, est. age 70 days on 06/25.
1995	Active, successful	2	1	Banded 06/01, est. age 42 days
1996	Active, successful	1	1	Banded 06/16, est. age 60 days
1997	Active, successful	1	1	Nestling branched out on 7/4/97.

Nesting Chronology. An estimated date of egg laying is derived from the estimated age of young at banding, or from observation of very young nestlings within two weeks post hatching. The average estimated date incubation was initiated was March 13, with

a range of March 9 to March 19. The estimated average hatching date is April 23. Nestlings are branched outside the nest in early July, and fledged by mid-July.

Occupied Nesting Zone, Zone 1. There is only one known alternate nest in this breeding area. This nest is approximately 52 feet up in an 85 foot tall Douglas fir. The nest tree base is 1/3 of the way downslope on a 65% slope with a northwest exposure. The nest tree is the largest tree in a small stringer of trees surrounded by mountain brush and sage. The canyon rim is only about 60 feet from the nest tree, and provides a clear view into the nest.

This nest is located an estimated 1 km from the reservoir. Although the adults encounter a great deal of human activity in the known foraging areas on Ashton Reservoir, the nest area itself is rarely visited by humans. The adults are vocally intolerant of humans within 600 m of their remote nest site, particularly if the approach is up the rim of Kerr Canyon.

Key Use Areas, Known Foraging and Perching Areas. The Ashton Reservoir Bay formed at the juncture of Kerr, Box and Rattlesnake Canyons is a favored perching and foraging area for this bald eagle nesting pair and their fledged young. Prey capture attempts have been observed in this bay, along the northwest shoreline of the main reservoir on both sides of the mouth of this bay, and up Willow Creek. The Kerr Canyon pair likely forages over a broader area of the reservoir, and over the wetland areas found to the south of the reservoir. Winter ranges in the vicinity of the nest area also provide ungulate carrion on occasion, particularly in late fall and early spring.

Breeding Area Habitat Quality. Ashton Reservoir is a relatively narrow water body with high levels of recreational use. This human activity likely impacts foraging opportunity on Ashton Reservoir itself. However, there is good foraging habitat on nearby private land ponds, such as the one found up Willow Creek. There are also mammalian prey sources available within the variety of vegetative habitats featured in this area.

Primary fishing areas on Ashton Reservoir and nearby ponds are not available year around due to winter ice cover. However, the breeding area features a variety of potential prey sources, including big game winter ranges, and abundant waterfowl where there is open water. This pair likely ranges over a much greater area during winter.

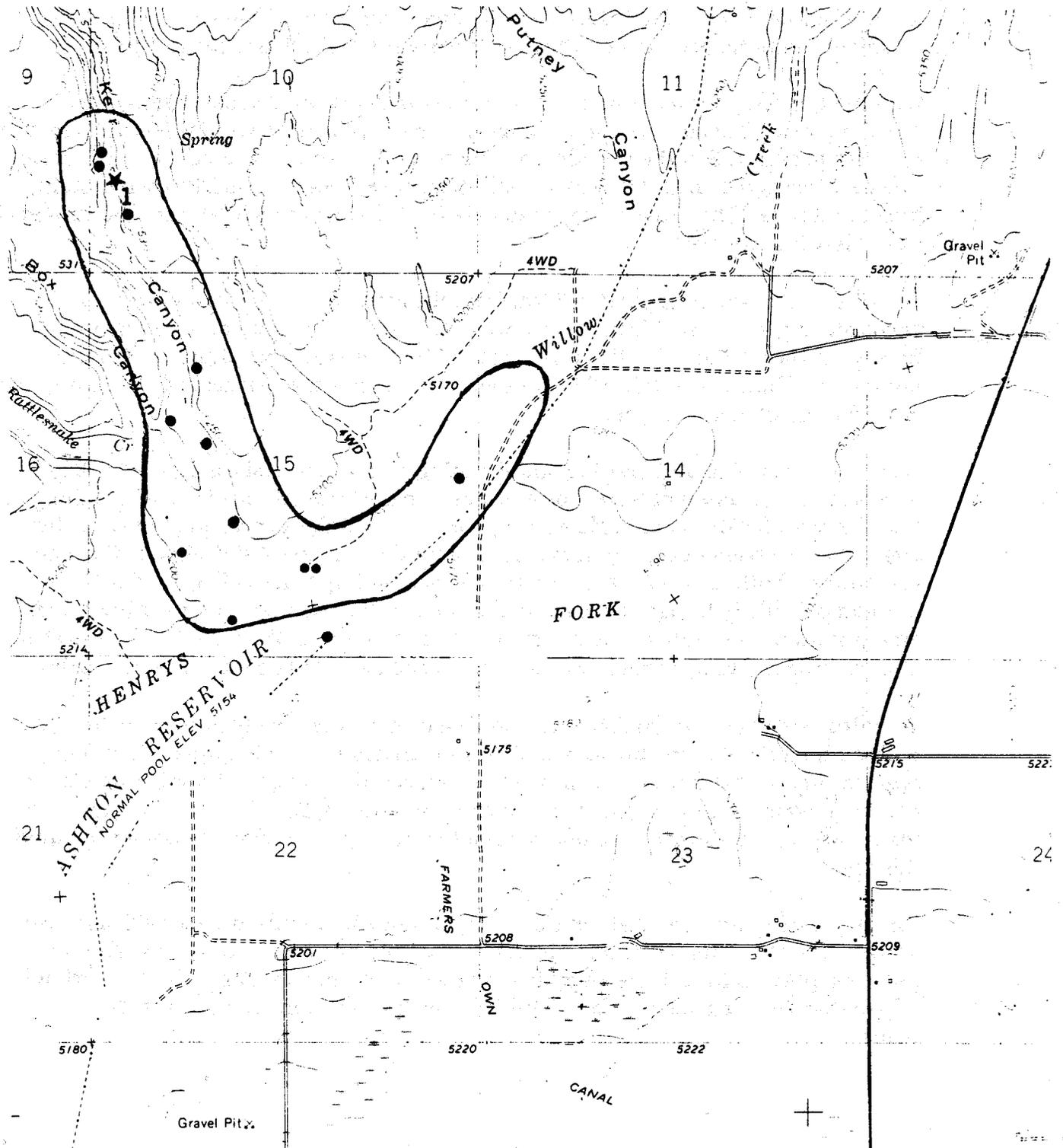


Figure 3. Known key use area within the Kerr Canyon bald eagle breeding area, Ashton Reservoir, Henry's Fork Snake River. Intensive monitoring has not occurred at this breeding area, and the information portrayed is preliminary only. The red line encloses the Principal Management Area. The number indicates the only known nest site.

Hale Canyon 18-IC-10.

**Breeding Area History.** As follow-up to fishermen reports received by the Idaho Department of Fish and Game of bald eagle activity in the area, this nest was found in 1989 by the research team. However, Judy and Gordon Smith, nearby residents, reported seeing the nest for approximately three years prior to 1989. The adult female was noted as unbanded in 1996, but there were not clear enough observations of adults in other years at this site to determine band status.

This is a successful bald eagle breeding area. An average of 1.67 advanced young have been produced at this site in the 9 years that productivity has been monitored here (1989-present, Table 6). Interestingly, the site consistently produced 2 young/year for 4 years (1989-1992), then 1 young/year for 3 years (1993-1995).

Including the 1997 breeding season, all but 2 of 15 young produced at this site since awareness of its existence was learned in 1989 have been banded as advanced nestlings. A nestling banded 05/26/91 at Hale Canyon nest was found electrocuted in Harriman State Park on 10/20/92.

**Table 6. Known productivity at the Hale Canyon bald eagle breeding area since re-establishment of nesting pairs.**

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>NESTING STATUS</u>	<u>NUMBER YOUNG FLEDGED</u>	<u>NEST NUMBER</u>	<u>COMMENTS</u>
1986-88	Active, unknown	?	1	Activity suspected.
1989	Active, successful	2	1	Banded 06/16, est. age 60 days
1990	Active, successful	2	1	Not banded, young fledged.
1991	Active, successful	2	1	Banded 05/26, est. age 46 days
1992	Active, successful	2	1	Banded 05/24, est. age 46 days
1993	Active, successful	1	1	Banded 06/13, est. age 58 days
1994	Active, successful	1	1	Banded 06/07, est. age 47 days
1995	Active, successful	1	1	Banded 06/07, est. age 53 days
1996	Active, successful	2	1	Banded 06/05, est. age 56 days
1997	Active, successful	2	1	Banded 05/27, est. age 46 days

**Nesting Chronology.** The patterns of incubation in this territory have remained relatively uniform over the past nine years. Dates of observed incubation activities and estimated age of young at banding suggest that incubation is initiated here, on average, March 10, with a range of March 6 to March 17. Hatching occurs around April 14, with fledging in the first two weeks of July. One of the two young apparently fledged early in 1996, as only one fledgling was seen here on 7/4 and 7/6. A fledgling and attendant adult were seen on the nest on 08/06/97 during collection of GPS location data.

**Occupied Nesting Zone, Zone 1.** Throughout the years, only one nest has been used within this breeding area. This very large nest is 81 feet up in an old-growth live Douglas fir that is approximately 126 feet tall. The nest tree stand is mixed-age Douglas fir near the top of a steep north slope above the river. Above the river rim, the nest

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stand is bordered by cultivated, irrigated fields. To the nesting adults, human activity in these fields is predictable, focused upon agricultural activities, and of little threat. There is little disturbance within the nesting zone because of this nest's relative isolation on a steep slope. A few adventurous fishermen enter the river down a steep path about .6 km east of the nest stand and outside of the primary nesting zone.

**Key Use Areas, Known Foraging and Perching Areas.** The adults were observed foraging and perching near potential foraging areas along the river within .35 km of the nest site (figure 4). The adults were seen flying and fishing as far as 5 km west along the river corridor. Whereas most foraging activity occurs along the river, the adults also soar out over the agricultural fields to the south, and brushlands north the river, with the potential of finding a variety of prey in the diverse habitats found in these areas.

**Breeding Area Habitat Quality.** Habitat quality in this breeding area is seemingly stable with no development or major alterations in the river corridor or near the nesting area in recent years. There are a number of properties along the river's north side that are on the market, but development of river front properties within this breeding area has not yet occurred.

Both adults, as noted by A. Whitfield during extensive observations in 1996, often left the nest vicinity to fly and fish downriver toward Ashton Reservoir. Fishermen often stopped to fish the river reach below the nest area for extended periods. When fishing activity was heavy near the nest area, with fishermen fishing and anchored directly below the nest and preferred adult perches, the adults remained high on the ridge or left the area completely.

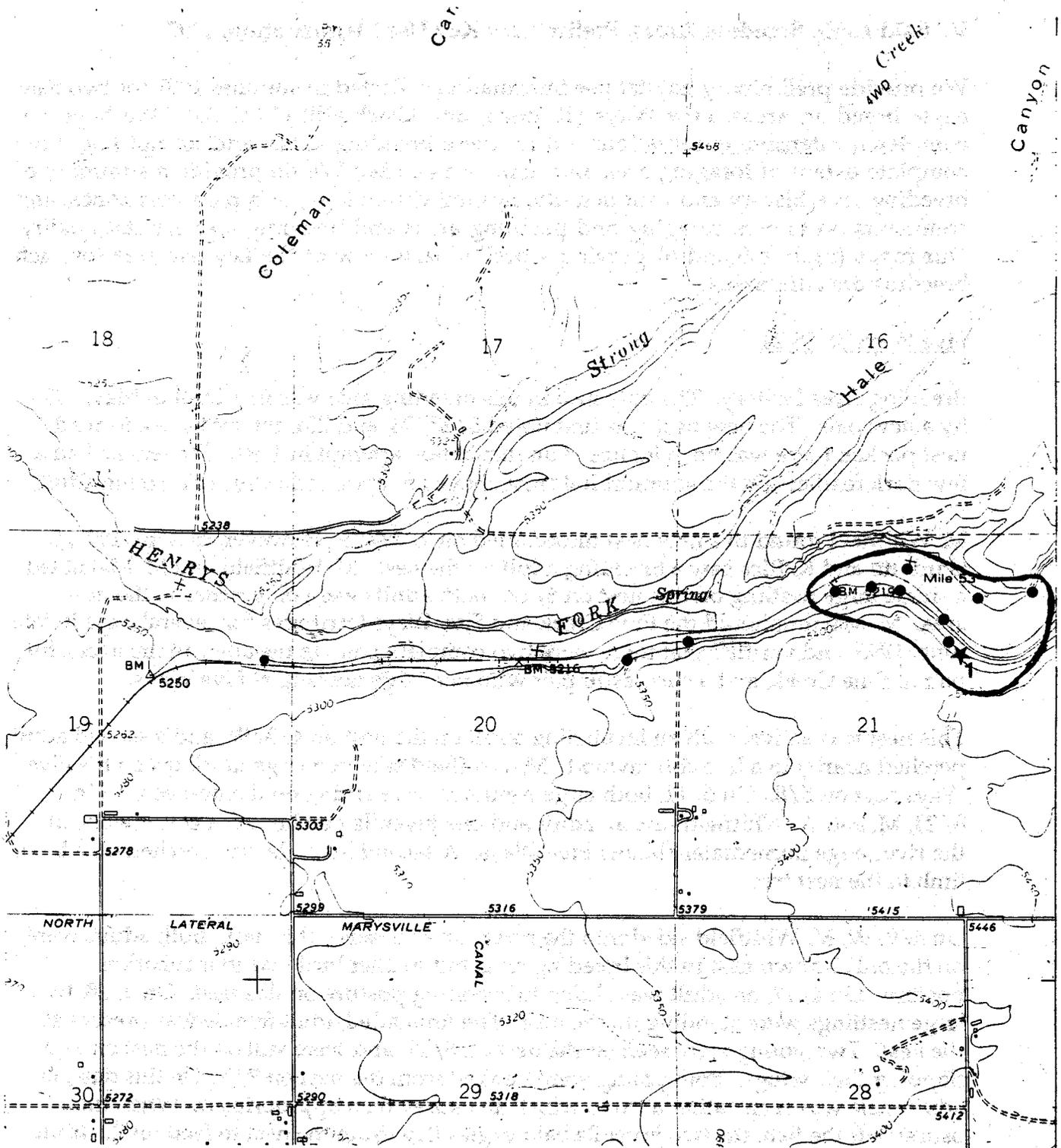


Figure 4. Known key use area within the Hale Canyon bald eagle breeding area, Henry's Fork Snake River. Intensive monitoring has not occurred at this breeding area, and the information portrayed is preliminary only. The red line encloses the Principal Management Area. The number indicates the only known nest site.