

Arizona Wildlife Podcast Comprehension Activity

Episode 19: Bald Eagle History and Evolution

Part A: Determine whether each statement below is true or false. If it is false, correct the statement so that it will be true.

1. Bald eagles and golden eagles are more closely related to Old World vultures than they are to hawks and falcons.

False. Bald eagles are more closely related to Old World vultures than they are to hawks, falcons, and even golden eagles.

2. Habitat loss was the primary cause of the bald eagle decline in North America.

False. DDT use was the primary cause.

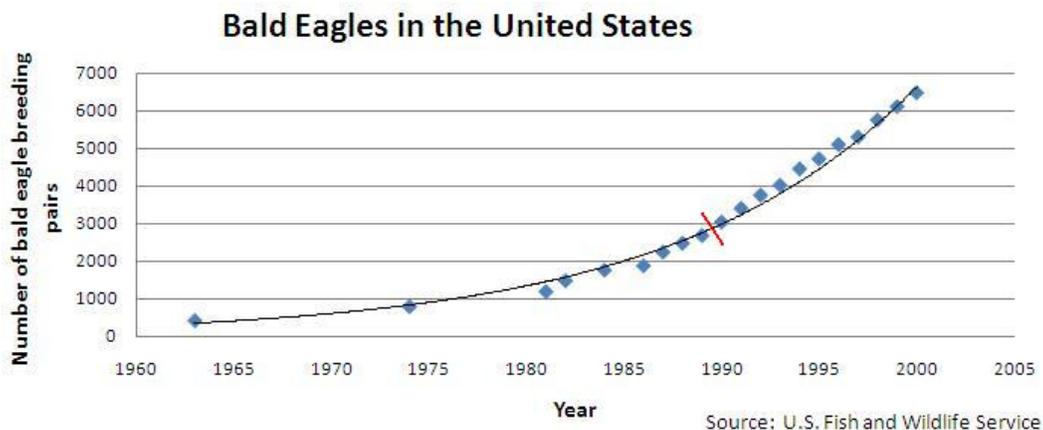
3. Bald eagles are found in every state except Hawaii.

True.

Part B: The paragraph below is a summary of bald eagle history in Arizona as it was discussed in the podcast. However, there are four mistakes. Identify and correct these errors.

Bald eagles have been in North America for at least 600,000 years. However, they are relatively new to Arizona. The first bald eagle was discovered in the state by Alexander Mearns in ~~1790~~ 1890 at Stoneman Lake. Then, in the 1930s, because of ~~pesticide use in their natural habitat~~ the construction of dams around the Phoenix area, the bald eagles were first discovered nesting in a desert environment at two separate locations. Those two nests are still actively used today. In fact, one of those nests is now the largest one in the state at approximately ~~eight~~ fifteen feet tall. Although bald eagles were removed from the Endangered Species list in ~~1995~~ 2007, the Arizona population is treated as a distinct population and is still protected.

Part C: Below is a graph of bald eagle breeding pairs found in the United States recently. Use the graph to answer the question.



ANSWER KEY

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1. Notice the mark at the year 1990. This signifies a turning point in the recovery of the bald eagles. What best explains the increased population prior to 1990? And after?

Prior to 1990, the increase in bald eagle numbers is largely accounted for by biologists seeking out information on the birds. They were actively surveying and identifying breeding locations. Therefore, they “discovered” more birds. After 1990, most of the appropriate habitat had been surveyed. The increase, at that point, can be attributed to successful management techniques to increase the population.