

Vermont sees modern-day record for bald eagle reproduction

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In this March 5, 2014 file photograph, a juvenile bald eagle flies over the western shoreline of Lake Champlain in Essex, N.Y. Vermont biologists say the number of bald eagles that successfully nested in the state, including on Vermont's eastern shoreline of the lake, set a modern-day record in 2017. (AP Photo/Mike Groll, File)

The number of bald eagles that successfully nested in Vermont and

raised young set a modern-day record this year, advancing the state's years long effort to restore the bird, according to state biologists.

The Department of Fish and Wildlife said Thursday that 21 adult bald eagle pairs successfully produced 35 young birds this season.

"Vermont's bald eagles continue to recover thanks to improved habitat conditions, especially water quality and forested shorelines," said John Buck, a bird biologist.

Bald eagles have continued to be included on the state's endangered species list, but another strong year of growth has biologists hopeful for their recovery.

There was a 60-year absence before biologists discovered the first modern bald eagle nest in 2002. But it wasn't until 2008 when the first young bald eagle successfully left its nest.

Most bald eagles in Vermont nest along the Connecticut River, Lake Champlain, Lake Memphremagog and other large inland bodies of water.

Eagles have also been doing well in New Hampshire and throughout the northeastern region. The recovery of the species has been hailed as a great conservation success story. Once reduced to a few hundred pairs because of DDT and other pollutants, they were one of the first species to be added to the Endangered Species List in 1967.

The species was removed from the federal endangered species list in 2007 and now there are estimated to be thousands of nesting pairs across the country.

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