

# Has the bald eagle population along the James River peaked?

April 13 2018

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The bald eagle population along Virginia's James River made a stunning comeback after falling to zero in the 1970s.

Scientists now wonder if the James has reached "peak eagle."

William & Mary said in a press release Wednesday that the population has plateaued. Two university biologists are looking out for signs of natural population decline as more and more eagles compete for limited space along the river.

Bald eagles live up to 30 years. They're extremely territorial and generally mate for life.

Biologists survey the river by airplane each spring, and in late April, they'll tally up the number of hatched chicks.

Bald eagle populations plummeted before the federal government banned the pesticide DDT in 1972. Eagles also were given endangered status under the Endangered Species Act in 1967.

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