

L30 (WRST (c) RM)

August 28, 1990

Memorandum

To: Supervisory Resource Management Specialist

From: Resource Management Specialist (Wildlife)

Subject: 1990 Bald Eagle Survey

WRST Resource Management staff flew on four occasions to survey portions of the Copper River drainage for bald eagle nests in 1990. The Chitina River was flown in spring and fall by WRST. The Copper River from Copper Lake to its confluence with the Chitina River was flown in the spring by BLM and in the fall by WRST. The Copper River from the Chitina River to Bremner River was flown by WRST, but in the fall only.

The percent nests known active in spring was down slightly from 1989 (53% versus 44%) (Table 1). A total of 42 nests were found in 1990 that were not known to exist in 1989, therefore, the drop in percent active nests may be due in part to a more thorough search for nests in 1990.

Number of young produced per successful nest was 1.4 in 1990, identical to 1989. However, the number of young per active nest was only 0.2 in 1990 versus 1.0 in 1989. This is no doubt because some of the fall surveys were flown too late in the season.

I recommend that a piper supercub be used to conduct the bald eagle surveys. The park's arctic tern can be used, but the slower flying speed of the supercub makes it the plane of choice. Air taxi Jerry Lee flies eagle surveys for the BLM and he has lots of low level flying experience with ADF&G and the U.S. Forest Service. He has good knowledge of the area and has a good eye for nests. I recommend we use him consistently for bald eagle surveys.

We need to conduct the spring survey in mid May and the fall survey in mid to late July each year to be consistent and to obtain sound data on nesting success. Nestlings may fledge as much as 1 to 2 weeks later on the upper copper river compared to the lower elevations. This should be considered when survey flights are being scheduled.