



RE: Abandoned Nest Declaration

## Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

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*Managing fish and wildlife  
resources for their long-  
term well-being and the  
benefit of people.*

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MyFWC.com

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) does not declare nests abandoned because the agency does not have the nest specific data that would enable us to make abandoned nest declarations, nor the resources to collect such data or verify such data if presented to us by other entities. It is the responsibility of the person contemplating an activity near an eagle nest to determine if that nest is abandoned or not.

The FWC defines an abandoned nest as “a bald eagle nest that is in tact or partially intact but has been inactive through five or more consecutive nesting seasons.” The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) National Bald Eagle Management Guidelines specify that if someone has “information to show that the nest has not been active during the preceding five breeding seasons, the recommendations provided in the guidelines for avoiding disturbance around the nest site may no longer be warranted.” If you believe the nest of interest meets the FWC or USFWS definition, then the guidelines on what may and may not be done within specified distances from the nest no longer apply, and you may proceed with the activity being contemplated without a permit, unless there is a new nest in the area of question. However, the nest and the tree it is in remain protected and the activity in question cannot harm the nest or nest tree.

The FWC recommends being prepared to present your evidence, justification, or reasoning for believing the nest to be abandoned should a concerned citizen report the activity and a wildlife officer investigates the report. The FWC Eagle Nest Locator database (<http://myfwc.com/eagle/eaglenests/Default.asp>) may be helpful in making your determination. Please be aware that the database tracks the status of eagle nesting territories, not individual nests, and many territories may have multiple nests. If the database is unavailable on the web site, the most current nest territory data can be obtained by emailing your request to [baldeagle@myfwc.com](mailto:baldeagle@myfwc.com) or by calling 386-758-0525.