

SHARING THE EAGLE

Marjorie W. Rines

If I went upstairs and looked out the window, I could just barely make out the silhouette, dark and bulky as it perched in the tree across the street from my neighbor's house. I was elated. Once again, as it had been nearly every morning for the past three weeks, the eagle was there.

I live in Arlington, which isn't exactly a hotspot for Bald Eagles. In fact, to my knowledge there have only been two other Bald Eagle sightings in the town in recent years. But this one arrived and stayed, first at Spy Pond for a few hours on January 10, 1999, and then on Mystic Lake, where it could be seen almost daily from February 12 to March 6.

Computers come into the story, too. Arlington has its own birders' "list server" — a group of people who exchange local bird information by e-mail — and the eagle was big news for all of us. It was a joy to see an eagle on our home turf. But as

time went on, I realized that my pleasure came not just from seeing the bird, but from sharing it both with the people on the e-mail list and with non-birders in our area. Other birders on the e-mail list felt the same way, and "sharing the eagle" became a subject of our e-mail discussion. The following excerpts from our electronic conversation highlight this very social aspect of birding, as well as the special kind of pleasure that comes from seeing a good bird on your home turf.



The Arlington eagle – digital image by the author

From: Marj. Rines, posted on February 22, 1999

I'm getting a particular kick out of the reaction of folks who didn't know about it and have been introduced by one of us. Renee ran into a guy at the Tufts Boat Club who was not a birder, but was thrilled to be shown. He evidently has started keeping binoculars in his car, and watching the bird regularly. David and Dennis Oliver ran into an MDC ranger, and showed her. I ran into some folks that Diane Hartman sent along on Sunday, and a few minutes later a fisherman came up and just about jumped out of his boots when he was shown the eagle. I loaned him my cell phone and he called home to gather others to watch it.

From: Renee LaFontaine, posted on February 22, 1999

I second Marj's comments about the fun of seeing others' reactions to this eagle. As I was walking along the lakes yesterday, a fellow I sometimes see

walking pulled his car over and exclaimed about how excited he was to have been shown a Bald Eagle. (By whom, I don't know.) And one of my neighbors said he had been stopped while jogging by some woman (Marj?) who offered to show him a Bald Eagle.

From: David Oliver, posted on February 23, 1999

I must share Marj's enthusiasm about the eagle. I got goose bumps when I spotted the eagle flying towards Dennis and myself while we were standing at the Medford Boat Club. I fought to contain my excitement when it perched in perfect view and close by. I've seen quite a few Bald Eagles, but this was exciting so close to home. The bird called a few times as it surveyed the lower lake. A Red-tailed Hawk flew in and landed in the same tree. They glared at each other and then the hawk flew up and swooped down on the eagle. The eagle took off just as Laura and Guy drove up. Sorry I've forgotten your last names. I was too excited.

From: Renee LaFontaine, posted on March 7, 1999

This morning for about 45 minutes Dave and I, our friends Constance and Brian, and Julie and Paul Roberts enjoyed watching the Bald Eagle at his favorite perch in the tree behind the boat club, and then saw him flying high and away towards Horn Pond, with 3 Turkey Vultures cruising above. Sorry, Chris, you were just a little too early. And about 5 others arrived just too late. I guess timing is everything. Thanks to Paul and Julie for their information and other great eagle-watching stories.

March 7 was the last date the eagle was seen on Mystic Lake, but there continued to be scattered (and unconfirmed) reports from nearby. As Renee said, "Perhaps, like Elvis, the sightings will continue. It was glorious while it lasted."

Water attracts the birds like nothing else.



SOLAR SIPPERS cover water; insulated for cool summer water, solar heated against winter ice.

Free Puddles Water Shop catalog.

Free Puddles Water Newsletter.

Web site at <http://petsforum.com/happybird/>

HAPPY BIRD, P.O. 86, Weston, MA 02193.

781-899-7804

Bird Watcher's General Store

Featuring: The Amazing AVIARIUM In-House Window Birdfeeder. One-way mirrored plexiglass allows you to watch the birds for hours but they can't see you!
Come see this exceptional birdfeeder in action.



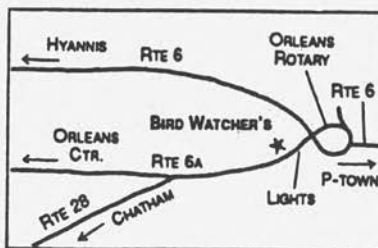
OTHER BIRD-LOVER ITEMS INCLUDE:

- Bird Mugs
- Bird Note Cards
- Bird Carvings
- Bird Field Guides
- Bird Books
- Bird Key Chains
- Bird Jewelry
- Bird Door Knockers
- Bird Telephone
- Bird Houses
- Bird Baths
- Bird Gift Wrap
- Bird T-Shirts
- Bird Photos
- Bird Prints
- Bird Calls
- Bird Recordings
- Bird Potholders
- Bird Towels
- Bird Carving Kits
- Bird Welcome Mats
- Bird Thermometers
- Bird Sun Catchers
- Bird Calendars
- Bird Pillows
- Bird Place Mats
- Bird Mobiles
- Bird Fountains
- Bird Bath Heaters
- Bird Switch Plates
- Bird Puzzles
- Bird Bookmarks

- A complete line of Binoculars, Spotting Scopes and Tripods
- A children's section with birdhouse kits, beginner books, and other fun and educational items

PLUS over 100 different types of bird feeders including Bluejay and Squirrel-proof feeders that work, GUARANTEED, plus ten different types of Bird Seed.

GIFT CERTIFICATES & U.P.S. SHIPPING • OPEN YEAR ROUND



Bird Watcher's General Store

36 Route 6A • Orleans, MA 02653

(508) 255-6974

OR

1-800-562-1512