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May 14, 2012



Independence and Franklin take a break from parenting and ponder eagle thoughts atop their nest inside Eagle Mountain Sanctuary at Dollywood in Pigeon Forge, TN. Their work has just begun!

Welcome to our first ever "Notes From The Nest," filled with memories and high points collected by our wonderful Volunteer "Eagle Nest Cam" Chat Moderators ("Mods") over the last week or so. Thanks so much to these dedicated people that we know as Yamibike, JimBowie, gretchenFL, oulaigledare, Jcrushing4, carolyne12, bluemanie, and eaglewatchingfool who join AEF staff members Al Cecere and Carolyn Stalcup to educate all the people who visit our [Eagle Nest Cam on USTREAM](#).

Please share these Notes with your friends! They might like to receive and read them too, and we'd be pleased to send them their way.

As we searched for the tiniest pip mark on any of the eggs in our "Independence" and "Franklin" nest, a new eaglet had already hatched on April 12, next door in the nest of "Isaiah" and "Mrs. Jefferson." That was great news!

Meanwhile, some of us were dismayed when the egg hatch "due dates" came and went in our Independence and Franklin nest - especially for E-1 (the first egg laid). We thought dark thoughts, and conjured up awful fears. Then, on May 6, pips were clearly visible on 2 of the eggs! (Thank you, Al and Blue, for your awesome zooms!)

The Mods were so great in explaining about the egg pipping process to many of our new chatters. They learned that a pip occurs on the larger end of the egg where the air sac is. The baby eaglet breaks the sac and then takes its first breath of air before continuing the process of breaking through the shell - and this process can last well over a day. The egg tooth (the hooked top



A New Eaglet

Two Pips!



Top: This little eaglet hatched on April 12 in the nest of Isaiah and Mrs. Jefferson. Bottom: On May 6, two pips were visible on the eggs in the nest of Independence and Franklin.

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and breaking through the shell, and was occasionally observed when the cam zoomed in close.

Independence and Franklin.



Our two "twins" hatched within 1 1/2 hours of each other!

E-1 hatched when it was "ready" to hatch - 44 days (not the normal 35) after being laid. And - gracious goodness me, its nest twin hatched less than 2 hours later from an egg laid 41 days prior. Both hatched on May 7. We jumped up and down and shouted in all caps, "PIP PIP HOORAY!" (lots of emoticons on UStream Nest Cam site!) Updates were posted (by everyone!) on FaceBook. Videos and images enhanced the experience for ourselves and others - and we patted ourselves on the back because "we knew all along it would happen." (LOL). Or perhaps we should say, "Independence" and "Franklin" were confident all along that it would happen.

Then, we refocused our attention on the 3rd remaining egg, and when Blue and Al zoomed in close, we saw a little eaglet beak making headway in finding an escape route from its egg. Little bitty E-3 struggled for hours and hours before it made its way out into the wide world

of eagles, arriving in the early morning hours of May 8. All 3 eggs hatched miraculously within a 30-hour period, which was very unusual.

At this stage of their lives, the little "bobble-heads" (as many of us call them) are fiercely competitive. Little One is going to have to hurry and catch up, but Independence (nicknamed "Indy") and Franklin (nicknamed "Frank") are diligent about making sure ALL their babies get fed. In this wonderful video recorded by the AEF from Cam 1, we see Frank bringing food to Indy, and Indy feeding her babies.

[We repost it here for your enjoyment.](#)

As our 3 little ones grow rapidly, the AEF has recently received 2 young eaglets that were hatched in captivity in Florida (Wildlife Sanctuary of Florida). These birds are now in our hack tower on Douglas Lake awaiting the time they will be set free. They will be released into the foothills of the Great Smoky Mountains of Tennessee when they are strong enough to fly.



It is amazing to see what a difference a day makes in terms of size and strength, and it's easy to tell the twins from their 1-day-younger sibling.

Have you heard this story? Al Cecere, Founder and President of the American Eagle Foundation, was making rounds in the AEF's off-park breeding facility, and found two recently-mated eagles acting very much in nesting mode - not in a nest, but right on the ground! The adult female had never actually laid an egg before, so we can forgive the tiny mistake she made.

Closer inspection revealed that the pair had actually DISCOVERED an egg (or what they THOUGHT was an egg) on the ground, which the birds began to incubate ambitiously. They also proceeded to defrock

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Get away from my egg!

nesting space.

If you watch this [YouTube video](#), you will undoubtedly have a smile on your face by the time it's over.

Finally, being the eagle lovers that we all are (since we cheer for eagles wherever we find them and we watch a lot of nests), we were so glad hearing the good news that Minnesota's eaglet "Harmon" was successfully returned to its nest and reunited with its natural eagle parents. The adult eagles are once again taking good care of their very lucky youngster.

Here are two video links with that happy story.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w8IPA77gVVg>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ki7HVhbjDQ&feature=related>



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