

USGS Data Exploration Unit: Lesson 2 Homework: The Range, Habitat and Niche of the Bald Eagle (KEY)

For the next two lessons you will be working with data collected on bald eagles. As you work with these data, it will be helpful to consider the range, habitat, and niche of the bald eagle. In this homework first read the USGS – Biological Resource Division, Patuxent Wildlife Research Center article, *The Range, Habitat and Niche of the Bald Eagle*, and then answer the following questions.

1) Define the following terms:

- a) range – *the region where an animal lives*
- b) habitat – *the kind of place where an animal lives*
- c) niche – *the way in which an animal fits into its community*

2) Name two kinds of ranges of bald eagles.

Breeding (summer) range
Winter range

3) What is the breeding range of bald eagles?

Mainly in Canada

4) What is the winter range of bald eagles?

Mainly in the United States

5) Where in North America do bald eagles live year round?

Northwest United States, Southwest Canada, and the Pacific and Atlantic Coasts

6) Where are the highest populations of breeding bald eagles?

Alaska, the Great Lakes, and Florida

7) How wide are the home ranges of bald eagles?

1-3 kilometers wide

8) What is an important characteristic of the trees on which bald eagles perch?

The tree for nesting is taller than the surrounding trees

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9) What do bald eagles eat?

Primarily fish

10) What are the range, habitat and niche of the bald eagle?

Range – Bald eagles live from the Alaskan coast to the Canadian Atlantic coast and from Southern California to the southern tip of Florida.

Habitat – They nest on lakes and rivers and require open areas.

Niche – They feed on medium-sized fish that can be seen from the air.

11) How might the migration habits of different populations of bald eagles influence their chances of bioaccumulating DDT or other toxic chemicals?

Those bald eagles that have separate breeding and winter ranges have separate food sources. Even if they are exposed to toxic food sources in one location, they may not have as high an exposure in their other range. Those bald eagles that live year round in one location take from the same food source all year and may have more risk of prolonged exposure to contaminated food sources.