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3rd chick arrives in Hays bald eagle nest



JEFF HIMLER | Saturday, March 27, 2021 3:51 p.m.



COURTESY OF PIXCAMS/AUDUBON SOCIETY OF WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA

The first eaglet of the year to hatch at the Pittsburgh Hays bald eagle nest, March 23, 2021.

A third eaglet has broken out of its shell in a bald eagle nest in Pittsburgh's Hays neighborhood.

The fluffy white chick joined its two older siblings before 6 a.m. Saturday, the Audubon Society of Western Pennsylvania announced. It's the first time since 2014 that three chicks have been produced in a season by the pair of eagles that have been seen nesting at the site since 2013, according to the society.

The society maintains a popular live webcam at the Hays site, in a partnership with PixCams of Murrysville, that can be viewed at www.audubon.org. The Pennsylvania Game Commission has provided a

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Every successful hatching is vital for the species, as young eagles can have high rates of mortality due to disease, lack of food, bad weather or dangers associated with humans — collisions with cars or power lines, according to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Mortality rates in the first year can be as high as 50%, but survival rates are much higher after that milestone has been passed.

Breeding bald eagles typically lay one to three eggs once a year, and they hatch after about 35 days. This year's two other Hays eaglets both were hatched on Tuesday — one in the early morning and the other at about 10 p.m.

Successful hatchings for the Hays pair have occurred anywhere from March 21 to early April in previous years.

Young eagles are flying within three months, but they will return to the nest, where their parents will continue to care for them for an additional 4-6 weeks.

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