

## Wind knocks down bald eagle nest on webcam

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**PITTSBURGH** — The bald eagles nest overlooking the Monongahela River in Pittsburgh and the sole egg laid Friday were destroyed at 9:35 p.m. Sunday when high winds blew down the hackberry tree in which the nest had been built.

The pair of adult eagles are safe and were seen roosting together in a tree nearby Monday morning.

Bill Powers, president of PixController Inc., the Murrysville company that placed the wildlife cam in an ash tree overlooking the eagles nest four years ago, said there's still a chance the eagles could re-nest but it's a long shot. With no nest available, the female eagle likely will push out any remaining eggs to be discarded.

He was watching the nest Sunday night when he saw it disappear. When he zoomed in the camera to see what had happened, he saw that the tree had fallen over. He said he initially thought maybe the ash tree where the camera is situated would have fallen down because it has been badly damaged by the emerald ash borer.

Others confirmed Monday morning that the nesting tree had fallen, he said. For four years now, the project has been a collaborative project between PixController and the Audubon Society of Western Pennsylvania and drawn international attention with millions of people watching the eagles and their eggs as they hatched and as the eaglets grew and fledged.

“The egg is definitely gone,” Powers said. “She likely would have laid the second one today.”

But he said the laid egg probably wasn't viable, anyway.

“The eagles knew something was up with it, and she was off the egg for six hours and went to sleep with the egg off to the side of the nest,” he said. “But then she jumped back on to incubate it, but that is a sign it was not viable.”

What happens next, Powers said, remains up in the air. Is there a chance of the eagles finding or building another nest? “It probably won’t happen this season,” he said. “They could re-nest but that’s a long shot.”

During the first year of nesting in the Hays neighborhood in 2013, the eagles nest blew down in a windstorm, and the eagles had to fledge their eaglet from the ground. On their third year of nesting their eggs didn’t hatch. In other years, they had successful hatching and fledgling of the eaglets.

“As we are left with a gaping hole in the skyline we are also left with gaping holes in our heart,” says the PixController cam site, which now shows only the hillside. “But these eagles are from Pittsburgh, and we have no doubt they will rebound from this tragedy and rebuild a new nest next season.”

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