

# Coinage Kids

by Marcy Gibbel

## The 2008 Bald Eagle Commemorative Coins

The bald eagle was on the brink of extinction just 35 years ago. Since then, it has made remarkable progress and is still expanding its presence throughout North America's lands and skies.

Public Law 108-486, signed by President George W. Bush on December 23, 2004, called for the United States Mint to make and issue three commemorative coins that celebrate the encouraging recovery of the bald eagle species, the 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, and the removal of the bald eagle from the endangered species list.

In 1782, the Second Continental Congress selected the bald eagle as our national emblem of the United States and made it the centerpiece of the Great Seal of the United States. The majestic bald eagle has come to symbolize America's freedom, strength and democracy.

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Bald eagles were once abundant throughout our nation. It didn't take long for poaching, habitat destruction, pesticides and food-source contamination to take their toll. The population was reduced from approximately 100,000 nesting pairs at the founding of our nation to just over 400 nesting pairs in the early 1960s.

The path to recovery took the efforts of governments, private organizations and citizens determined to save our national emblem. The ban on the use of certain pesticides in 1972, the protections provided under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, and efforts such as captive breeding and nest watch programs, provided the vital protection that the bald eagles needed to survive.

The success of this recovery effort resulted in the removal of the bald eagle from the endangered species list in 2007. About

10,000 nesting pairs of bald eagles can now be found throughout the continental United States.

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The Bald Eagle Commemorative Coin Program consists of three coins—a \$5 gold coin, a silver dollar, and a half-dollar clad coin—available in both proof and uncirculated conditions. Surcharges from the program were authorized to be paid to the American Eagle Foundation of Tennessee for the purposes of continuing its work to save and protect bald eagles nationally.

The maximum mintages across all product options for these commemorative coins was limited to 100,000 for the \$5 gold coin, 500,000 for the silver dollar, and 750,000 for the half-dollar.

### Additional resources:

- June 20 is American Eagle Day. Read the bill that established it here: <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/z?c112:H.+Res.+301>:

- View the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Endangered Species List, <http://www.fws.gov/endangered/>

- America's Teaching Zoo at Moorpark College, [http://www.moorparkcollege.edu/current\\_students/teaching\\_zoo/index.shtml](http://www.moorparkcollege.edu/current_students/teaching_zoo/index.shtml), has a bald eagle as part of its exotic animal training and management program and conservation effort.

- "High-Flying Commemoratives," *COINage*, December 2008, by Jennifer Morkunas.

- There are several bald eagle cams with online access, but this one had a view of hatchlings at press time, <http://www.pixcontroller.com/eagles/>

Answer the questions, then mail your completed quiz to June Quiz, *COINage* magazine, P.O. Box 7030, Ventura, CA 93006-9899. Two winners will be drawn from the valid entries received by June 30, 2014. Valid entries must include the correct answers, the entrant's name, age (17 or younger) and address, and the signature of a parent or guardian. *Please, only one entry per child per household.* The winners will each receive a selection of 10 mixed world coins.

1. Who selected the bald eagle as our national emblem? \_\_\_\_\_

2. Name one thing change that enabled the bald eagle to survive? \_\_\_\_\_

3. What does the bald eagle symbolize? \_\_\_\_\_

4. Name two reasons why the bald eagle almost became extinct. \_\_\_\_\_

5. About how many pairs of nesting eagles can now be found throughout the United States? \_\_\_\_\_

