

Dead Bald Eagle at Hogan likely mutilated before recovery

By Nick Baptista/The Valley Springs News

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The dead Bald Eagle found last week at New Hogan Lake by a Valley Springs fisherman apparently was mutilated before being retrieved by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Bill Heger, the man who found the eagle the afternoon of Oct. 23 at Wrinkle Cove and notified authorities that day, said he was upset to learn parts of the bird were missing.

It took two days for the carcass to be picked up, Heger said, and when he spoke with park rangers they told him the animal had been mutilated, apparently by man.

"I thought I went through the proper manner to notify them so this wouldn't happen," Heger said.

New Hogan Park Ranger Adam Durando confirmed the bird had been mutilated, but would not comment on what parts were missing.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has been notified, Durando said, and he did not want to elaborate any further on the matter now that it's in their hands.

Although the Bald Eagle no longer is listed as an endangered or threatened species, the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act, the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, and the Legacy Act protect the bird.

The three laws make it a federal offense and illegal to take, possess, sell, purchase, barter, offer to sell, purchase or barter, transport, export or import, any Bald or Golden Eagle, alive or dead, including any part, nest, or egg, unless allowed by permit. "Take" includes pursue, shoot, shoot at, poison, wound, kill, capture, trap, collect, molest or disturb.

Felony convictions carry a maximum fine of \$250,000 or two years of imprisonment.

In addition, rewards are provided for information leading to arrest and conviction of violators.

Heger said the Bald Eagle is not just any bird, but our national bird, and he was troubled by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' delayed response to properly dispose of it or see what it may have died from.

It's natural for animals to die in the environment, Durando said, and the Bald Eagle is just like any wildlife.