



**PRESS RELEASE**

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## **Best Eagle Watching this Winter in Illinois**

Each winter, around 3,000 bald eagles fly to Illinois to make it their temporary home, settling in among the cliffs and trees in at least 27 counties around the state—making Illinois one of the best places in the entire country to spot the majestic bird. Whether you are a seasoned eagle-watching pro or are ready to try it for the first time, explore these events to help you catch these birds in action during the optimal viewing months of January and February.

### **Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge Eagle Watch, Marion**

**January 20–28**

Six pairs of eagles and their offspring call this 44,000-acre refuge home. Guided tours take visitors to the eagle nests and through areas of high eagle-traffic, making it a great place to ensure a spotting. A short drive from the refuge, make like an eagle and dive (into a pool) at the HUB Recreation Center, which also includes a gymnasium, waterslide and lazy river in Marion. Guests can purchase an all-day pass to utilize the whole facility.

### **Pere Marquette State Park Bald Eagle Days, Grafton**

**January 22, 26, 27, 29, 30, February 1-6, 8-9, 23, 26 and March 1**

A scenic observational drive up the bluffs of this riverfront park provides opportunities for you to view the wintering birds yourself. Informational programs teach visitors how to distinguish the difference between immature and mature eagles, what eagles eat, and why they spend the winter months in this area. Admission is free, but reservations are required. While in Grafton, keep the winter fun going with a stop at the Loading Dock Ice Rink. The Loading Dock is the area's only waterfront entertainment destination and is located 10 minutes from Pere Marquette State Park.

### **Bald Eagle Watch Weekend, Oglesby, Starved Rock**

**January 27–28**

For only \$1 per person, a trolley shuttles passengers between the Starved Rock Lodge, the Starved Rock Visitor Center and the Illinois Waterway Visitor Center, which all house various eagle programs, activities and exhibits. Join the Starved Rock State Park naturalist for a guided eagle viewing tour. Stay overnight at Starved Rock Lodge and Conference Center, which offers rustic hotel rooms and log cabins in the woods.

**Great River Eagle Days, Quincy****January 27–28**

Immerse yourself in Native American tradition and cultures at this annual event at the Oakley Lindsay Center. See Aztec dances by the Omeyocan Dance Company while perusing Native American vendors and food booths (try the Indian Fry Bread). A traditional Blessing of the Eagle Ceremony also takes place. Experience more culture and history at the Quincy Museum in the historic Newcomb-Stillwell Mansion. The first floor is restored for tours, while the second and third floors include exhibits on dinosaurs, World War I and plenty of other topics.

**Fulton-Mason Eagle Day****February 3**

Centered around the Dickson Mounds Museum, this event has various activities located throughout Lewistown and Havana. A presentation from the World Bird Sanctuary, lakeside activities, wildlife viewing, crafts and more await visitors. While here, don't miss the museum's interpretive exhibits and hands-on activities that cover 12,000 years of history in the Illinois River Valley.

**Kaskaskia Eagle Fest, Modoc****February 3, 2018**

Located at the Jerry F. Costello Lock & Dam, this annual festival includes a presentation by the World Bird Sanctuary, a craft area with activities for children, and tours of the lock and dam. Guests can also take a hike to spotting scopes where they can scan for eagles. A short drive leads to Fort de Chartres. Built by the French in 1753 during the colonization of Illinois, this state historic site is open year-round and contains a museum as well as portions of the fort that have been reconstructed.

**Lake Shelbyville Eagle Day, Shelbyville****February 10, 2018**

This all-day event at the Lake Shelbyville Visitor Center features programs for people of all ages. At an eagle meet-and-greet, visitors can ask a handler questions about eagles and get their picture taken with the birds. In the evening, enjoy a movie at Boarman's Roxy Theater. After being closed for 37 years, the theater reopened in 2003 thanks to a local revitalization effort. Pose for a selfie in front of the vintage-style marquee, a reconstruction of the original.

For more information about planning an Illinois getaway, visit [EnjoyIllinois.com](http://EnjoyIllinois.com).

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