



CALIFORNIA

Will Big Bear’s famous bald eagles welcome eaglets in the snow? Thousands watch for eggs to hatch



Jackie, one of Big Bear’s famous bald eagles, sits in her nest keeping two eggs warm while it snows in Big Bear on Friday. (Friends of Big Bear)

BY SALVADOR HERNANDEZ | STAFF WRITER
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As a [winter storm](#) blasted much of California on Friday, the state’s most famous bald eagles — Jackie and Shadow — have been hunkering down in their Big Bear nest keeping two eggs warm in snowy conditions.

On Friday afternoon, Jackie was [spotted on a live camera](#) sitting on the two eggs, standing firm against [thundering winds](#) and constant snow that has nearly covered the entire nest.

“This year we haven’t had this much snow for this many days,” said Sandy Steers, executive director of the Friends of Big Bear Valley, the group that runs the livestream camera aimed at the eagles’ nest.



The [heavy snow](#) — and the anticipation that the two eggs could possibly hatch at any moment — has resulted in thousands of people viewing the live feed. At one point earlier in the week, more than 15,000 watched the feed, Steers said, the most that the group has ever seen.

Many of the viewers have been worried about the cold temperatures and how they could affect the eggs, but Steers tries to reassure Jackie’s and Shadow’s fans.

“They’re really built for that,” she said, pointing out that the eagles have more than 7,000 waterproof feathers covering their bodies and down feathers underneath, keeping them warm.



Jackie [laid the first of the two eggs](#) in mid-January, and viewers have been keeping a close eye looking for a hatchling.

Steers said that’s been a growing concern, since Jackie’s previous eggs have hatched at about 30 days or so. On Friday, it had been 41 and 44 days, respectively, since the eggs were laid, raising the possibility there may not be any baby bald eagles in the nest this year.

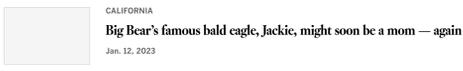
It’s unclear what, if anything, may have gone wrong, Steers said.

Last week, both of the eagles were seen leaving the nest unattended and the eggs exposed several times for about two to three days. The eggs were at times left alone for one or two hours in 20-degree weather.

The eagles may have been distracted by another eagle in the area or a possible predator to the eggs, Steers said, but it’s not clear. That type of behavior sometimes reveals that the eggs will not hatch, Steers said.

This week, both eagles resumed their spot in the nest, Steers said.

“We don’t know if that changed anything,” she said, “but now they’re fully reinvested in incubating the eggs.”



Jackie has sat diligently throughout the current storm, moving only to shake snow off her feathers. She’s also allowed Shadow to sit on the eggs for about three to four hours at a time.

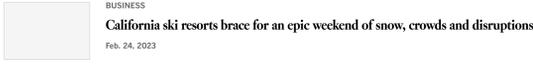
There’s no way to tell from the video feed if something is wrong, Steers said, but she tries to share insights with viewers on social media.

Like other viewers, Steers said, she’s hoping the eggs will ultimately hatch. She understands how difficult nature can be.

“What we do is try to find good feelings and solace from watching the eagles and how they take it,” she said.

When other eggs have failed to hatch, she said, she’s seen the look of disappointment in them.

“I just connect with the eagles, and it makes me feel better,” she said.



For now, Steers said she’s still waiting to see what happens. She’ll continue to do so while the eagles stay steady through the winter storm.

“They don’t give up,” she said.

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Salvador Hernandez is a reporter on the Fast Break Desk, the Los Angeles Times’ breaking news team. Before joining the newsroom in 2022, he was a senior reporter for BuzzFeed News, where he covered criminal justice issues, the growing militia movement and breaking news. He also covered crime as a reporter at the Orange County Register. He is a Los Angeles native.

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