

Published December 03, 2011, 12:15 AM

Jeremy Doan, McKenzie, N.D., letter: Don't hold eagle's death against hunters

The hard facts are that the eagle in the story was euthanized because of a badly broken wing, not lead poisoning. The hard facts are that collisions with buildings, power lines and cars kill hundreds of thousands more birds than does lead poisoning every year.

By: **Jeremy Doan**,

McKENZIE, N.D. — The story of an injured bald eagle found in East Grand Forks and subsequently euthanized was indeed tragic ("Center euthanizes rescued eagle," Page A1, Nov. 26).

But as an outdoorsman who works with hunters year-round, I was disappointed by the link the story tried to establish between hunters and the eagle's unfortunate death.

There were many quotes about the suspected connection between hunting and lead poisoning in eagles, but not many hard facts.

The hard facts are that the eagle in the story was euthanized because of a badly broken wing, not lead poisoning. The hard facts are that collisions with buildings, power lines and cars kill hundreds of thousands more birds than does lead poisoning every year.

The hard facts are that the return of bald eagles from the brink of extinction is a great success story. Bald eagles were removed from the federal government's endangered species list in 1995.

As recently as February, the North Dakota Game and Fish Department featured an article on the growth of our bald eagle population in the department's newsletter, "Watchable Wildlife." The story noted that 10 years ago, nesting bald eagles were found primarily along the Missouri River, but today they range across the state and the population has been increasing.

Before we condemn hunters for poisoning these majestic birds, I would like to remind Herald readers that through the purchase of required licenses and tags, hunters provide millions of dollars for habitat conservation each year and help pay for that part of the Game and Fish Department's budget that goes to conservation and habitat.

The issue of eagles consuming lead from field-dressed deer is not a new one. Every hunting season, organizations with politically-motivated intentions push this message, hoping that it turns public opinion away from hunters — or, better yet, that it deters some from going afield by suggesting a cause-and-effect relationship between a hunter's choice of ammunition and harm to the bald eagle.

While the East Grand Forks story is tragic, I hope people will remember the hard facts, especially that hunters provide millions of dollars for habitat and wildlife conservation every year.

Hunters are not the enemy of bald eagles or any other wildlife. We are the original conservationists.

Jeremy Doan

Tags: [in the mail](#), [bald eagle](#), [lead poisoning](#), [opinion](#), [hunting](#), [lead](#), [updates](#)