

## New Melones park rangers, volunteers rescue bald eagle

By Patricia Sanders

The air was filled with heavy smoke on the morning of July 29, 2018. A call came out over the radio from the New Melones Lake Visitor Center of a young eagle in distress near the Mark Twain Day Use Area. Visitor Center volunteer Renee Isaacs was informed of the eagle's need for assistance by some local kayakers who made the discovery.

Immediately, Park Ranger Grant Harrison went to get the Bureau of Reclamation boat, and Park Ranger Pat Sanders headed back to the office to get a pet carrier and supplies. Park Ranger Harrison picked up Ranger Sanders at the Mark Twain Day Use Area and a search ensued. The first pass along the shoreline elicited no eagle. A second attempt was made and the young eagle was located. The bird was very hard to locate as it blended in with the rocks so completely. The wind was picking up significantly now but Ranger Harrison brought the boat to the shoreline east of the eagle's location as not to stress it further. As Park Ranger Sanders approached the eagle it was observed to have a piece of fish line coming out of the side of its beak and the line was wedged in between two rocks, hence it could not fly, eat or drink due to the tautness of the fish line. Park Ranger Sanders slowly approached the stressed eagle and gently placed a towel on its back, down over the wings and made a little hood over the eyes. She then, with gloves on, used her left hand to break the fishing line from the rocks and then secured the legs and talons. Ranger Sanders then gently lifted the bird, climbed back into the boat and placed the eagle in a very large pet carrier.



New Melones volunteers Elissa and Mark Wall (who also assist at a local wildlife rehab) were called and met Rangers Harrison and Sanders at the Angels Creek Launch Ramp. Mark Wall and Ranger Sanders loaded the bird into the Walls' truck, and they transported the young bald eagle to the Tri-County Wildlife facility in Jackson, California. The eagle was found to be very thin at the time of rescue, hence, no one knows how long it had been trapped in the fishing line. Pat Benik received the bird and immediately administered fluids. Arrangements were then made with a veterinarian in Placerville, California, with Dr. Smith, who accomplished the removal of the fish hook from the bird's esophagus the very next morning and placed it on pain medication and antibiotics.... Check our [homepage](#) soon, for the rest of the story!

# RECLAMATION

*Managing Water in the West*

