

**UNITED STATES FOREST SERVICE  
TONGO NATIONAL FOREST  
BALD EAGLE CLOSURE (LOWER VERDE RIVER)**

**PROHIBITIONS**

Pursuant to Title 36 CFR 261.50(a), the following act is prohibited within the Tonto National Forest, which is depicted on the Map attached as Exhibit A hereby incorporated into this Order.

1. Entering into the area. 36 CFR 261.53(a).

**EXEMPTIONS**

Pursuant to 36 CFR 261.50(e), the following persons are exempt from this order:

1. Persons with a permit from the Forest Service specifically authorizing the otherwise prohibited act or omission.
2. Any Federal, State, or local officer, or member of any organized rescue or fire fighting force in the performance of an official duty.
3. Arizona Game and Fish Department, US Fish and Wildlife Service, US Forest Service personnel, persons employed by the Maricopa Audubon Society, and Arizona Bald Eagle Nestwatch Program contractors in the performance of an official duty.

**AREA DESCRIBED****Bartlett BA Closure - Area 1**

The seasonal closure begins downstream of Bartlett Dam and the Indian Spring Wash confluence with the Verde, roughly one river km downstream of Riverside campground at river km 36. The closure continues downstream to the Needle Rock recreation site. The closure includes land on the east and west (river left and right respectively) sides of the Verde River. Floating through this section of the Verde River is authorized, however stopping and exiting the river within this section is prohibited. This closure area includes portions of Township 5 N, Range 7 E, Sections 5, 6, 7, 8, 17, and 18.

The seasonal closure area is signed with "Sensitive Wildlife Area: No Entry December 1 - June 30".

**Needle Rock BA Closure - Area 2**

This closure begins at the terminus of the Bartlett BA closure, just downstream of river km 30, at the Needle Rock recreation site, and continues downstream to river km 26. Floating through this section of the Verde River is authorized, however stopping and exiting the river on downstream left (east) is prohibited. This seasonal closure area includes portions of Township 5 N, Range 7 E, Sections 17, 19, 20, 28, 29, and 30.

The seasonal closure is located east of the Verde River and skirts the base of the cliffs east of FR 1116. Forest road 407 enters the closure area from the east. FR 1116 and FR 407 are both signed and closed to the public during the seasonal closure.

**Box Bar BA Closure - Area 3**

This seasonal closure begins at the downstream terminus of the Needle Rock BA, at river km 26, and continues downstream to river km 24 (see map). The closure is located east of the Verde River or downstream left, and includes the cliff faces east of the river. Floating through this section of the Verde River is authorized, however stopping and exiting the river on downstream left (east) is prohibited.

**UNITED STATES FOREST SERVICE  
 TONTO NATIONAL FOREST  
 BALD EAGLE CLOSURE (LOWER VERDE RIVER)**

Portions of FR 407 and FR 160 are within the seasonal closure. Both roads are signed to inform the public of the closure from December 1 - June 30.

**Box Bar BA Closure - Area 4**

Area 4 is located west of the Verde River and north of the Box Bar recreation site. The nest tree, a cottonwood, is the center of the closure area, with a radius of roughly 800 feet from center. The seasonal closure is heavily signed with "Sensitive Wildlife Area: No Entry December 1 - June 30" around its perimeter to inform the public of the closure.

Additionally, there is a kiosk located at the intersection of FR 20 and Box Bar road entrance which includes a notice of the seasonal closures as well as a map of the closures along the Lower Verde.

**PURPOSE**

The purpose of this Order is:

1. To provide short-term seasonal protection of nesting bald eagles during their critical reproductive period in high-intensity recreation areas

**IMPLEMENTATION**

1. Prohibitions contained in this order become effective beginning February 16, 2018 at 6:00 a.m. and will remain in effect seasonally (December 01 to June 30) until June 30 2021 at 6:00 p.m. unless terminated sooner.
2. If by March 31, the breeding pair is not occupying the BA or the specific nest a closure protects, or the pair in an occupied BA does not lay eggs in a nest within a closure, then the closure can be lifted and the area opened to the public.
3. If the pair lays eggs but the breeding attempt fails, the closure can be opened to the public if the pair does not double clutch within 45 days after the failure.
4. These prohibitions are in addition to the prohibitions found at Title 36, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Section 261. Subpart A - General Prohibitions.

Dated this 14<sup>th</sup> day of February, 2018, at Phoenix, Arizona.

NEIL BOSWORTH  
 Forest Supervisor

**UNITED STATES FOREST SERVICE  
TONTO NATIONAL FOREST  
BALD EAGLE CLOSURE (LOWER VERDE RIVER)**

