

**June 8, 2005**

**UWSP graduate student researches bald eagles infected with the West Nile virus**

Wildlife graduate student, Nick Derene, 5702 Sauk Road, Madison, has a keen interest in the well-being of resident Wisconsin eagles.

Derene has focused much of his graduate work on eagles that have contracted the deadly West Nile virus. He presented an abstract, "Post Recovery Behavior of Bald Eagles With High Exposure to West Nile Virus," at the 2005 National Wildlife Rehabilitators Association Symposium this spring in Minneapolis.

A graduate student in natural resources, Derene received a \$233 Student Research Fund grant to attend the symposium. Derene has been mentored in his graduate studies by retired UWSP wildlife expert, Professor James Hardin. Derene's case study examined rescue, diagnosis, rehabilitation, and post-release behavior of three bald eagles infected with the West Nile virus. He utilized satellite transmitters and telemetry information to determine indicators of long-term effects on the bald eagles.

"Nick's research may be the first of its kind relative to the fate of bald eagles that have recovered from this disease and then released back into the wild," said Hardin. "His study will serve as baseline information for future studies that will use advanced technology."

Derene has been monitoring rehabilitated eagles at the Raptor Education Group, Inc. in Antigo. He is a 1999 graduate of James Madison Memorial High School.