

Name: _____

Date: _____

Plotting the Bald Eagle Recovery

Bald eagle breeding pairs in Virginia from 1936 to 2021

The bald eagle is the national bird of the United States. In the 1940s, farmers started spraying **DDT**, a chemical that washed into rivers and built up in fish that bald eagles ate. The chemical made eagle eggs have thin shells that cracked before chicks could hatch, and eagle populations dropped fast. In **1972, the U.S. banned DDT**. Your job is to plot the data and see what happened.

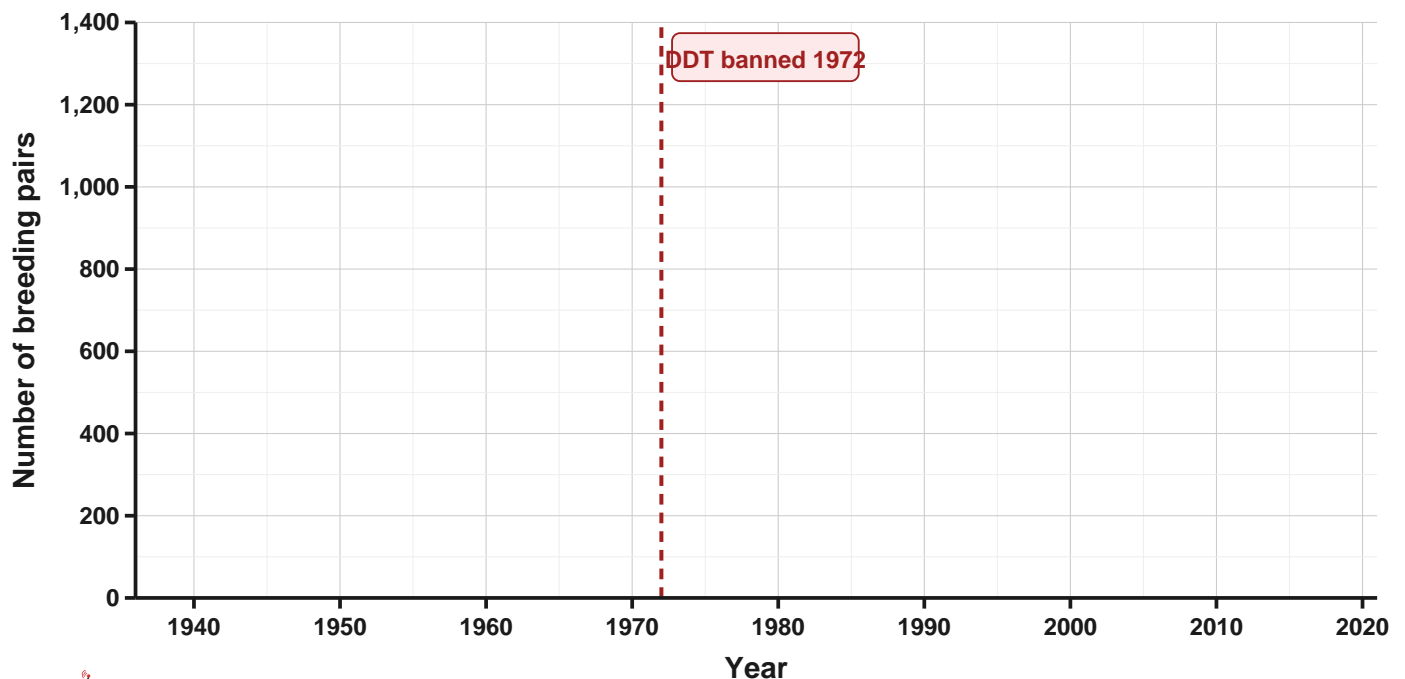
Step 1: Plot the data, then connect the points with a line.

On your graph:

- Bald eagle pairs = SOLID GREEN line with circles
- ⋮ DDT ban year (1972) = DASHED RED vertical line (already on graph)

Year	Breeding pairs
1936	17
1962	85
1970	30
1977	33
1985	55
1993	135
2000	270
2007	600
2016	1,070
2021	1,200

Virginia Bald Eagle Recovery, 1936 to 2021



Step 2: Mark important features on your graph.

Use the descriptions below to find each feature on your graph. Then write the feature label next to that part of the line.

Population low point: The lowest the population ever got. Look for the LOWEST POINT on your line. Around what year does this happen?

Slow recovery: After the DDT ban (the red dashed line at 1972), the population stayed LOW for several years before clearly rising. Find this part of the line.

Rapid recovery: Later, the line begins to RISE STEEPLY. Find the section where the line is going up most sharply.

Step 3: Reflection questions

1. About how many breeding pairs were there in Virginia at the population low point? About what year did this happen?

2. About how many breeding pairs were there in Virginia in 2021? About how many times more eagles is that compared to the low point?

3. How much did the eagle population grow between 2007 and 2016? Show your math.

4. The DDT ban happened in 1972. Did the eagle population recover quickly, or slowly? Use specific numbers from the graph as evidence to support your answer.
