

Preventing Harm To Wildlife During Tree Care

Almost all bird nests are protected by law. The tree care worker can reduce harm to wildlife, comply with bird regulations, and know how to protect wildlife habitat. Become familiar with the Best Management Practices and other materials at:

www.treecareforbirds.com.

Job Steps Affected by this Topic

- Working during the nesting season vs the nonnesting season.
- Preparation before work begins.
- Actions when safety concerns conflict with wildlife regulations.
- Action when wildlife are accidentally impacted.

Potential Risks

- Harming wildlife unnecessarily.
- Violation of bird regulations and possible fines.
- Negative public relations.

Why are Wildlife Important?

Wildlife contribute to the environment. They also rely on trees for their food and homes.

Many laws and regulations exist to protect wildlife. The Federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 states that it is against the law to kill or injure native birds, fledglings, eggs or active nests. This includes putting them at risk by scaring parents away from eggs or young.



Immature songbird by Four Oaks

WILDLIFE EMERGENCIES

If you find injured wildlife or an immature bird out of its nest, call a Wildlife Rehabilitation Center before intervening. Parents are highly likely to continue caring for immature birds when they have fallen out of the nest. It is against the law to take a wild bird home as a pet.



Immature Red-tailed Hawk by David Watkins

Project preparation

- Be prepared with contact information for a Wildlife Trained Arborist, Wildlife Biologist (with training and experience in ornithology), and a Wildlife Rehabilitation Center.
- Know if work is to be done during the nesting season (Feb.-Aug.) when most birds nest, or outside the nesting season (Sep.- Jan.)
- Consider the quality of the habitat in which work is to occur. High habitat value areas and riparian areas are more likely to have wildlife present. (Figure 1-3)



Egrets commonly nest in riparian areas. Photo by Tom Grey



Owls are found in high quality habitats where there is good canopy cover. Photo by Peggy Honda



Figure I <u>High habitat value</u> Riparian areas with or without water all year.



Figure 2 High habitat value

Large areas with mature trees, some dead trees, and understory vegetation.



Figure 3 <u>Low Habitat Value</u> Areas with large hard surfaces.

KNOW WHAT TO LOOK FOR AND WHERE TO LOOK



Figure 5



Figure 6

Fieldwork

- Conduct a pre-work inspection prior to starting work or in the days before the work is scheduled but not more than a week before the work is planned to begin. Look for signs of wildlife and nesting birds in likely locations. (Figure 5 and 6).
- If a nest is found, determine whether it has eggs or immature birds (active nest), is an old, abandoned nest, or if it is a large, stick nest which may have special protection law all year.
- If an active nest is present, it is best to delay work until the immature wildlife have left the nest. (Wildlife continue to rely on parents in the first few weeks after they have left the nest.) If it is not possible to delay work, consult a Wildlife Trained Arborist or Wildlife Biologist for instructions.
- If a nest/wildlife is accidentally injured, contact a Wildlife Rehabilitation Center or Wildlife Biologist. Keep the bird in view, but keep away from it. Avoid handling or relocating it unless directed to do so. It is against the law to take a bird home.
- It is illegal for anyone to keep a nest, or any part of a native bird (including feathers) without a permit from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.
- For further information about bird nests and permits, contact: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Pacific Southwest Region Division of Migratory Birds and Habitat by emailing: permitsr8mb@fws.gov

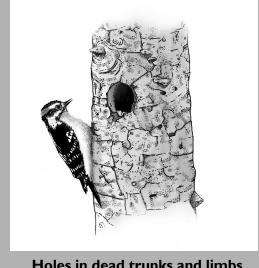
Look closely for these three hard-to-spot nests



Under palm fronds



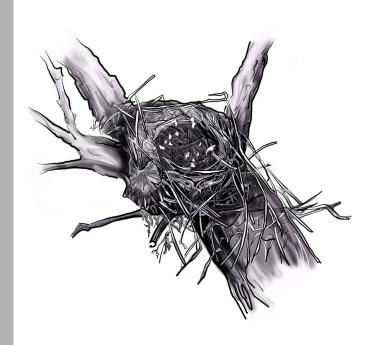
Hummingbird nest about 2" In diameter



Holes in dead trunks and limbs

Most nests are protected. Degree of protection depends on the species and location.

> To learn more: https://www.fws.gov/endangered



Small, old/abandoned nests can often be removed but should be left in place if possible.



Large stick nests usually have special protection even if abandoned or unoccupied.

QUIZ

TREE CARE FOR WILDLIFE

Complete the following:

NAME:DATE:	SIGNATURE:
Multiple choice instructions: Select one or more answers that best suit the question:	Which type of habitat has the highest chance of wildlife presence:
Federal and state regulations prohibit tree care providers and others from:	 Riparian A small recreational park with some trees and
1. Destroying only nests with young wildlife	vegetation.
 Disturbing or destroying the nests of native wild- life if they contain eggs or young, or if the young still rely on their parents. Destroying all abandoned nests 	If unsure of whether to continue work in a tree when it has an active nest, the first best thing to do is:
Before starting work it is best to:	 Stop work in the tree and return when the young no longer use the nest and rely on their parents.
 Determine if it is the nesting season Consider the habitat value of the work site and the risk of wildlife presence. 	 Call a supervisor, Wildlife Biologist or the CA Department of Fish and Wildlife.
3. Turn off all noisy equipment.	
4. Do a pre-work survey for wildlife	It is permitted to take a native injured or young bird home if you want to adopt it:
5. Come prepared with contact information for a Wildlife Biologist or Wildlife-Trained Arborist, and a Wildlife Rehabilitator.	Yes No
5. All of the above.	If you find an injured or immature bird, the best thing to do is:
Most wildlife nest at this time of the year:	 Catch it, put it in a safe place and call a Wildlife Rehabilitator
1. January-July	2. Leave it alone, watch to see if its parents are
2. February-August	looking after it, and then call a Wildlife Rehabilita-
3. March-October	tor or Wildlife Biologist for guidance if you are not sure what to do.

Arborist Wildlife Pre-work Inspection Form

Inspector Name:	Inspection Date:	
Inspection Time:	Work Scheduled Date:	
Location/Address:		
Weather conditions:		
Description of work:		

	work Area Habitat value Evaluation					
	Low Value		High Value			
	High human use and infrastructure		Low human use and infrastructure			
	High impervious surfaces		Low impervious surfaces			
	Low plant species diversity		High plant species diversity			
	□ Low plant structural diversity		High plant structural diversity			
Image: Far from water bodiesImage: Close to water bodies		Close to water bodies				
	□ No riparian vegetation		Riparian vegetation present			
	□ Few mature, dead or dying trees		Many mature, dead or dying trees			
	Few/no wildlife present		Abundant wildlife present			
*Higher valued habitat areas may require consultation fro			wildlife biologist. Contact biologist? 🗆 Yes 🗆 No			
□ Breeding Season (Feb. 1- Aug. 31)			Non-Breeding Season (Sep. 1 – Jan. 31)			

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Inspection Feces/Whitewash Ground: Foot prints Ground Hole Nest Sounds Feces/Whitewash Shrub(s)/Hedge(s): Sounds Cavity/Birdbox Nest Eggs/Birds Feces/Whitewash Cavity/Birdbox Eggs/Birds Tree(s): Sounds Nest Cavity/Birdbox Building(s): Sounds Feces/Whitewash Nest Eggs/Birds

□Yes

□No

*If work is within a high habitat value area, can work be scheduled during non-breeding season?

•	Ψ Ψ If	nest is identified in work area:	$\mathbf{\Psi}$	$\mathbf{\Psi}$	$\mathbf{\Psi}$
Location:				Height	
Nest Type:	Ground B	urrow Cupped Pendulous	Cav	vity P	latform
Species:					
Active nest	buffer distance:	Song bird (50 feet) Raptor nes	t (300 f	eet) (Other
Deptor posts for line line is a line of line o					

Raptor nest: *Shall not move, disturb or destroy nest and supporting structure, even when non-active.

Work Plan

Biologist/Rehabilitator:		Pl	hone:	()	-
Situation:						
Advice given:						
Action:						

Avoid violations with Federal laws. Find more about protected species and the US Fish and Wildlife Service at www.fws.gov

Appendix V - Pre-work Inspection Form

Inspector:	Certification Level:	Date:
Time:	Weather conditions:_	
Description of work:	When is work:	
Wildlife Biologist:	Wildlife Rehabilitator	:

Habitat Value

	Low			
	High human use		<u>Hi</u> g	<u>gh</u>
	High impervious surfaces			Low human use
	Low plant species diversity			Low impervious surfaces
	Low plant structural diversity			High plant species diversity
	Far from water bodies			High plant structural diversity
	Few mature, dead and dying trees			Close to water bodies
	Few/no wildlife present			Many mature, dead and dying trees
				Abundant wildlife present
	<u>Riparian</u>			
	Within or adjacent to water bodies	<u>E</u>	Breedi	ng Season
	Within or adjacent to dry water channels			Breeding Season (Feb. 1 – Aug. 31)
	Riparian vegetation present			Non-breeding Season (Sep. 1 – Jan. 31)
	Cat	tegor	Ŷ	
		egory		Category 3
	Recommended level of training:			
Ins	pection			
	Scan the sky, trees, ground, shrubs, and		Signs	of nesting wildlife
	branches.		Nests	s that may have eggs or young
	Check trunk or branch cavities and holes in the		Conc	entrations of white colored droppings
	ground.		Wildl	ife exhibiting breeding behavior
	Listen for wildlife sounds.		Wildl	ife carrying nesting materials
	Look for wildlife flying or running away.		Repe	ated wildlife visits to area
			Healt	h and human emergency
Ne	st found		Risks	
	Location			ns
	Species			
	Туре		Wild	life emergency

Buffer distance _____

Active nest? (Y / N)

Nest contains eggs or young wildlife

Situation
Contacted
Advice given
Actions