



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 non-nesting 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 1 High habitat value

**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 Low Habitat Value
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.**

Tailgate Attendance Record

Foreman/Crew Leader: _____

Name	Signature	Date
1.	_____	_____
2.	_____	_____
3.	_____	_____
4.	_____	_____
5.	_____	_____
6.	_____	_____
7.	_____	_____
8.	_____	_____
9.	_____	_____
10.	_____	_____
11.	_____	_____
12.	_____	_____
13.	_____	_____
14.	_____	_____
15.	_____	_____

QUIZ

TREE CARE FOR WILDLIFE

Complete the following:

NAME: _____ DATE: _____ SIGNATURE: _____

Multiple choice instructions: Select one or more answers that best suit the question:

Federal and state regulations prohibit tree care providers and others from:

1. Destroying only nests with young wildlife
2. Disturbing or destroying the nests of native wildlife if they contain eggs or young, or if the young still rely on their parents.
3. Destroying all abandoned nests

Before starting work it is best to:

1. Determine if it is the nesting season
2. Consider the habitat value of the work site and the risk of wildlife presence.
3. Turn off all noisy equipment.
4. Do a pre-work survey for wildlife
5. Come prepared with contact information for a Wildlife Biologist or Wildlife-Trained Arborist, and a Wildlife Rehabilitator.
5. All of the above.

Most wildlife nest at this time of the year:

1. January-July
2. February-August
3. March-October

Which type of habitat has the highest chance of wildlife presence:

1. Riparian
2. A small recreational park with some trees and vegetation.

If unsure of whether to continue work in a tree when it has an active nest, the first best thing to do is:

1. Stop work in the tree and return when the young no longer use the nest and rely on their parents.
2. Call a supervisor, Wildlife Biologist or the CA Department of Fish and Wildlife.

It is permitted to take a native injured or young bird home if you want to adopt it:

Yes No

If you find an injured or immature bird, the best thing to do is:

1. Catch it, put it in a safe place and call a Wildlife Rehabilitator
2. Leave it alone, watch to see if its parents are looking after it, and then call a Wildlife Rehabilitator or Wildlife Biologist for guidance if you are not sure what to do.