

## Why Protect Birds' Nests?

First, birds are protected under the law. Second, birds provide numerous beneficial activities, such as eating thousands of insects, which may eliminate some of the need for pesticides. They also disperse seeds, ensuring plant health and biodiversity. Finally, many bird populations nationwide are plummeting primarily due to the impact of human activities. Birds are creatures of the earth, with whom we share this planet and its limited resources. Our positive actions can make the difference in ensuring their long-term survival.



## Before You Trim

Avoid the nesting season completely-if possible schedule tree trimming between September and January. During any season, carefully inspect the area before beginning your operations. **It's best to, and it's legally required to, hire a trained biologist to do a nest survey of larger areas or sensitive habitats with native plants, dense brush, stream-sides and stands of trees.** Many nests are difficult even for experts to spot. The ANSI A300 pruning standard calls for a clearly defined objective before pruning is undertaken. We recommend that maintaining habitat for birds be included in your plan.

## How to Detect Nests

Look on the ground for concentrations of white-colored droppings, and then check the vegetation above. This may indicate a roost site or a possible bird nest.

As you walk through an area, look for birds flying out of vegetation close to you and scolding you.

They may have a nest nearby.

Sit quietly and watch for birds bringing nest material or food repeatedly to one place. Birds tend to place their nests on the undersides of the tree canopy and where branches join together. Some birds nest in tree cavities or even under a flap of bark.



## If You Find a Nest

Reschedule! Cease work that could disturb or destroy the nest. Keep 50 feet away from songbird nests, and 500 feet away from raptor (hawk or owl) nests. Do not move the nest. Contact a qualified biologist or the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) to find out how to protect the nest. Ideally the nest should be left undisturbed until the young have left on their own. The CDFW or the Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology may be able to give you an estimate of how long until eggs hatch and nestlings leave.

## Why Nests Cannot Be Moved

Parent birds choose a nest location for specific reasons such as proximity to food and water, and protection from predators and the elements. If the nest is disturbed, parents may abandon it along with their eggs or young. **Local, state and federal laws prohibit taking, destroying or damaging nests.** Moving a nest requires a special permission from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and is usually only granted for human health and safety reasons.



## Pruning Considerations

Removing internal tree limbs results in lion-tailing, over-thinning, and increases the hazards potential for a tree. Birds utilize internal branches and foliage. Trees and shrubs should be pruned in a manner that considers the time of year, incorporates a pre-work inspection to check for nesting, and maintains branch density. In general, less pruning is better for birds. Pruning using these considerations is consistent with proper pruning that maintains tree health and safety while providing habitat for the birds that depend upon the trees and shrubs.

## Other Resources and Links

### **Wildlife Rehabilitation:**

Ojai Raptor Center 805-649-6884

<http://www.ojairaptorcenter.org/>

California Wildlife Center 818-222-2658

<http://cawildlife.org/>

### **Tree Trimming Tips:**

<http://goldengateaudubon.org/conservation/-make-the-city-safe-for-wildlife/tree-care-and-bird-safety/>

### **Native Plant Information and Nurseries:**

<http://theodorepayne.org/>

<http://www.matilijanursery.com/>

# LAWS PROTECTING BIRDS



**California State Code:3503 and 3503.5 Title**

**14, Chapter 1, Section 251.1:** It is unlawful to take, possess, or needlessly destroy the nest or eggs of any bird, except as otherwise provided by this code or any regulation made pursuant there to. It is unlawful to take, possess, or destroy any birds in the orders Falconiformes or Strigiformes (birds of prey) or to take, possess, or destroy the nest or eggs of any such bird.

**Federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act 703:**

Unlawful to take, capture, kill, possess, sell, or purchase any migratory bird, part, nest or egg.

**Information and a list of birds that are considered migratory birds can be found on:**

<http://www.fws.gov/pacific/migratory-birds/definition.html>

<http://www.fws.gov/birds/management/managed-species/migratory-bird-treaty-act-protected-species.php>



## FOR MORE INFORMATION

**To report wildlife harassment, killing, and/or destruction of nests:**

California Department of Fish and Wildlife:  
**(888) 334-2258**

For advice on nesting birds or referrals  
for nest surveys:

Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology  
439 Calle San Pable Camarillo, CA  
805-388-9944  
[wfvz.org](http://wfvz.org)



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# Healthy Trees, Healthy Birds

*Bird-Friendly Tree Care for  
Ventura County*



## Ventura County: Home to over 240 Species of Birds

Ventura County is home to more than just pigeons, sparrows and crows! 243 species live, migrate or pass through Ventura County each year. Birds nest in a variety of spots: tree branches, cavities, bushes, on the ground, or on the sides and eaves of buildings. Nests are often in hidden, hard-to-spot locations.

Types of local tree nests:

- Stick or cup-shaped nests
- Pendant or hanging nests
- Cavity nests
- Mud nests

Many birds raise their young between February 1st and August 31st, the time of year when people tend to trim trees and clear bushes. Severely cutting, thinning and topping greenery such as trees, and shrubs in the spring and summer can destroy nests and eliminate valuable nest sites, and kill nestling and fledgling birds.

