

## It's Illegal to Harm a Bird Nest!

All work that has the potential to harm or destroy an active nest should stop in the immediate vicinity.



Orioles that migrate to Redlands often build nests under palm fronds (Photo by Stephen Myers)

If you witness tree trimmers or anyone disturbing or destroying an active nest (one with viable eggs or chicks), ask them to **STOP!**

- Let them know **it is against the law.** (CA Fish & Game Code § 3503 (2018) Cite information about the **California Migratory Bird Protection Act** and **California State Code.** If they do not cooperate, call the **CALTIP number below;** give exact information about location, cross streets, name of offending company, vehicle license plate number, etc.
- Take photographs! Evidence is needed that birds are definitely nesting.
- Find someone in authority such as a building manager, city staff, or park ranger to let them know what is happening.
- Consider social media and the local press if the practice continues.

**To report bird harassment, killing and/or destruction of bird nests, call the California Department of Fish & Wildlife at (888) 334-2258 (CALTIP number).**

## What to Do if an Active Nest with Chicks is Cut Down

If damage has **already** occurred (the tree limb has been cut and a nest of chicks is now on the ground), the outcome can be positive. If the nestlings are not injured, place the nest back in the tree, if possible, and secure it firmly to a branch. The nest must be protected from sun and weather conditions in addition to being concealed.

If the nest is beyond repair, make a new nest from a small plastic container or cardboard box lined with paper towels or tissues. Hungry chicks will let parents know where they are!

Nestlings only need to be rescued if they are injured. Symptoms of injury include falling over on their side, wing tweaked upward or drooping, or bleeding.

Keep chicks warm and call your local Animal Control, or an area wildlife rehabilitator (see <https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Laboratories/Wildlife-Investigations/Rehab/Facilities>)

**Because most bird nests are concealed, it is best to do tree trimming between September and January to avoid the nesting season.**



This barn owl was left exposed in Redlands by a tree trimming company and had to be rescued.

(Photo by Emily Bendemire)

## Keep Bird Nests Safe and Your Trees Healthy!



(Photo by Stephen Myers)

**It's best to trim trees and shrubs in fall and winter to avoid harming nesting birds and to keep your plants healthy!**

City of Redlands  
Facilities & Community Services Department  
(909) 798-7655

Adapted from a Sea & Sage Audubon publication, with input by local State certified bird rehabilitators.

## Many Birds Nest in Southern California

We share our urban landscape with breeding birds that live here year-round or migrate here in spring and summer.

Birds provide many useful functions in the environment such as eating insect pests and dispersing seeds, along with providing enjoyment to bird-watchers.



Juvenile Red-tailed Hawk nesting by Redlands Community Hospital (Photo by Emily Bendemire)

## What the Law Says About Bird Nests

There are laws that protect birds, their nests, eggs, and young from being removed, destroyed or harassed. Violating these federal, state, and city laws may result in fines and imprisonment.

- The **California Migratory Bird Protection Act** of 2019 makes it unlawful to take or possess any migratory nongame bird as designated in the federal **Migratory Bird Treaty Act** (16 U.S.C. Sec. 703 et seq.), or any part of a migratory nongame bird.
- Additionally, California Fish and Game Code 3503 states “It is unlawful to take, possess, or needlessly destroy the nest or eggs of any bird...”
- Individual Cities may have additional laws protecting birds and their nests.

## What to Know About Nesting Birds

According to Audubon California and local bird rehabilitators, most birds nest between **February 1 and August 31 in Southern California**.

Great Horned Owls and Ravens begin nesting in in January, while Orioles and Mockingbirds can nest through August, sometimes later. Certified bird rehabbers note that hummingbirds, hawks, owls and other nests are found any time of year.

- **Always check for active nests before trimming.** Tree trimming during nesting season can result in destruction of nests, eggs and young birds.
- **Do not disturb large nests.** Some birds re-use nests every year – beware of large stick nests of hawks, owls, crows, ravens, herons and egrets.
- **Most bird nests are well camouflaged.** Songbirds conceal nests so they are virtually impossible to detect even by the best arborists.
- **Moving a nest is illegal** and requires special permission from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. If the nest with eggs or young is disturbed, the parent birds may abandon the nest.



Bird nests, such as this hummingbird's, are often hidden and easily missed (Photo by Steve Myers)

## Important Ways to Keep Your Trees Healthy

Cities and homeowners spend money to plant trees and shrubs to increase the beauty and value of their property. It's normal practice to trim trees, prune shrubs and clear brush as part of our landscape maintenance. However, severely cutting or topping trees can damage them and lessen their lifespan.



- Keep these tips in mind:** (Photo by Trude Hurd)
- Cutting when plants are growing creates a pathway for pests to reach the inner sap. Fall – when trees are dormant - is the best time to trim.
  - Too many trees are trimmed excessively, which stresses the tree and causes sunburn. Pine trees and other conifers should not be cut so severely that you can see through them. Avoid tree topping, the cutting of large branches to stubs.
  - Carefully consider tree species before planting and obtain proper permission if required. Putting the right tree in the right place will prevent future problems.
  - Consider hiring a Certified Arborist. Tree trimming companies are not required to have education on tree care.

**Please share this brochure with tree trimmers, homeowners associations or others.**