

## Do Not Harm an Active Nest!

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



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.
- Provide information about the Migratory Bird Treaty 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 lots of photographs! Evidence is needed that birds are definitely nesting.
- Find someone in authority such as building manager, city manager, or park ranger to let them know what is happening and ask for their help.
- Call the local press if an active nest of a high priority species is involved.

**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 situation may still have a positive outcome. If the nestlings are not injured, you can place the nest back in the tree and secure it firmly to a branch. The nest must be protected from sun and weather conditions in addition to being concealed in order to protect nestlings. 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 indeed injured. Symptoms of injury include falling over on side, wing tweaked upward or drooping, or bleeding. Keep chicks warm and call an Orange County wildlife rehabilitator or Orange County Animal Care.

- Wetlands & Wildlife Care Center in Huntington Beach at 714-374-5587
- Songbird Care & Education Center at 714-964-0666
- Orange County Animal Care at 714-935-6848

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



Photographs by Trude Hurd used with permission.  
Sea and Sage Audubon Society

## Keep Bird Nests Safe and Your Trees Healthy!



**Trim trees and shrubs in fall and winter to avoid harming nesting birds and to keep your plants healthy!**

Sea and Sage Audubon Society  
949-261-7963  
[www.seaandsageaudubon.org](http://www.seaandsageaudubon.org)

## Many Birds Nest in Orange County



We share our urban landscape with breeding birds that live here year-round or migrate here in spring and summer. Over 152 resident and migrant species nest and raise their young in Orange County. Protecting bird populations and nests is critically important.

Birds provide many useful functions in the environment such as eating insect pests and dispersing seeds in addition to providing enjoyment to bird-watchers. We can be good stewards and share the planet with them!

### 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 **Federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act** states that taking, killing, or possessing migratory birds is unlawful. "...it shall be unlawful at any time, by any means or in any manner, to pursue, hunt, take, capture, kill, attempt to take, capture, or kill, possess...any migratory bird, any part, nest, or eggs..."

**California State 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 You Should Know About Nesting Birds

Most types of birds nest between February 1 and August 31 in Southern California, but nests of hummingbirds, hawks, owls and others may be found at any time of year. Always check for active nests before trimming.

Some birds re-use nests from year to year. Large stick nests of hawks, owls, crows, ravens, herons and egrets should not be disturbed.

Most bird nests are small and well camouflaged.



Songbirds conceal their nests carefully so they are virtually impossible to detect even by the best arborists. Tree trimming during nesting season almost always results in destruction of nests, eggs and young birds.

Parent birds select a nest location because it offers the best food, water, and protection from predators and weather. If the nest with eggs or young is disturbed, the parent birds may abandon the nest. Moving a nest is illegal and requires special permission from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.



Education about responsible landscape management and laws that protect nesting birds will reduce the number of conflicts during breeding season. We need your help!

## Important Ways to Keep Your Trees Healthy

Plants are living organisms that support a variety of other living creatures. Cities and homeowners spend money to plant trees and shrubs to increase the beauty and value of their property. We then trim trees, prune shrubs and clear brush as part of our landscape maintenance. However, severely cutting, trimming, and topping trees and other greenery in spring and summer can damage trees.



Cutting when plants are growing creates a pathway for pests to reach the inner sap. This can cause disease and a shortened lifespan. Fall is the best time to trim--when trees are dormant!

Sadly, many trees are trimmed excessively, especially in local parks, apartment complexes and condominiums. Pine trees and other conifers should not be cut so severely that you can see through them.

Carefully consider tree species before planting. Putting the right tree in the right place will prevent future problems with plumbing, electrical lines, uplifted sidewalks, and size. Orange County Native Plant Society is a good resource for how to choose native plants for landscaping projects: <http://www.ocnps.org>.

**Citizens are encouraged to become involved with their city planning and landscape departments, as well as homeowner association landscape committees in an effort to educate these entities to practice bird-friendly tree trimming practices.**