

Pre-tree Trimming Bird Nest Search Information

Pasadena Audubon Society

Nesting birds are an important part of Pasadena's biodiversity. There are more than 35 native species that nest in Pasadena amongst urban trees, parks, and buildings. These species and their nests are protected by federal and state laws. Tree trimming contractors are required to not disturb trees that have nesting birds. The Pasadena Audubon Society is voluntarily assisting the City of Pasadena to protect nesting birds and ensure compliance with the law by informing the public of the protections, and how to prevent nest failures.

NATIVE BIRDS ARE PROTECTED BY FEDERAL AND STATE LAWS

THE MIGRATORY BIRD TREATY ACT OF 1918 is the federal law that protects migratory birds, their parts, and nests from harassment, harm, killing, and other violence. The law applies to all native birds of the United States of America and also to birds that migrate between the US and other countries. The migratory bird treaty act is enforced by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service.

§ 3503-3513 OF THE CALIFORNIA FISH AND GAME CODE are the state laws that protect birds, their parts, and nests. These laws prohibit the destruction of birds and their nests and reaffirms the Migratory Bird Treaty Act for the State of California. The California Department of Fish and Wildlife protects native birds.

§ 3.24.110 OF THE PASADENA MUNICIPAL CODE prohibits hurting, catching, or killing birds in parks.

You can help protect birds and assist compliance with the law by seeking nests and notifying the appropriate entities and authorities

The Stages of Nesting

1. Construction. 2. Copulation, Egg Laying, and Incubation
3. Nestling Rearing 4. Fledging 5. Independence
Nests come in a variety of shapes, sizes, and materials.

Sometimes birds use nests constructed by other species and sometimes they re-use old nests from previous years of their own nests. Some species construct multiple nests but only use one in a season.

Birds and their nests are protected from stages 1-5. Once stage 5 is done, the nest is inactive/unprotected, however birds may restart nesting at stage 2 within days of the completing stage 5.

What to do if you find a nest in a plant that may be trimmed or is being trimmed

- Do not disturb the nest and don't make its location obvious to others by pointing or approaching close to the nest.
- Do not reveal the exact location of the nest to others, except fellow nest observers and wildlife law enforcement.
- Do tell tree trimmers or construction managers that it is illegal to disturb the tree and that they should STOP immediately.
- If there is a wildlife emergency call **Cal-TIP, (888) 334-2258**, to notify **CA Dept. of Fish and Wildlife** law enforcement.
- If the tree is a City Tree (not private), call the **Kenneth Graham, (626) 744-3880**, or **Michael King, (626) 744-3846**.
- Contact **CA Dept. of Fish and Wildlife office, (858) 467-4201**, if you find a "sensitive" species nest or to request nest surveys.
- If the nestlings can be saved, call **Pasadena Humane Society, (626) 792-7151**, or **Wild Wings of California, (909) 592-4900**.
- You can help science by reporting nests to **Nestwatch.org**.

How to find nests that are protected

The trick for finding nests is recognizing that:

There is no need to look for nests.

Spending time craning your neck to gander up one tree canopy at a time without any idea where a nest is will not be productive. You will see the nests as you go.

First find the birds and let them show you where their nests are. Birds do specific behaviors associated with nesting, and they will show you the general area where their nest is based on how they act and where.

Looking for nests can waste time and you may get distracted by various objects that are not protected and which can confuse you, such as old nests, clumps of leaves, etc.

Behaviors that Indicate Nesting

- Carrying twigs, pieces of hair, feathers, pieces of other nests, webs, mud, or other objects
- Carrying food a long distance and to a specific location
- Aggression, communicated by scolds, frantic calls, and/or diving flights
- Carrying fecal sacks out of a location
- Shuttling to and from a specific location repeatedly
- Attention-grabbing actions like the "broken wing display"
- Pairs of opposite sex birds flying to and from locations together, isolated from mixed flocks

Nesting Urban Birds of Pasadena

Bird Species Catalogued for Inhabitation in the Urban Environment, which May be Affected by Tree Trimming in Pasadena

Alphabetical List by Common Name

Acorn woodpecker +urban +oaks
American crow +urban, park inhabitant
American kestrel * +urban
American robin +urban park -building
Anna's hummingbird +urban +tree generalist
Band-tailed pigeon +urban, park inhabitant, street tree inhabitant +tree generalist
Barn owl * -building
Barn swallow -buildings, bridges
Bewick's wren +urban, hedgerows
Black phoebe -building
Black-chinned hummingbird +urban, BNA -edge inhabitant
Black-headed grosbeak +oaks +urban -heavy understory
Brewer's blackbird +urban +generalist -mostly ground or ledge nester
Bullock's oriole +urban
Bushtit +urban +tree generalist
California towhee +eucalyptus
Cliff swallow -building, bridges
Common nighthawk -buildings
Common raven +urban +generalist +trees -buildings, power poles, cliffs
Cooper's hawk * +eucalyptus, non-native trees +urban
Dark-eyed junco -buildings and rock cavities
Downy woodpecker +urban parks -fence posts
Great-tailed grackle +urban +palms, other urban trees
Hooded oriole +urban, when palms present
House finch +urban -buildings and other anthropogenic structures
House wren +urban -edge inhabitant
Lesser goldfinch +oak +various trees including non-natives +urban + -water proximity
Mourning dove +urban +generalist -buildings and hanging plants
Northern flicker ?possible migrant, nesting in higher elevation than Pasadena +tree cavities
Northern mockingbird +urban +trees +hedges +pavement -multi-nest builder -buildings
Nuttall's woodpecker
Pacific-slope flycatcher -edge inhabitant -buildings
Peregrine falcon * -buildings
Red-tailed hawk * +large trees +urban
Song sparrow +urban -edge -water
Turkey vulture -isolated -buildings -edge
Western kingbird +urban +park +generalist -buildings
White-throated swift -buildings and bridges

* high priority species

(-) less priority for tree trimming, due to sheltered nest location (building eaves, etc.) or other factors

+ indicators of greater likelihood of nesting in urban Pasadena (excluding Hahamonga Watershed Park and natural areas)

? Uncertain, require more data

References

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