

HOW TO PROTECT WILDLIFE BEFORE REMOVING A DEAD TREE

Federal, State and local regulations protect birds and wildlife. Become familiar with regulations in your region before managing or removing a dead tree or dead limb which may contain nesting, roosting or denning wildlife within a cavity. For more information: <http://treecareforbirds.com/>



Tree Swallow
By Jerry Millett

First, observe all sides of the tree and its limbs.

1. Look for cavities and other areas of decay near cankers, at broken treetops, near branch breaks, and other points of injury, as well as openings created by stress cracks, and small round excavated holes made by woodpeckers.
2. Move away to a safe distance and observe the behavior of birds around you.
3. Watch for birds nervously moving toward or away from you or vocalizing in alarm.
4. Look for a bird nearby carrying insects or other prey in its bill.
5. Listen for the incessant chirping of baby birds from within the tree.
6. As a last resort, bang on the tree in multiple locations where cavities exist to see if a bird flushes from within.



Circle indicate two cavities
less than 6ft from ground

When is a cavity in a dead tree or limb most likely to contain an active nest?

1. Between February and August (when most birds nest)
2. If the tree is in a riparian area or adjacent to a standing body of water.
3. Where there is tree and vegetation diversity
4. In natural habitats with mature trees
5. When the tree is taller than 10' and has some remaining bark
6. If the cavity/defect is 1 ¼" in diameter or greater
7. If there are bird droppings near the hole entrance or on limbs nearby, and if flies or other insect can be seen entering the cavity
8. If woodpeckers and other cavity-nesting species have been observed in the habitat



Western Screech-Owl by Peggy Honda

If an active nest exists in a dead tree or limb, first assess degree of tree-risk

Consider if the tree needs to be removed completely or if removal can be delayed until the young have fledged. If an active nest is present and needs to be removed for human health and safety, a Level 2 inspection by a Tree Risk Assessment Qualified Arborist is recommended. A permit is needed to remove or relocate an active nest. The US Fish and Wildlife Service or your State Department of Fish and Wildlife can grant such a permit. Prior to removing or relocating a nest, a Certified Wildlife Rehabilitation Center or Wildlife Biologist should be contacted for guidance.

In a time-sensitive or emergency situation, the tree or limb may need to be removed before a permit can be received, but this should only be done in the most extreme situations and with detailed documentation.

Resources

To find a certified arborist near you: [TreesAreGood.org](https://www.treesaregood.org)

To prevent harm to nesting wildlife during tree care: [TreeCareForBirds.com](https://www.treecareforbirds.com)

To find a Certified Wildlife Rehabilitation Center in California:
<https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Laboratories/Wildlife-Investigations/Rehab/Facilities>

To find a Wildlife Biologist in California: <https://treecareforbirds.com/find-a-wildlife-biologist/>

To request a permit from US Fish and Wildlife: <https://www.fws.gov/permits/>

To request a permit from the CA Department of Fish and Wildlife:
<https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Licensing>

To learn about specific North American birds: <https://www.allaboutbirds.org>