

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Keep Birds in Mind When Trimming Trees

(Atlanta, Ga.) June 27, 2017 – Atlanta Audubon Society encourages homeowners to inspect their property carefully for any signs of nesting birds prior to scheduling tree pruning or removal. This is particularly important during the spring and summer as most Georgia birds nest between March 1 and August 31. The best timeframe to schedule a tree trimming is between September and February; however, it is always important to check the area before beginning work.

Birds often make efforts to hide their nests in order to protect them. This can make spotting nests a challenge, so keep a look out for concentrations of white-colored droppings on the ground, or for birds flying out of vegetation and scolding you. If you suspect a nearby nest, sit and watch for birds bringing nest material or food repeatedly to the same place.

Branch density is a key concern for birds when they are searching for real estate as they often use the internal branches and foliage of trees to make their nests. During spring and summer, any trimming conducted should leave adequate branch density to provide nest camouflage, and trimming should only take place following a pre-work inspection to check for nests.

If you find an active nest, you should reschedule any planned trimmings and wait until the young have left the nest (generally 10 to 14 days after hatching). Parent birds often choose locations for specific reasons, such as food and water resources. If the parents find the nest has been disturbed, they will sometimes abandon the nest and the young.

If you find a nest with live birds in it after a tree has come down, you should contact a licensed wildlife rehabilitator. Your local veterinarian may be able to point you in the right direction or the Wildlife Resources Division maintains a list on their website at <http://georgiawildlife.com/injuredorphanedwildlife>.

It is important to remember that state, local, and federal laws prohibit taking, destroying, or damaging nests. Most bird nests are protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA). This law says: "No person may take (kill), possess, import, export, transport, sell, purchase, barter, or offer for sale, any migratory bird, or the parts, nests, or eggs of such bird except as may be permitted under the terms of a

valid permit...” Under the MBTA it is illegal to destroy a nest that has eggs or chicks in it or if there are young birds that are still dependent on the nest for survival. It is also illegal for anyone to keep a nest they take out of a tree or find on the ground unless they have a permit issued by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). Moving nests requires special permission from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services and is usually only granted for health reasons.

Atlanta Audubon Society is committed to building places where birds and people thrive. We create bird-friendly communities through conservation, education, and advocacy.

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