



BCTS
BC Timber Sales
Babine Business Area
ISO 14001:2004 Registered

**Standard Operating Procedure(SOP)
For Timber Sale Licensees and BCTS
Contractors Using Machinery:
Bird Nest Encounters**

July 12, 2017

APPLICATION:

This SOP applies to all BCTS Licensees, Permittees and Contractors, including their employees, agents and subcontractors, involved in timber harvesting, road and bridge construction, road maintenance and silviculture projects (Site preparation or Brushing).

BACKGROUND:

The BC Wildlife Act prohibits the destruction of a bird or its egg or a nest occupied by a bird or its egg. The Migratory Birds Convention Act prohibits harm to migratory birds, their nest and eggs. Large stick nests may be re-used by birds from year to year and are to be protected, even if they are not currently occupied. An active bird nest is one with eggs or live young in it. Signs you may be near an active nest include:

- birds swooping at you or machinery,
- birds flying in or out of tree cavities, or
- birds carrying objects in their beaks or talons
- cheeping coming from tree cavities, trees or shrubs.
- Birds repeatedly circling an area or a tree

PROCEDURE:

If you encounter an active bird nest or a large stick nest on or adjacent to the work site, or if you see a bird(s) exhibiting nesting behaviour , **STOP WORK** in the vicinity and immediately report the finding to the Project Supervisor and BCTS. BCTS staff will provide additional guidance or direction consistent with applicable licence, permit or contract provisions.



Birds generally consider humans to be a threat and may leave fledglings unattended, or abandon the nest permanently.

Other recommended steps contractors and their employees should follow (BCTS staff may assist with this if requested by the contractor):

- Ensure the location is GPS'd and photographs are taken.
- Record the bird calls and make a video of the birds flying around the nest if possible. This greatly assists in identifying the bird species.
- Make note of the bird species if known, and move away from the area.



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- Avoid disturbing the underbrush, or creating a trail to the nesting area. For stick nests and cavity nests, do not walk up to the base of the tree the nest is located in.

BCTS LICENCEES (HARVESTING): Are advised to establish a **NO WORK ZONE (NWZ)** that will ensure no further disturbance to the nest. Recommended best practices are to cease disturbances in the nesting area until the young have permanently left the nest (which could range from a few days to a few weeks, depending on the species and stage of development). The nest should be protected with a buffer zone (NO WORK ZONE) appropriate to the species, the level of disturbance and the landscape context.

Example buffer distances that may be considered per active nest range from:

- 10 - 50 meters or more for songbirds and other small bird nests,
- 50 meters or more for swallow colonies
- 150 to 200 meters for woodpeckers,
- 200 meters or more for Northern Goshawks
- 200-500m for Red-tailed hawks

For active cavity nests in snags (not including woodpeckers), see setback distances above:

- In snags 10m height or less, establish a NWZ with a radius > 3.0 times the height of the snag,
- In snags greater than 10m height, establish a NWZ with a radius >2.0 times the height of the snag, or as prescribed by an RP Biologist with experience in nest assessments.

Additional information is available from Environment Canada or qualified professionals.

Licensees: Project activities can continue outside of the **NO WORK ZONE**, *however BCTS recommends licensees delay operations on the portion of cutblock near the nest until after the nest assessment is completed by a qualified professional.*

Active nests: it is strongly recommended that licensees do not enter the **NO Work Zone** during the nesting period: **May 15 –July 30 (May 1 to August 31 for raptors)**, or as directed by a registered professional biologist with experience in identification of bird nests.

BCTS Machinery Contractors: Will cease all operations on the worksite until BCTS enlists a qualified *professional with local experience in identifying bird nests* to evaluate the nest and provide recommendations, including the conditions under which work will be resumed in the **NO WORK ZONE** and on the rest of the cutblock or worksite.



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Goshawk in flight



Goshawk Nest, and inset photo of a goshawk nest. Note how it is located below the main canopy (unlike most species that make large stick nests).



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Ground nest



Cavity nests



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Approved by:

Debbie Janning-Stewart, RPF

Timber Sales Manager

Babine Timber Sales Office

Business Area

Date: August 3, 2017

