



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

**Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)
for BCTS Layout Contractors, Planting
Contractors and Silviculture Surveyors**

**Large Stick Nests (including
Goshawk Nests), Cavity Nests, and
Ground Nests:**

July 12, 2017

APPLICATION:

This SOP applies to BCTS Contractors, including their employees, agents and subcontractors, involved in multi-phase timber development projects, planting contracts, and silviculture survey contracts.

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 and some cavity 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.

Examples of bird nesting behaviour:

- birds repeatedly circling an area or a tree,
- alarm calls,
- carrying objects in their beaks, or
- aggressive behaviour including “dive-bombing” humans.

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

Northern goshawks are a species of special management concern and their nest sites and breeding areas require conservation. The number of active nests in this region has dropped precipitously, and this species is currently under provincial review to be re-classified as red-listed (Endangered and/or Threatened).

BC’s Wildlife Act and Canada’s Migratory Bird Convention Act both prohibit the destruction of nests of birds that re-use their nests from year to year. Large stick nests are typically re-used by Eagles, hawks and crows, and when abandoned their stick nests maybe used by other species - such as owls.



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Cavity nests are another type of nest that may be used for >than 1 yr.

PROCEDURE:

FIELD: All forest workers will be vigilant in observing and detecting any large stick nests, including those of Northern goshawks, and cavity nests and ground nests, within or in close proximity to work areas. Observations and locations will be reported to BCTS for further management actions. **Goshawks and All Other Species of Birds, Their Nests, and their Eggs will not be disturbed.**

If you find a goshawk nest, other large stick nest or cavity nest, or if you see any bird species exhibiting nesting behaviour, STOP WORK and contact your project supervisor and the BCTS Contract Officer:



Other steps contractors and their employees will follow:

- Ensure the location is GPS'd and photographs are taken.
- Record the bird calls and make a video (from a distance) of the birds flying around the nest if possible. This greatly assists in identifying the bird species.
- It is suggested that contractors and their employees install the Ibird Application on their electronic field gear, for easier bird identification.



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- Make note of the bird species if known, and move away from the area.
- 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 nest tree.
- BCTS will ensure a qualified *professional (R.P. Biologist with local experience in identifying bird nests)* will evaluate the nest and provide recommendations, including the size of the NO WORK ZONE, and the conditions under which work might be resumed in the NO WORK ZONE.

Project activities can continue outside of the NO WORK ZONE, after it is established in the field.

IDENTIFICATION OF NORTHERN GOSHAWKS AND THEIR NESTS:

Northern goshawks are a raven-sized bird of prey, that live and nest in mature and old growth forest in the region. Typically, goshawks will choose the largest trees within a territory to build large stick nests (usually nests are > 80 cm in diameter). Nests are usually located just below the canopy, sometimes making nests difficult to observe in the branches. Nests usually look like a broom, or large mass of sticks and branches.

Breeding season (regionally from May 1 to August 31) begins in early spring, when birds pair up then incubate eggs. Chicks hatch in mid to late spring, and they fledge in late-Spring early summer. Goshawks are fiercely protective of their nest area and will display aggressive flying behaviour when humans or other intruders encroach. Goshawks can fly at high speeds, even through dense mature timber.



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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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Some bird species nest on the ground. This is important to remember for all layout, survey and planting workers.

Approved by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. Janning-Stewart".

Debbie Janning-Stewart, RPF

Timber Sales Manager

Babine Timber Sales Office, Babine Business Area

Date: August 3, 2017

