

# Tree Care for Birds and Other Wildlife

May 5, 2016 Workshop Notes

The workshop was held at the West Coast Arborist Office in Anaheim on May 5, 2016 1:30 to 4:00 pm. Attendees in person were: Gillian Martin, Cavity Conservation Initiative; Andy Trotter and Mike Palat, West Coast Arborists; Ryan Gilpin, HortScience; Chris Guenther, City of Escondido; John Melvin, California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CalFire); and Anne Fege, consultant. The following participated by teleconference (GoToMeeting): Amelia Oliver, California ReLeaf; Magen Shaw and Michele Perez, Davey Resource Group; Diana Ruiz, Resource Conservation District; and Merlin Schumberger, Bird Rescue Center, Santa Rosa.

## Actions after Workshop.

1. Andy, Gillian and Ryan will finalize and submit a proposal to the Britton Foundation (International Society of Arboriculture).
2. Invitation will be sent to Roster (Gillian), agency biologists (Anne), International Society for Arboriculture and Professional Tree Care Association (Rose Epperson) to review and provide comments by May 31 on draft Best Management Practices (BMPs), which are posted at <http://treecareforbirds.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Framework-and-BMPs-Packet-4.29.16.pdf> [Now extended to June 10]
3. Steering Committee will meet monthly by teleconference call (Andy, Gillian, Ryan, Kara, Magen, Susan, Scott, and Anne).
4. Project participants (Roster) will be invited to work on the Training and Education committees and project plans.
5. Contacts will be made with Hispanic arborist groups (Chris G. will contact Jose, Andy will contact Oscar)
6. Content additions and structural changes will continue to be made, for the website, [www.treecareforbirds.com](http://www.treecareforbirds.com).
7. Next workshop will be Tuesday, August 30, likely also at West Coast Arborists office in Anaheim. Agenda will focus on finalizing the text version of the BMPs, and approving plans for professional training and outreach/education.

Science/Literature Review. Magen Shaw and Michele Perez gave an update on the literature/science review. They have reviewed more than 70 articles, many of them relating to disturbance of urban birds by various human activities, and possible mitigating actions. There are only a few articles on the effects of tree care practices on wildlife; one assessed canopy thinning in cork oak woodlands in Spain (Leal 2012). They will contact other wildlife researchers as another approach to confirm that most of the articles and ongoing studies have been identified.

This literature review will be combined with a survey of current tree care practices in the industry, submitted to Urban Ecosystems, Urban forestry and Urban Greening, and/or a wildlife journal. Anne will work with a retired research social scientist to develop questions and analysis of that survey. Questions could include observations from the ground about nests, evidence of bird disturbance, conditions of trees with snags, location of trees (urban streets, utility lines, riparian), canopy size, and reasonableness of various mitigation options (list from Magen's presentation at October 30 workshop).

Best Management Practices. Ryan presented the draft BMPs during a session of the Western Chapter of International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) that just concluded in Anaheim.

Interested individuals provided their contact information, and will be added to the project contact list. Comments were about unintended consequences (does the likelihood of a future nest become reason to cut tree down now? does a diameter limit result in trees cut down before they reach that size?), about whether non-native birds would be covered (and yes, they will be), consideration of hazards (what about a nest on a limb that could fall/break?), whether distances would be prescribed (likely discretion left to arborist or biologist), and whether bats and squirrels would be covered (yes).

The four-page draft document has been posted on the website, and will be sent to the Roster to invite review by May 31 (now extended to June 10). Comments are to be sent to Ryan. Anne will send to agency biologists, with request to review. Anne will send a request for forwarding or including the draft BMPs in a newsletter to the International Society for Arboriculture and Professional Tree Care Association (Rose Epperson), California ReLeaf (Amelia Oliver), and California Urban Forests Council (Nancy Hughes).

Ryan, Kara, and others on the BMP committee (identified at July 17 workshop as Lynnette Short, Mike Palat, Chris Guenther, Susan Sims) will transform the figures into the language and rationale for BMPs, and send to the Roster in advance of the August 30 meeting). Some changes are reportedly being made to incorporate wildlife habitat in the ANSI standards for tree care.

Administrative Issues. There are 70 contacts on the roster, which Gillian maintains. The current list will be posted on the website, with name and affiliation (not contact information).

An invitation needs to be extended to all on the Roster to participate in the monthly Steering Committee teleconference meetings. The following offered to be on this committee, at the July 16 workshop, and all have participated regularly (except Degner and Thomas): Andy Trotter, Gillian Martin, Kathy Degner, Ryan Gilpin, Susan Sims, Chris Guenther, and Scott Thomas.

The website audience is the project team, participants (Roster), and endorsing organizations. In the future, the website can be redirected and redesigned to serve the training and education phases of this project. California ReLeaf, CalFire, and Audubon chapter logos need to be prominently placed, as project funders. Next steps are to remove draft Britton proposal, add a non-endorsement sentence preceding the educational flyers, and post Ryan's presentation at the Western Chapter ISA conference.

Proposal to Britton Foundation. The preproposal was accepted and Gillian, Andy and Ryan are finalizing the proposal for \$10,000, to send draft to Amelia Oliver by May 15. This will focus on the training and education phases of the project, and request.

#### Training for Tree Care Workers

The training and professional development approach will be outlined from the draft BMPs. Some materials will be prepared and an outreach campaign started, but this group does not intend to become a training provider.

The audiences are those who perform or contract for tree maintenance. These professional audiences generally gain new information and methods from conferences (ISA, Pacific Tree Care Association-PTCA, California Urban Forests Council-CaUFC), focused training sessions, trade magazines and newsletters (Western Arborist, Arborist News, ReLeaf newsletter, Utility Arborists), webinars, social media, videos about practices, on-the-job training, and more. Some tree care workers participate in the Hispanic Arborists' association.

The following organizations need to be listed and contacted:

- Arborists, including Hispanic arborist and tree care groups
- Property managers, homeowners' associations, landscape contractors
- Planners and public works professionals (American Planning Association, American Society of Landscape Architects, League of Cities)
- Park management professionals, biologists, and municipal arborists
- Partners in California ReLeaf, California Urban Forests Council

#### Public Education

A branded public information campaign will focus on reasons to enhance habitat, tree care practice methods, and contacts for biologists and wildlife recovery. Outreach will be focused on organizations with missions related to nature and the environment (Audubon, Sierra Club, garden clubs); local affiliates of North American Bluebird Society and other national groups; gardens and nurseries; and local wildlife and conservation agencies (such as Resource Conservation Districts, park boards, city councils, state wildlife agencies).

An outreach plan will be developed, to include the following resources and approaches:

- Public education campaign to protect birds and other wildlife and enhance habitats during tree care
- Branding, logo, key messages, and marketing materials
- Articles in regional and national newsletters, especially relating to issues and innovations
- Resources on website, which will be restructured to assemble and display relevant information
- Blogs, Facebook postings, other social media
- Webinars, videos (posted on YouTube), and perhaps online training
- Speakers' and instructors' kit, with resources, information sheets, lists of local rescue organizations
- Presentations at conferences (California ReLeaf, Audubon Society)

Invitation/Inspiration. How do we make this more exciting and enticing?

- Ensure that webpages are visually appealing, easy to navigate, and link to credible information.
- Focus on how tree care practices can solve problems (avoid horrible work by unqualified tree care workers or companies, public embarrassment or fines when nests are destroyed)
- Create extra value (tree canopy health and tree longevity, competitive advantage for tree care companies that care about wildlife)
- Tie to the missions of various organizations (birds, wildlife, agencies, tree care business)

#### Other comments.

John Melvin, CalFire state urban forester, affirmed that the CalFire grants due in November will be focused on tree planting and care of planted trees, and not on maintenance of the existing tree canopy. City budgets need to fund urban forestry management, not depend on state grants.