



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 8/1/2025

Submitted by: Vida Wildlife Rehabilitation and Education Center

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SPARE THEIR NESTING SITES:

Most people would never intentionally harm a nest of baby birds or squirrels. But that is just what happens if you prune your trees in spring. Depending on your location, birds can nest as early as January! According to Elaine Thrune, President of the National Wildlife Rehabilitators Association, "Wildlife rehabilitation centers across the U.S. receive thousands of baby birds and mammals every summer because their nests are destroyed when trees and bushes are trimmed or removed during breeding season."

Many nests are very visible, like those of larger birds of prey and squirrels. But most birds' nests are small, hidden inside the trunk or limbs, and well camouflaged. Raccoons and wood ducks use hollows in trees to raise their young. Most of these nesting cycles are relatively short, usually only a month for songbirds, and if the tree in question is not causing an immediate problem, please consider waiting until wildlife has left. While spring may seem like a good time to trim and prune trees, it is better for the tree to trim during cold weather when it is dormant.

"At Vida Wildlife Rehabilitation and Education Center, we care for dozens of baby birds only because the tree their nest was in was cut down," said Albert Ustaszewski, President. "Most of these wild babies are not true orphans, but have been separated from their wild parents," Ustaszewski added.

Please remember to prune trees and bushes before spring breeding season arrives. And, if that dead snag in your yard does not pose a threat to buildings or power lines, consider leaving it as a home for the animals. Wildlife will thank you. If you find a wild animal you think needs help, it is best to call for advice so both you and the animal remain safe. A licensed wildlife rehabilitator is the wild animal's best chance for survival.

In this area, you can call Vida Wildlife Rehabilitation and Education Center at 928-261-6192.