

City of Arcata Vegetation Management Guidelines

Brush Clearing, Mowing, Tree Limbing Work Windows to Avoid Nesting Birds

FEB MAR APR MAY JUN JUL AUG SEP OCT NOV DEC JAN

Early nesting, check
before limbing trees

Nesting Season - Conduct avian
surveys prior to any work

Non-nesting Season - Best time to
work

When to plan vegetation management:

September 1 – January 31 is the best time to plan for tree removal, invasive plant species management, mowing and brush clearing.

When to avoid vegetation management:

February 1 – April 15 is the early bird nesting season (raptors, hummingbirds). Major disturbance to vegetation, especially trees, should be avoided during this time unless nesting bird surveys are conducted by a qualified biologist prior to work. Mowing grass and trimming the ground at trail edges out to 2' are ok during this time. In tidally influenced areas invasive plant management and mowing can occur at low tide as no nesting would occur there.

April 15 – August 31 (most birds) is the primary nesting season. Disturbance to vegetation should be avoided during this time unless nesting bird surveys are conducted by a qualified biologist prior to work. In tidally influenced areas invasive plant management and mowing can occur at low tide as no nesting would occur there although the access route through riparian vegetation to the tidal zone should be surveyed for nesting birds prior to work. Trimming trail-side grasses out to 1' and trimming City road-side grasses out to 5' are exceptions to this rule.

If an active nest is found during surveys prior to work, avoid work in the area until the young have fledged. A 50' no-work buffer should be applied for song birds and a 500' no-work buffer should be applied for raptors. "Active" nests are defined as those with eggs or young and required buffers around active nests will be flagged by qualified biologist prior to work near these area.

Management of cut vegetation:

Non-native invasive vegetation should be disposed of to prevent additional infestations (chipping and spreading if no seeds are present, or taken to green waste facility). If seeds are present (late summer to fall for most plant species) in non-native vegetation waste, it should be disposed of in the trash or a burn pile. Native vegetation that has been cut or pulled (except grass that is mowed) should be piled in an inconspicuous location on-site to decompose. Placing vegetation on a tarp is an efficient way to transport it by dragging the tarp to a compost pile or truck for loading.