Every spring, baby animals that have been orphaned or injured because their nests were damaged or removed arrive at Pacific Wildlife Care. Most people are appalled to find they have caused these accidents, especially when the injury to wildlife is so easy to prevent: just procrastinate! Wait until nesting season is over. It really won't be long--usually just a matter of weeks.

Before you cut that tree, take a look to see if there are wild families already living there. If so, give them a chance to grow up and move out. Some species of birds and raptors nest in hidden tree cavities, so don't forget to check your trees thoroughly before trimming or removing. Remember to check for nests in snags or standing dead trees before removal – they are prime nesting spots for many species of animals.

Moving or disturbing the nests can hurt the animal's chances for survival. Even trimming trees around the nests can be detrimental, not only because the noise and activity can scare away the parents, but because the nest's covering may be lost, exposing the babies to predators and the hot sun, wind and inclement weather.

Another incentive to wait before trimming: saving on electricity to cool the house. Tree trimming during the warmer months takes away your shade, causing a wasteful increase in energy consumption.

Cutting, trimming and pruning during spring and early summer can lead to diseased trees and intrusion of pests that harm trees. Fall and early winter are the best times to trim branches when trees are dormant. For more information on how to keep your trees healthy, visit http://www.treesaregood.com/

How to spot a nest: Squirrels and birds like to nest in larger trees and bushes at least 8' feet off the ground. They generally build their nests in the crotches of branches. A squirrels nest is about 2' wide and is made of twigs and leaves on the outside and pet hair and soft materials on the inside. A bird's nest can be anywhere from two inches for small birds to two feet for larger birds of prey. They are also made of twigs, leaves and animal fur. In colder areas squirrels like to build their nests inside tree trunks.

“In most cases, simply being patient for a couple of weeks is all it takes to safely (and legally) remove the nest.”

Thank you for caring. Pruning wisely may seem like a small thing given all the dangers facing our environment and local wildlife. But every small contribution we make protecting the world around us helps improve the quality of life for all living things – including ourselves.