HAMILTON BIOLOGICAL

November 24, 2021

Daniel Ruelas
Great Scott Tree Care
10761 Court Avenue #2435
Stanton, CA 90680

SUBJECT: NESTING AND ROOSTING BIRD SURVEY REPORT ALAMITOS BAY SOUTH SITES, LONG BEACH LOS ANGELES COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

Dear Daniel,

At your request, Hamilton Biological, Inc., has conducted a survey for nesting and roosting birds in trees planned for pruning at several locations around the southern part of Alamitos Bay in coastal Long Beach (see Figure 1).

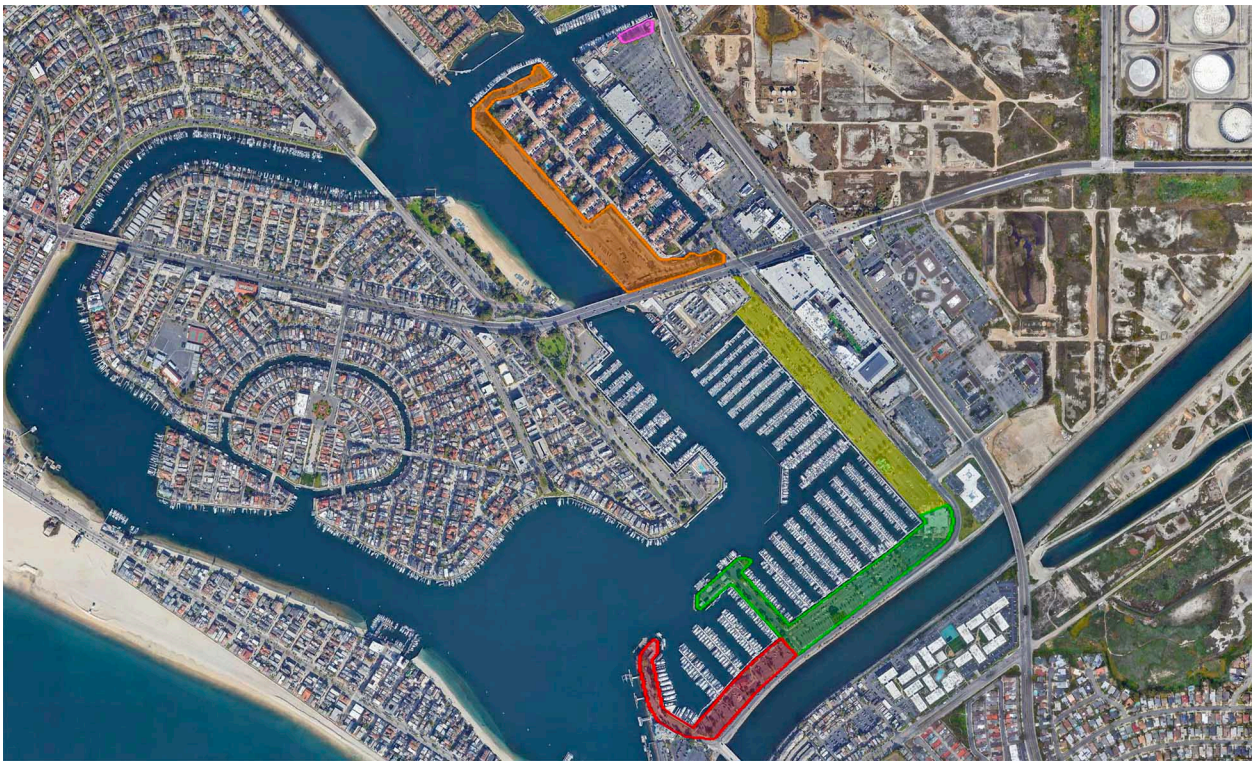

Figure 1. Showing the survey areas. Clockwise from north to south are Basin 6 (pink polygon); Davies Launch Ramp (orange polygon); Basin 3 (yellow polygon); Basin 2 (green polygon); and Basin 1 (red polygon). All trees in these areas were included in the nest survey, and trees within 300 feet of these areas were surveyed for the potential presence of nesting raptors.

316 Monrovia Avenue — Long Beach, CA 90803 — 562-477-2181 — robb@hamiltonbiological.com

The survey is required to comply with relevant federal and state laws, and the City of Long Beach Tree Trimming Policy, approved by the California Coastal Commission in 2008.

REVIEW OF REGULATIONS PROTECTING NESTING BIRDS

Federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act

The federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) of 1918 implemented the 1916 Convention between the U.S. and Great Britain (for Canada) for the protection of migratory birds. Later amendments implemented treaties between the U.S. and Mexico, the U.S. and Japan, and the U.S. and the Soviet Union (now Russia). At the heart of the MBTA is this language:

> Establishment of a Federal prohibition, unless permitted by regulations, to "pursue, hunt, take, capture, kill, attempt to take, capture or kill, possess, offer for sale, sell, offer to purchase, purchase, deliver for shipment, ship, cause to be shipped, deliver for transportation, transport, cause to be transported, carry, or cause to be carried by any means whatever, receive for shipment, transportation or carriage, or export, at any time, or in any manner, any migratory bird, included in the terms of this Convention . . . for the protection of migratory birds . . . or any part, nest, or egg of any such bird." (16 U.S.C. 703)

California Fish and Game Code

Section 3503 of the California Fish and Game Code states, "It is unlawful to take, possess, or needlessly destroy the nest or eggs of any bird, except as otherwise provided by this code or any regulation made pursuant thereto." Thus, in California, it remains a potential State offense to knowingly disrupt an active nest of virtually any native bird species. The term "active nest" is not clearly defined in the Fish and Game Code, and in some circumstances may be left to the discretion of the biologist in the field.

City of Long Beach Tree Trimming Policy (Coastal Commission)

In 2008, the California Coastal Commission asserted jurisdiction over "annual and emergency tree trimming activities" in those parts of the City of Long Beach that lie within the coastal zone[1]. This includes the Downtown Shoreline, Alamitos Bay Marina, Marine Stadium, Colorado Lagoon, and other state tidelands and beaches. Under this policy:

> Any trimming of trees with nests shall be supervised by a qualified biologist or ornithologist and a qualified arborist to ensure that adequate nest support and foliage coverage is maintained in the tree, to the maximum extent feasible, in order to preserve the nesting habitat. Trimming of any nesting trees shall occur in such a way that the support structure of existing nests will not be trimmed and existing nests will be preserved, unless the Department of Parks, Recreation and Marine, in consultation with a qualified arborist, determines that such trimming is necessary to protect the health and safety of the public. The amount of trimming at any one time shall be limited to preserve the suitability of the nesting tree for breeding and/or

[1] https://documents.coastal.ca.gov/reports/2009/2/W23b-2-2009.pdf.

> nesting habitat. Trees or branches with a nest that has been active anytime within the last five years shall not be removed or disturbed unless a health and safety danger exists.
>
> Trimming may not proceed if a nest is found and evidence of courtship or nesting behavior is observed at the site. In the event that any birds continue to occupy trees during the non-nesting season, trimming shall not take place until a qualified biologist or ornithologist has assessed the site, determined that courtship behavior has ceased, and given approval to proceed within 300 feet of any occupied tree.

The policy pertains to the nests of colonial waterbirds, including cormorants, herons, and egrets, as well as raptorial species known to re-use nests from previous years.

SURVEY METHODS

Biologist Robert A. Hamilton conducted the nesting bird survey on November 22, 2021, from 1:45 to 3:45 p.m. Skies were clear; winds were in the range of 1–5 miles per hour; and the temperature was 82° F. The areas were surveyed by walking or driving slowly under each tree, looking for nests in the trees above, observing the behavior of the birds in the area and listening to their vocalizations, and inspecting the ground for guano or "pellets" of undigested fur and bone often deposited beneath the nests of owls and other raptors. Trees within 300 feet of the survey areas were inspected for the potential presence of nesting raptors.

SURVEY RESULTS

I detected the following bird species during the survey: Rock Pigeon, Allen's Hummingbird, Ring-billed Gull, California Gull, Western Gull, Brown Pelican, Great Blue Heron, Black-crowned Night-Heron, Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, Black Phoebe, Cassin's Kingbird, American Crow, Swinhoe's White-eye, European Starling, House Finch, and Yellow-rumped Warbler.

I did not observe any evidence of nesting or roosting birds during the survey.

During the survey, I detected at least 16 inactive heron/egret nests in Ficus trees along the fuel dock road in Basin 2. Please see Figure 2 on the next page, and Photos 1-10. During spring/summer 2021, I observed Black-crowned Night-Herons (BCNH), and Snowy Egrets (SNEG) nesting and roosting in these trees. I did not observe any roosting herons or egrets during my survey.

Figure 2. Showing the locations of 16-20 inactive heron and/or egret nests in four Ficus trees along the fuel dock road in Basin 2. Herons and egrets were also observed roosting in these trees during the current survey.

Photo 1. Inactive heron/egret nest in Ficus tree, fuel dock road, Basin 2.

Photo 2. Inactive Great Blue Heron nest in Ficus tree, fuel dock road, Basin 2.

Photo 3. Six inactive heron/egret nests in Ficus tree, fuel dock road, Basin 2.

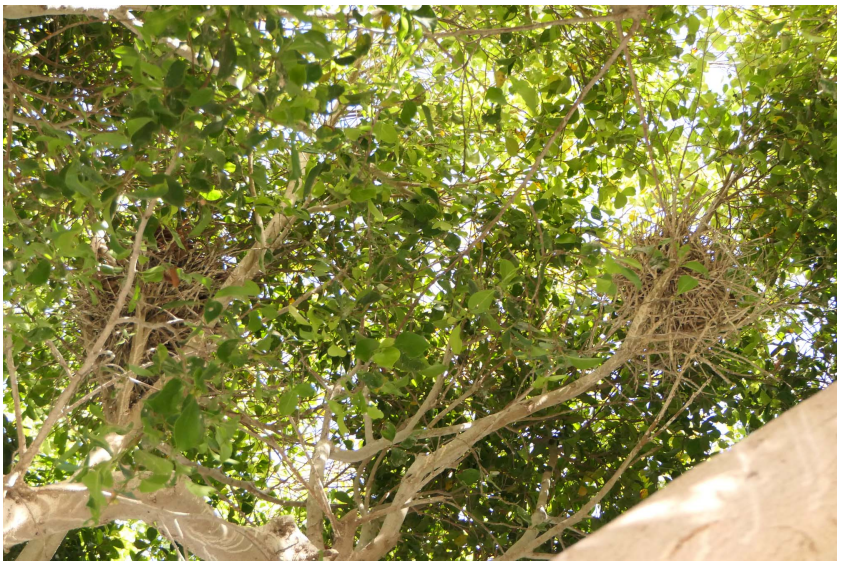

Photo 4. Two inactive heron/egret nests in Ficus tree, fuel dock road, Basin 2.

Photo 5. Roosting Yellow-crowned Night-Heron and two inactive heron/egret nests in Ficus tree, fuel dock road, Basin 2.

Photo 6. Three inactive heron/egret nests in Ficus tree, fuel dock road, Basin 2.

Photo 7. Black-crowned Night-Heron roosting in an inactive heron/egret nest in a Ficus tree, fuel dock road, Basin 2.

Photo 8. Two inactive heron/egret nests in Ficus tree, fuel dock road, Basin 2.

Photo 9. Roosting Great Blue Heron in Ficus tree, fuel dock road, Basin 2

DISCUSSION & RECOMMENDATION

Consistent with the City of Long Beach Tree Trimming Policy, work in any of the four nesting/roosting Ficus trees in Basin 2, shown in Figure 2 and Photos 1-9, should be monitored by a biologist to ensure the trees continue to provide viable substrate for nesting and roosting herons and egrets. Trimming of the remaining (non-nesting/non-roosting) trees within the survey areas may proceed without a biological monitor being present.

As a general disclaimer, this field review represents a good-faith effort to find and document bird nests and heron/egret roosts, and to recommend actions intended to ensure compliance with applicable regulations as landscape trees are pruned and removed. Birds may initiate new nests at any time, and it is possible that unfound nests existed in or near the Survey Areas at the time of the survey. The recommendations provided represent my best understanding of state and federal regulations, and the steps needed to achieve compliance. In particular, it is stipulated here that an active nest is understood to be one that is complete and holding at least one potentially viable egg.

If work crews encounter an active nest not reported here, they should avoid disturbing the nest. If crews intend to work near the nest, Hamilton Biological should be notified so that the nest may be properly identified and appropriate protective measures taken.

Thank you for the opportunity to continue working with you on this project. Please call me at 562-477-2181 if you have questions or wish to further discuss any matters; you may send e-mail to robb@hamiltonbiological.com.

Sincerely,

Robert A. Hamilton, President
Hamilton Biological, Inc.
http://hamiltonbiological.com