THE PROBLEM

Dead or dying trees and rotting limbs, called snags, are removed for safety reasons and also because they are thought of as unattractive. The loss of these trees affects many birds and wildlife and diminishes the quality of habitat necessary for them.

THE SOLUTION

A securely rooted dead tree can often be safely retained by reducing its height and removing its weakest branches. Just 10’ of a trunk 12” in diameter, even with shortened branches, can provide many years of value to wildlife. A short, dead limb on a live tree is a potential nest site if it is 8” in diameter.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

- Encourage parks and land managers to retain dying trees.
- Request interpretive signs explaining the value of dying trees.
- Encourage children to observe how wildlife use dying trees.
- Visit http://cavityconservation.com
- Invite us to do a free program for your school or organization.

Contact:
Gillian Martin : GM99oliver@cox.net
(949) 495 0977

The Cavity Conservation Initiative promotes the preservation of dead and dying trees for cavity-nesting birds and other wildlife that depend on them.
Holes are created in dead or dying trees from natural conditions but many are made by woodpeckers. Over time cavities abandoned by woodpeckers are used by a variety of birds and other wildlife for such things as nesting, food storage and protection from the elements.

Snags provide preferred hunting perches and serve many other functions for birds and other wildlife.

Some beetles breed in dying trees. Many serve as predators of other insects and some become pollinators. They also contribute to the decay process.

Beetles, their larvae and other insects using snags become prey for birds and other wildlife. This helps to lower insect populations.

Unlike live trees, snags offer birds an unobstructed view. This is helpful for territorial defense, safety from predators and courtship displays.

The removal of too many snags results in fierce competition between species and lower breeding opportunities for cavity-nesting birds.

Fungi enter dying trees and also colonize under downed wood. Their role is to help the natural decay process. Meanwhile their fruiting bodies serve as nest sites for insects and food for some small mammals.

Fungi and other natural decomposers help trees return vital nutrients to the soil. By so doing they facilitate the growth of new and existing vegetation.