

Swainson's Hawk NestCam (LIVE)

Introduction:

Last week the Swainson's hawk NestCam in Natomas (Sacramento) was reinstalled!

The link (below) is a live video stream of an active nest, and is provided for your entertainment and education.

The NestCam is part of the research on Swainson's hawk reproductive ecology, one of the many studies being conducted by the members of the Swainson's hawk Technical Advisory Committee of California. The Swainson's hawk is State listed Threatened in California.

Locating an active nest, acquiring and setting up the webcam system, and putting the video stream on the internet is no small effort, and I'm grateful for the help and support of the following persons and agencies:

- Funding for the NestCam system was provided by the Department of Water Resources as part of its ongoing Swainson's hawk mitigation program for the Temporary Barriers Project.
- A great deal of logistic and IT support was provided by the Department of Consumer Affairs.
- The Department of Fish and Game has been instrumental in providing funding, permits, approvals, and encouragement for the SWHA TAC's research.
- Special thanks to Anita Scuri who worked through Jude Lamare's Friend's of the Swainson's hawk to find me and keep me updated on this rare urban nest site, which led to this rare opportunity to obtain this video.

Thanks for your interest, and please forward this on to other interested parties.

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About this nest:

The Swainson's hawks that you see here returned from their wintering grounds (probably Mexico, but possibly as far south as Argentina) at the end of March. The female is the darker of the two; the male can be readily identified by the large white patch on its face, chin and throat, while the female has almost no white on its head. The female is also larger than the male (which is normal) although it is difficult to see the size difference at the nest.

Since arriving back at their nest site, they've been constructing their nest, mating, and defending their territory from rivals (other Swainson's hawks), competitors (owls and other hawks) and hostiles (crows). The female began laying eggs last week and will lay/has laid up to four eggs (probably 2 or 3), each egg being laid 2 days apart. If successful, the eggs will hatch in 4 weeks. The female is primarily responsible for incubation, although the male will take over for short periods after bringing food back for the female. She usually leaves the nest to eat, and to stretch her wings.

After the young hatch, the female remains the primary caregiver, feeding, defending and shading the young. The male is responsible for finding prey for the entire family. Both will defend the nest/young from the air, attacking potential predators. In just 6 short weeks the young will have grown to the size and weight of the adults, and will be ready to fly. In the final weeks, the young will spend hours flapping their wings from the nest and branches around the nest, learning to fly, and the feeling of flight.

NESTCAM: www.dca.ca.gov/stream/hawks

More information about the Swainson's hawk can be found at www.swainsonshawk.org and www.dfg.ca.gov