



January 23, 2019

Andrew and Ashley Bothman
226 Sunnyside Avenue
Campbell, California 95008

Subject: 56 Central Avenue, Los Gatos – Initial Focused Survey of Palm Tree for Nesting Owls
(HTH #4277)

Dear Mr. and Ms. Bothman:

Per your request, H. T. Harvey & Associates has conducted an initial focused survey for nesting owls in a date palm tree (*Phoenix dactylifera*) located on the project site at 56 Central Avenue in Los Gatos, California. It is our understanding that this palm tree, along with a number of other trees, are to be removed from the project site as part of proposed development activities and that the Town of Los Gatos' Conditions of Approval (COA) requires two preconstruction surveys for nesting birds prior to the initiation of project activities. We also understand that an Arborist Report completed for the project site in October 2018 mentioned that owls were nesting in a cavity under the lowest fronds of the date palm tree. We further understand that project construction activities are expected to start in May or June 2019. This report summarizes the results of our initial focused survey of the date palm tree, measures implemented to reduce the potential for an owl to nest in the tree prior to its removal, and additional recommendations for avoiding constraints to your project from nesting owls.

On the morning of January 22, H. T. Harvey & Associates wildlife ecologist/ornithologist Craig Fosdick, M.S., surveyed the palm tree on the project site for the presence of owls or suitable owl nesting habitat. Mr. Fosdick searched the base of the tree for signs of owl presence (i.e., whitewash, pellets, and feathers), and scanned the palm tree as well as the immediate surroundings with binoculars for evidence of owls. In addition, under Mr. Fosdick's direction and guidance, Chris Bellizzi of Bellizzi Tree Service climbed the palm tree and carefully inspected the tree, including all cavities and ledges located under the base of the lowest live fronds, for any evidence indicating the presence of owls or an active owl nest. Mr. Fosdick observed with binoculars from immediately under the tree, watching and listening for any owls leaving the tree. No eggs, nestlings, nor any other signs of an active owl nest were observed in the palm tree. However, Mr. Fosdick found several owl pellets on the ground, less than 5 feet from the base of the palm tree, directly underneath a large cavity among the fronds, indicating that a barn owl (*Tyto alba*) recently roosted in the tree.

Under the guidance of Mr. Fosdick, Mr. Bellizzi was able to carefully inspect all cavities and ledges under the live palm fronds, and then remove all platforms and cavities formed by the bases of the dead palm fronds to minimize the potential for barn owls to establish a nest in the palm tree prior to tree removal. While we originally

had proposed to use materials to block the cavities and platform ledges, we found it was more effective to simply remove the dead fronds that formed the cavities. However, Mr. Bellizzi was not able to climb above the bottom of the crown of live palm fronds.

It is unlikely that owls would nest in the crown of the fronds, now that we have removed the cavities below the fronds, as nesting in the crown would expose nesting owls to the elements and potentially to predators such as great horned owls (*Bubo virginianus*). However, given that owls have apparently nested in this tree in the past, we cannot rule out the possibility that barn owls could attempt nesting in the crown. Therefore, we would recommend trimming all live fronds from the palm tree to prevent owls from potentially nesting in the crown of the tree as soon as possible.

Please do not hesitate to contact me at speterson@harveyecology.com or (408) 458-3230 with any questions you may have about this report. Thank you very much for contacting H. T. Harvey & Associates about this project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stephen L. Peterson', written in a cursive style.

Stephen L. Peterson, M.S.
Project Manager, Senior Wildlife Ecologist