

Tip of the Month

Protect our ground-nesting birds while clearing for fire safety

California Quail (*Callipepla californica*) and other ground-nesting birds are nesting now and use underbrush and dense vegetation to do this. This is exactly the areas we are supposed to be clearing to increase fire safety.

You can accommodate the Quail and Oregon juncos and other ground-nesting animals while reducing vegetation on your land if you pay attention.

The quail will burst out of the underbrush to let you know if you are getting near an area where they are nesting. Use that area as one of your “islands” of vegetation. Leave these active areas alone, they will become key locations for wildlife to get refuge. But clear around and between these islands (being careful to observe for any activity in the area).

When these vegetated islands are located away from the house they also accomplish the task of keeping our native predators away from the house.

Tell your gardener to do the same and we can help keep this iconic bird common.



<http://cattell.net/devon/Quail/Quail2.html>

Additional information on quail from our friends at Edgewood:

<https://friendsofedgewood.org/california-quail>

And the Conservation Committee’s guide to Understory Habitat and Defensible Space:

<https://www.portolavalley.net/home/showpublisheddocument/15183/637728279341370000>

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Town of Portola Valley – Conservation Committee