



The Peregrine Fund

Focusing on birds to conserve nature

WORLD CENTER FOR BIRDS OF PREY

CALIFORNIA CONDOR (*Gymnogyps californianus*) FACT SHEET

- SIZE:** Weight: 16 to 23 pounds
Wingspan: Up to 9.5 feet (3 meters)
Body Length: 46 to 55 inches
- VOICE:** None, but may grunt or wheeze
- NEST SITE:** Usually a cave in a cliff or a crevice among boulders on a steep slope.
- REPRODUCTION:** Condors reach sexual maturity and attain adult plumage and coloration by five to six years of age and breeding is likely between six and eight years of age. A mature condor will lay one egg (average incubation period for a condor egg is 56 days) every other year during a successful nesting cycle. The species provides extensive parental care to very few young.
- FEEDING:** Condors are strict scavengers. Historically, carcasses of bison, elk or deer in inland areas. Seals and beached whales along coasts. With fluctuating populations of wild game, the condor has adapted to utilizing carcasses of domestic animals too.
- Unlike Turkey Vultures, condors do not have an exceptional sense of smell. They find their food visually, often by investigating the activity of ravens, coyotes, eagles, and other scavengers. Without the guidance of their parents, young inexperienced juvenile condors may also investigate the activity of humans. As young condors learn and mature this human directed curiosity diminishes.
- RANGE:** Occurred historically from British Columbia south to northern Baja California and in other parts of southwestern United States. Has ability to travel 150 miles a day in search of food.
- POPULATION:** On December 1, 2002, there were 198 California Condors in the world -- 70 in the wild in California and Arizona. In 1982, there were only 22 California Condors in the world.

YOUNG: Nestlings fledge (leave nest) full grown at six months of age, however, historically juvenile condors may be dependant on their parents for more than a year. Reintroduced condors are released on their own and must learn to forage and survive with the now existing free-flying population.

SEXES: There is no sexual dimorphism (observable difference in size or appearance) between males and females.

IDENTIFICATION: Numbered wing tags, white or mottled triangle under wing, no feathers on head, and head color black in juveniles or orange/pink in adults, not dark red as in Turkey Vultures.

CAUSE OF DECLINE: Unsustainable mortality rate in the wild and a naturally low reproductive rate. Predation, shootings, poisoning, lead poisoning, and collisions with power lines are some of the major threats.

CONDOR ENCOUNTER: Please enjoy the birds from a distance. Do not approach or attempt to feed a condor. **Never feed, shoot, or throw objects at a condor.** The California Condor, hawks, eagles, vultures, and owls are protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty and the Endangered Species Act. Under these acts it is illegal to pursue, hunt, take, capture, kill, or attempt any of these activities to a bird of prey. If a condor approaches you, or you observe anyone harassing or harming a condor, immediately notify:

The Peregrine Fund - (928) 355-2270 (azcondors@aol.com)
Arizona Game & Fish - (928) 774-5045
Bureau of Land Management - (435) 688-3200
National Park Service - (928) 638-7756

If you should observe a condor please report your sighting to Peregrine Fund biologists at (928) 355-2270 or e-mail us at azcondors@aol.com. Helpful information would include date, time, location, number of birds observed, and wing tag numbers if possible.