

## NEWS AND COMMENTS

### **Two of three wild-hatched condors have fledged, joining the wild flock in Arizona and Utah**

#### **16 December 2014 - The Peregrine Fund**

Program biologists from The Peregrine Fund and Zion National Park have confirmed that two California condor chicks have left their nests and taken flight in northern Arizona, but hopes of a third chick successfully reaching the fledgling milestone in southern Utah have been dashed by a lack of visual observation. The third chick was Utah's first wild-hatched condor chick.

Observations of the condor parents visiting the Utah nest cave suggested all was going well during the six months leading up to fledging, but by late November, a month after the predicted fledge date, biologists noted that something was wrong. The Utah chick quit coming out to the cave opening, and soon after, the parents decreased their visitation to the cave. After multiple trips to investigate, biologists concluded that the chick had not survived.

“Although two out of three 2014 condor chicks surviving to fledging remains encouraging, the loss of

Utah's first chick is a hard reminder that critters have a tough go of it in the wild. It's just a shame that we weren't able to recover a carcass to examine what might have provided clues as to the cause of death,” said Chris Parish, Condor Program Director for The Peregrine Fund, which manages the wild Arizona-Utah flock.

As for the other two condors now gracing Arizona's skies, both birds appear to be doing well since fledging. Condors, like other wild animals, are most vulnerable in their first few months. That is why condor parents tend to their young for a year after fledging.

There are now 73 condors in the wild in Arizona and Utah, including the two new fledglings. A total of 25 chicks have hatched in the wild since condors were first introduced in Arizona in 1996.

The recovery effort is a cooperative program by federal, state, and private partners, including The Peregrine Fund, Arizona Game and

Fish Department, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Arizona Strip Field Office of the Bureau of Land Management, Grand Canyon and Zion national parks, Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, and Kaibab and Dixie national forests.

\*\*\*

## CALIFORNIA CONDOR RECOVERY PROGRAM

Summarised from the Peregrine Fund e-newsletter of July 2013. As at 30 June 2013, there were 431 California Condors *Gymnogyps californianus* alive in the USA. This is a stunning increase from the early 1980s when there were thought to be only 22!

In the wild, there are 231 birds distributed as follows:

- |       |                             |                                 |
|-------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| (i)   | Three places in California  | 130 flying (+9 chicks in nests) |
| (ii)  | Arizona ( Vermilion cliffs) | 71 flying (+ 4 chicks)          |
| (iii) | Baja California, Mexico     | 30 flying (+ 1 chick)           |

The captive population now numbers 200, distributed among several zoos as follows:

The Peregrine Fund, Boise	72
Oregon Zoo	42
San Diego Zoo Safari Park	31
Los Angeles Zoo	27
Santa Barbara Zoo	5
San Diego Zoo	3
Chapultepec Zoo, Mexico City	2
In field pens, southern California	3
Temporarily in captivity	15

On 28 September 2013, The Peregrine Fund plans to release more condors at the Vermilion Cliffs National Monument, Arizona. This will be the 18<sup>th</sup> annual public release of condors.

[extracted by P.J. Mundy]

\*\*\*\*\*