



PRESS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ADULT CALIFORNIA CONDOR – WITH BRIGHTLY COLORED HEAD – ADDED TO SANTA BARBARA ZOO ENDANGERED SPECIES EXHIBIT

- Six-Year Old Female, Number 327, Sports Adult Plumage
- Joins Four Juvenile Condors in Exhibit Which Opened Earth Day 2009
- Features Endangered or Threatened California Species Also Including Channel Island Fox, Desert Tortoise, Bald Eagle, and More

Santa Barbara, CA (February 23, 2010) – A young adult California condor, sporting a bright pink and orange head has joined four juvenile condors on exhibit in the Santa Barbara Zoo's California Trails complex, which opened last year on Earth Day.

The condor, known by the number 327, arrived at the Zoo in early January from the Peregrine Fund's World Center for Birds of Prey in Boise, Idaho. After a month-long quarantine, it was released into the exhibit last week.

"Number 327 makes a great addition to our condor flock, as we can show our guests the different stages of condor maturation," reports Assistant Zoo Director Alan Varsik. "Our birds turn three in April and still have their juvenile, grey heads. This bird is six years old and has the wonderful color of a young adult.

"She also adds to the variety of condor behavior our guests see every day," he adds, "and provides an array of adult behavior for the juveniles to experience."

About Condor 327

The bird hatched at the Peregrine Fund's World Center for Birds of Prey in Boise, Idaho, (one of four condor captive breeding facilities) on April 11, 2004, and was hand raised. At age eight months, she was transferred to the Vermilion Cliffs condor release site in northern Arizona. After she was released and recaptured twice between January 2005 and June 2009, it was decided by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Condor Recovery Program that she be placed in Santa Barbara.

This particular bird, reports Estelle Sandhaus, the Zoo's Assistant Director of Conservation and Research, had several close interactions with humans.

“This is a very intelligent species with a natural curiosity,” says Sandhaus, “Some California condors, particularly young ones, are not as wary of humans as are many other animals. They can be influenced by interactions which could result in undesirable human-oriented behavior later on.”

That could put the bird at risk of injury, of ingesting something harmful (like microtrash), and could take those dangerous behaviors back to the flock.

Number 327 will eventually join the captive breeding program. She has important ancestors and is valuable to the condor gene pool and to the continued success of the species’ recovery.

Her sire’s sire, known as AC2, was one of the last wild-born condors taken into captivity. Her dam is the captive-hatched offspring of two wild condors captured in 1983: Number 27, Cuyama, who is in Boise, and Number 31, Cachuma, now at the San Diego Wild Animal Park.

Why do some condors have numbers and some have names? Many of the very first condors born or taken into captivity were given both numbers and names that are Chumash in origin. As the Recovery Program has grown (now over 360 living birds), only numbers are used, which relate to the California Condor International Studbook, which tracks the entire population.

About California Trails

These rare California condors, the symbol of endangered species, are the centerpiece in the \$7.5 million exhibit California Trails complex that features creatures that are in danger of disappearing from the wild in the Golden State. Included are small Channel Island fox, found only on the islands off the California Coast; desert tortoises, once commonplace, but now facing habitat destruction; bald eagles, who are making a comeback after pesticides ravaged their numbers; and local raptor, amphibians and reptiles.

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The Santa Barbara Zoo is open daily from 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.; general admission is \$12 for adults, \$10 for children 2-12 and seniors 60+, and children under 2 are free. Parking is \$5.

The Santa Barbara Zoo is accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA). AZA zoos are dedicated to providing excellent care for animals, a great visitor experience, and a better future for all living things. With its more than 200 accredited members, AZA is a leader in global wildlife conservation, and is the public’s link to helping animals in their native habitats.



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