

VENTANA WILDLIFE SOCIETY

Strategic Plan

2022 - 2026

Adopted 6/06/22 by the Board of Directors





VENTANA WILDLIFE SOCIETY

Our Story...

Founded in 1977, Ventana Wildlife Society led the way to the successful reintroduction of the iconic Bald Eagle and the California Condor to their native central coast habitats. Through adherence to rigorous science, collaboration to amplify our efforts, and educational outreach to underserved and historically marginalized communities, our organization strives to address pressing ecosystem challenges while inspiring the next generation of environmental and wildlife stewards.

Ventana Wildlife Society is recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as a 501(c)3 non-profit organization

OUR VALUES

We believe in the importance of scientific research. We understand the value of contributing peer-reviewed publications to the scientific literature and extending our leadership in endangered and special-status species research, recovery, management and consultation.

We believe that access to meaningful outdoor experiences is a right that should be available to all, and that a love of the outdoors will help produce future leaders in wildlife preservation.

We believe that collaboration with other scientists, zoos, community members, organizations and governmental agencies will further our shared goals.

We believe in working closely with a diverse group of communities, industries, and native peoples.

OUR VISION

We see a world in which endangered species thrive, and people are committed to their protection. Having succeeded in restoring the Bald Eagle to the central coast as a self-sustaining population, we envision a future where California Condors and other species will be well established and independent of our assistance. We also look forward to a time when financial, cultural and access-related barriers to meaningful outdoor education are eliminated, providing all with the opportunity to learn about, enjoy and protect wildlife.

OUR MISSION

Conserving native wildlife and their habitats through science, education, and collaboration.





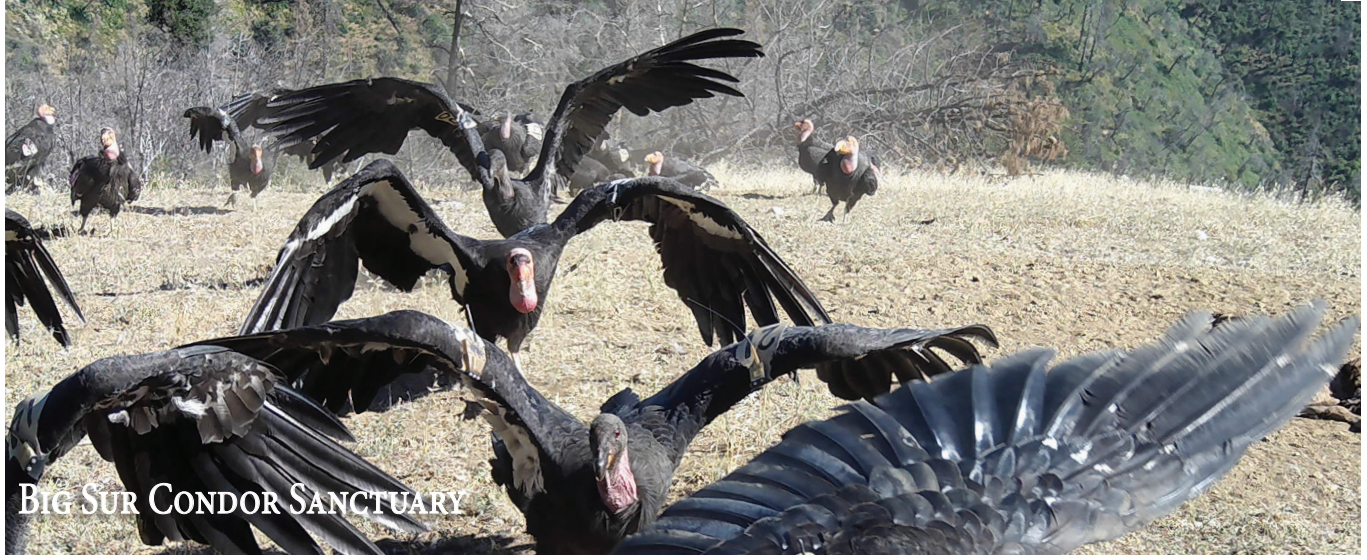
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Front Photo: Families from east Salinas enjoy a weekend of camping, hiking, beach time, and learning about nature and wildlife. Photo by VWS Staff

Back Photo and This Page: When Condor 1089 fledged from its redwood tree nest in fall 2021, it was a beautiful sight as this baby condor had not yet been adorned with its identification wing tags. This young chick will be closely watched and cared for by its father Amigo - Condor 204 (photo this page), for two years. Photos by Tim Huntington

Our Properties



BIG SUR CONDOR SANCTUARY



SAN SIMEON CONDOR SANCTUARY



LAKE NACIMIENTO BALD EAGLE SANCTUARY





Our Goals

This document outlines Ventana Wildlife Society's strategic goals. The plan's six major goals establish our focus for the next five years.

1 CONDORS

Recover self-sustaining, free-flying populations of California Condors and to serve as an internationally-recognized model of success.

2 EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

Instill a conservation ethic and inspire youth to take action by fully integrating environmental education with fun outdoor applications in nature.

3 RESEARCH AND CONSULTING

Extend our leadership in endangered and special-status species research, recovery, management, and consultation.

4 COLLABORATIONS

Collaborate with other stakeholders on high impact wildlife recovery and conservation, education, and outreach.

5 ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Build the organizational capacity and sustainability while fostering a culture to further our mission and goals.

6 FINANCIAL

Ensure the long-term fiscal strength and stability of Ventana Wildlife Society.



Our Process

This five-year Strategic Plan is the continuation of a process that we established in 2013 to guide our progress toward fulfilling our mission and growing our organizational impact. This strategic planning process was developed through extensive dialog among the Board of Directors, staff, and key community stakeholders. This updated plan, covering 2022-2026, will guide our efforts to conserve native wildlife and serve our community while balancing environmental, human, and financial realities.

GOAL: An outcome statement that guides a program or management function.

STRATEGY: A coordinated, broad approach or direction adopted by an organization in response to the environment so that the organization can achieve its goal.

OBJECTIVE: A measurable, time-phased result that supports the achievement of a goal. Objectives in this plan are to be S.M.A.R.T.

S = SPECIFIC

M = MEASURABLE

A = ATTAINABLE

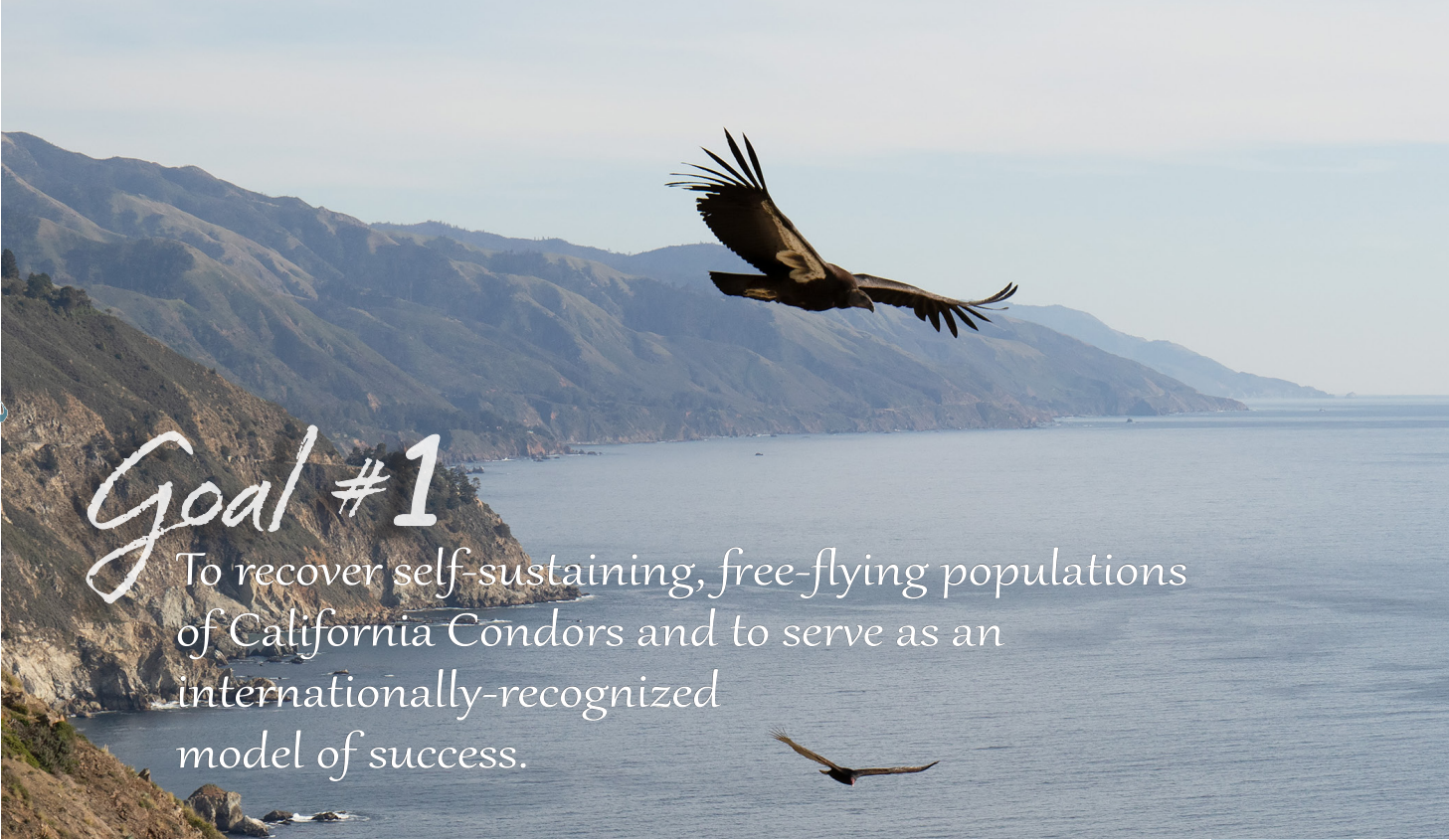
R = REALISTIC

T = TIME RELATED

We consider this plan to be a living document to guide our annual planning and budgeting process. Annual plans will focus on the vital few objectives critical to moving the organization toward the long-range goals shown in this plan. Management staff will review the organization's progress quarterly and make adjustments as appropriate. The highest priorities will be tracked and progress will be reported to the board at least every six months. In recognition of the need for flexibility and responding to changing conditions, the five-year plan will be reviewed annually and, if necessary, updated by management and the board.

The plan consists of a hierarchical outline of goals, strategies, and objectives, as defined here.





Goal #1

To recover self-sustaining, free-flying populations of California Condors and to serve as an internationally-recognized model of success.

GOAL #1 STRATEGIES	OBJECTIVES	Due
Augment the wild condor population	• Release California Condors in Big Sur or San Simeon, CA to increase wild flock to 150 birds.	FALL 2026
	• Monitor all accessible condor nests and productivity in the central coast region.	ANNUALLY
Contribute to condor recovery through captive breeding	• Investigate feasibility of constructing a captive breeding facility.	ONGOING
	• Secure location for new captive breeding site.	TBD
	• Complete construction of an eight-pair breeding facility.	TBD
Track all free-flying condors with radio telemetry, and when possible satellite transmitters, to monitor health and habitat use of individual condors, which informs other strategies herein	• Prioritize deployment of satellite transmitters on newly released condors and on breeding birds as available.	ONGOING
	• Capture condors as needed to maintain the function of radio telemetry tags and satellite GPS transmitters.	ONGOING
Manage lead exposure threats to aid in survivorship for the wild population	• Transport all condors showing symptoms of lead poisoning to a treatment facility.	AS NEEDED
	• Provide 2,500 boxes of free nonlead ammunition to hunters and ranchers in condor range with emphasis on rimfire.	ANNUALLY

GOAL #1 STRATEGIES	OBJECTIVES <i>continued</i>	Due
<i>... continued</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a clean food station in San Benito County to reduce lead exposure that might otherwise occur in nearby high-risk scavenging areas. • Hire an Outreach Specialist to deliver nonlead ammunition and meet with constituents; give presentations to key audiences including hunters, ranchers, and schools. • Develop business arrangements with ammunition retailers near key condor areas to enhance nonlead ammunition supply. 	<p>SPRING 2022</p> <p>WINTER 2022/2023</p> <p>SPRING 2023</p>
<i>Manage causes of death to aid in survivorship for the wild population</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine causes of death for condors whenever possible and work with key stakeholders to prevent future fatalities. 	ONGOING
<i>Document reproductive success in the wild population</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine reproductive rate for population analyses. • Determine causes of nest failure when possible. • Use remote cameras in nests to enhance monitoring when feasible. 	<p>ANNUALLY</p> <p>ONGOING</p> <p>ANNUALLY</p>
<i>Continue positive condor recovery collaboration with federal, state, and tribal partners</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue development and enhancement of the California Condor Central (CACO Central) database, an online data portal that coordinates multiple recovery partners through integration of range-wide data collection, storage, and management. • Attend all condor recovery meetings and work with partners to evaluate program-wide strategies and maintain all permits. • Continue to support the Yurok Tribe's northern California Condor release effort, where appropriate. 	<p>ANNUALLY</p> <p>ANNUALLY</p> <p>AS NEEDED</p>



Goal #2

Inspire a conservation ethic and encourage youth to take action through integrating innovative scientific and ecological education.



GOAL #2 STRATEGIES	OBJECTIVES	Due
<p><i>Overcome transportation, and other barriers, to provide meaningful outdoor education experiences for individuals with access, diversity, equity, and inclusion as cornerstones to approach</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Routinely review and adjust COVID-19 health and safety guidelines. • Maintain commercial terminal and fleet of 15-passenger commercial vans. Develop and maintain entry level driver training program and commercial drivers. • Engage 3,000 youth (ages 4-17) and their families through innovative seasonal and year-round programs focusing on nature awareness and stewardship in a live or virtual format, with at least 85% of enrollment consisting of students from underserved communities. • Hire bilingual educators to be more culturally relevant to Spanish-speaking constituents. 	<p>ONGOING</p> <p>ONGOING</p> <p>ANNUALLY</p> <p>ONGOING</p>
<p><i>Develop and maintain more cohesion and synergy between condor recovery and outdoor youth programs</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a shared narrative between condor recovery and outdoor youth education programs. • Develop and begin to implement an “arc” of opportunities that youth experience via programming. • Develop a career development component to programs to enhance the “arc” of opportunities. 	<p>FALL 2022</p> <p>ONGOING</p> <p>WINTER 2023/2024</p>
<p><i>Develop Nature Prescription programming in collaboration with health care providers, charities, and agricultural business community</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribute informational packets to 50 health care professionals and engage 20 in writing nature prescriptions. • Develop an online nature prescription google map resource for parents with prescriptions. • Continue to incorporate activities in programs that target physical, mental, and socio emotional wellbeing of participants. 	<p>WINTER 2023/2024</p> <p>SPRING 2023</p> <p>ONGOING</p>
<p><i>Develop community hubs to provide direct service in underserved communities</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to deliver outdoor experiences for East Salinas youth and Families in partnership with Alisal Health Clinics. • Engage 1,000 individuals per hub through youth and family programming, focusing first on east Salinas as well as north Salinas. 	<p>ONGOING</p> <p>FALL 2023</p>

... continued • Develop additional hubs in south Monterey County as funding and partnerships enable.

SUMMER
2023

Maintain and enhance interpretive center(s) for community outreach • Develop and install new exhibit on the wildlife of Big Sur at Andrew Molera State Park and at other locations as opportunities arise.

SPRING
2023

• Maintain activities and opportunities for the Discovery Center at Andrew Molera State Park to serve a minimum of 1,300 visitors annually during summer months.

ANNUALLY

Give presentations and attend tabling events to share the results of our work and expertise with the public • Give 35 public presentations in either live or virtual format.

ANNUALLY

• Attend 25 tabling events.

ANNUALLY

• Expand professional learning pilot program for teachers focusing on meaningful watershed education experiences by: four 2-day workshops/school year, one 3-day summer workshop, and two conference workshops.

ONGOING



Goal #3

Extend our leadership in endangered and special-status species research, recovery, management, and consultation.



GOAL #3 STRATEGIES	OBJECTIVES	Due
<p>Conduct high-impact research, monitoring and consulting for regionally significant wildlife and collaborate with other conservation organizations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine feasibility of at least one new research project involving regionally significant wildlife species. Contract with agencies, companies, non-profit organizations and others to research and monitor species of conservation concern. 	<p>ANNUALLY</p> <p>ONGOING</p>
<p>Develop a species-wide demographic model to inform recovery planning for California Condors</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine annual mortality, reproduction and survivorship rates. Work with collaborators to incorporate our data into the demographic model. 	<p>ANNUALLY</p> <p>ANNUALLY</p>
<p>Develop the capabilities, size, and leadership of the staff</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide support and training for key staff to receive permits on listed species in central California. 	<p>ONGOING</p>
<p>Present our research findings in peer-reviewed publications and/or professional conferences and lectures</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare at least one manuscript for peer-reviewed publication. Attend technical meetings or conferences live or virtually twice per year and present our project results at least once. Maintain publication library on website to demonstrate past success and release new publications while coordinating with journals and media. 	<p>ANNUALLY</p> <p>ANNUALLY</p> <p>ONGOING</p>

Goal #4

Collaborate with other stakeholders on high impact wildlife recovery, conservation, education, and outreach.



GOAL #4 STRATEGIES	OBJECTIVES	Due
<p><i>Promote our mission through collaborations with government agencies and non-government organizations</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forge stronger relationships by meeting regularly, at all levels, with California Department of Fish and Wildlife, USFWS, NPS, California State Parks, and regional agencies such as Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District, and Monterey County Office of Education (MCOE). 	ANNUALLY
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify land trusts, zoos, Native American tribes and other conservation organizations that have the potential for effective collaborations for Species Recovery. Meet with key partners annually. 	ANNUALLY
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain current youth education partnerships and forge new relationships with other youth-serving organizations supporting our work in nature prescription and teacher development. Meet with key partners annually. 	ONGOING
<p><i>Open a new facility at Andrew Molera State Park, the S'MORE, which stands for a Space for Meaningful Outdoor Recreation and Education for underserved communities</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Renew concession agreement. 	SUMMER 2022
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalize landscape plan. 	SUMMER 2022
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalize building plans. 	FALL 2024
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete construction. 	SPRING 2025
<p><i>Maintain regular communication with collaborators and identify common goals including ways to bring assets or expertise to shared problems</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and execute new agreements as necessary to support this plan. 	ONGOING
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain a master list of collaborators and review agreement renewal dates. 	ANNUALLY

Goal #5

Build organizational capacity to foster a culture that furthers our mission and accomplishes the goals, strategies and objectives of this plan.

GOAL #5 STRATEGIES	OBJECTIVES	Due
<p><i>Maintain a healthy, productive, collegial, and collaborative work environment and culture</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance ongoing board/staff coordination for annual fundraising events, membership events, and major donor cultivation. 	ONGOING
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain an Infectious Disease Policy to ensure that staff follow the current best practices to avoid contracting and spreading illness in the workplace. 	ONGOING
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain Blue Zones recognition by continued wellness council meetings; offering quarterly staff opportunities that focus on reinforcing healthy habits and boosting staff connections. 	ONGOING
<p><i>Improve board satisfaction and effectiveness through meaningful engagement</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain active participation of all board standing committees. 	ONGOING
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain a list of board prospects for consideration and prioritize attributes needed. 	ONGOING
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain the board at 12 members through ongoing recruitment and succession planning. 	ONGOING
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct satisfaction and effectiveness survey. 	ANNUALLY
<p><i>Improve staff satisfaction and effectiveness through training, surveys, competitive salaries, and regular reviews</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and provide staff training opportunities through professional seminars and classes. 	ANNUALLY
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct employee satisfaction survey and ensure staff reviews are completed in a timely manner. 	BI-ANNUALLY
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide competitive salaries at midpoint or higher levels, based on surveys of similar non-profits. 	ONGOING
<p><i>Enhance our commitment to addressing equity and cultural relevancy throughout the organization to better reflect the communities we serve</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure the proper diversity and expertise of the board of directors/staff through recruitment in the communities most underrepresented. 	ONGOING
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide Spanish-language versions of organizational outreach materials, including course curriculum, brochures, and webpages. 	ONGOING
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For each new job announcement, identify one new posting location to increase the diversity of applicants. 	ONGOING
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide recurring staff development opportunities in equity and inclusion for both seasonal and full-time staff. 	ANNUALLY



GOAL #6 STRATEGIES	OBJECTIVES	Due
<p><i>Improve our financial health</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain at least six months of liquidity year-round and grow investments to ensure long-term stability. • Establish a viable endowment through individual giving and bequests. 	<p>ONGOING</p> <p>FALL 2026</p>
<p><i>Enhance our development and communications capabilities as well as donor engagement and meaningful access to programs, staff and board</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and cultivate major gift prospects and update annual fund plan. • Increase number of contributing households by 10% annually. • Retain donors via online engagement including Zoom-Chats, live cameras, recorded videos and events. • Maintain robust schedule of donor offerings. • Offer a condor tour to Big Sur Condor Sanctuary for major donors. 	<p>ANNUALLY</p> <p>ANNUALLY</p> <p>MONTHLY</p> <p>ONGOING</p> <p>ONGOING</p>
<p><i>Maintain and find new fee-for-service or government grant opportunities, to support endangered species recovery, and outdoor youth education</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase government contracts and earned income to represent one-third of organization revenue. • Obtain a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA). 	<p>ONGOING</p> <p>WINTER 2023</p>
<p><i>Enhance exposure to our organization through online media such as Explore.org, live chats, Google Adwords, and social media</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain website, Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Instagram and Google Adwords with timely and interesting information. • Develop more online educational content, presentations, and remote access applications. • Conduct live chats via Explore.org at the Big Sur Condor Sanctuary. • Develop a condor docu-series and a short film. • Submit the short film to film festivals. • Self distribute the docu-series with a teacher facilitator guide available on our website. • Develop a promotional video for our meaningful watershed educational experiences professional learning for teachers. 	<p>ONGOING</p> <p>ANNUALLY</p> <p>QUARTERLY</p> <p>FALL 2022</p> <p>FALL 2022</p> <p>SPRING 2023</p> <p>SUMMER 2023</p>



Condor 1089 practicing flapping its wings and hopping around at its redwood tree nest. See this beauty finally take flight on the back cover.

OUR EXPECTED OUTCOMES

If the goals and objectives herein are achieved, we can expect outcomes described below

GOAL #1 - *Condors*

By 2026, the California Condor population in central California will be showing signs of progress toward becoming self-sustaining. These signs will include continued growth in numbers (>150 birds) and distribution, an increased capacity for productivity, and a decreased rate of fatalities. Population growth will be aided by maximizing releases of captive-bred birds in San Simeon and Big Sur. We will continue to monitor reproductive success, and engage the general public through the use of live webcams at active nests when feasible, as well as conduct monthly Condor Zoom-Chats. We will help hunters and ranchers reduce lead exposure for condors by distributing free nonlead ammunition and prioritizing areas where birds are most at risk. By requiring face to face ammunition transfers and increased documentation, the Safety For All Act will present new opportunities for us, as a licensed ammunition vendor, to meet directly with hunters and ranchers and facilitate access to nonlead ammunition. Our condor recovery efforts will extend beyond the central California population, from assisting with release strategies in northern California to providing nonlead ammunition to hunters and ranchers throughout the condor range in California. We will maintain our commitment and position as a key collaborator in the full recovery of the species. We will also determine the feasibility of aiding condor recovery through captive breeding.



GOAL #2 - *Education and Outreach*

We will offer meaningful outdoor education experiences through online and in-person classes for at least 3,000 youth annually. By offering grant-funded scholarships, we will ensure that students from underserved communities have every opportunity to participate. With diversity, equity, and inclusion as a focus, eighty-five percent enrollment will consist of students from these communities. By owning a fleet of 15-passenger vans and



operating a commercial transportation terminal, we will overcome transportation barriers that prevent youth from having access to education programs outside of their traditional classroom experiences. While focusing on nature awareness and stewardship in youth, we will also increase outreach and outdoor education programming for adults. These advances will include installing a new display at our Discovery Center, establishing a space for meaningful outdoor recreation and education (S'MORE), providing professional learning opportunities for teachers, developing an online community for teachers to collaborate on curriculum, and developing nature prescription programming in collaboration with local medical and business communities.

OUR EXPECTED OUTCOMES *Continued*

GOAL #3 - *Research and Consultation*



We will conduct research studies on current focal species, such as California Condor, with topics including lead exposure, reproduction, and survivorship. Results of our studies will be presented at scientific conferences or in peer-reviewed journals and publications. We will increase our staff expertise and involvement with a broader range of wildlife species through participation in courses, training workshops, and permit applications for new species. While providing consultation, we will distinguish ourselves from typical consultation firms by ensuring that all projects are consistent with our conservation mission.

GOAL #4 - *Collaborations*

We will promote our mission through collaborations with government agencies and non-government organizations, and identify meaningful ways to bring an asset or expertise to a common goal or issue for the mutual benefit of all. By expanding a shared database called CACO Central, we will continue providing our condor recovery partners with an efficient means of remotely entering and accessing data. This database integrates the work of each condor project collaborator and streamlines research designs, data collection, analyses, and reporting. Through collaborations, we expect to take on an expanded role at Andrew Molera State Park to enhance visitor experience and overnight camping opportunities. We will forge stronger relationships with local, state, and federal agencies and organizations by meeting annually to keep abreast of emerging issues or species of concern. We will also expand collaboration with other youth-serving non-government organizations to reach new students from underserved, and historically marginalized communities.





GOAL #5 - *Organizational Capacity*

We will seek ways to improve the satisfaction and effectiveness of staff and board members to maintain a healthy and productive work environment. As such, we will maintain our Blue Zones certification. We will support staff training opportunities, encourage feedback in the form of employee satisfaction surveys, and provide competitive salaries. We will maintain board participation in standing committees, recruit additional board members, ensure accountability through annual board evaluations, and encourage board and staff coordination. We will focus on developing more online educational content, presentations, and remote access applications, such as Condor Cam and Condor Zoom-Chat Archives, to become even more multifaceted, as well as release original short and feature films about our work.

GOAL #6 - *Financial*

We will improve our financial health by maintaining an annual fundraising plan, increasing government contracts and earned income, offering an expanded schedule of unique donor benefits and events, and enhancing social and online media interaction with the general public. Our financial health will be measured by retention of at least six months of cash reserves and a ten percent annual increase in the number of contributing households. Achievement of these financial benchmarks will accelerate the ability to support ongoing internal growth, which would further strengthen our ability to conserve native wildlife and their habitats for years to come.



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Ventana Wildlife Society

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Photo caption - page 2