

# VENTANA WILDLIFE SOCIETY

## *Strategic Plan*

2016 - 2020

Adopted April 1, 2016 by the Board of Directors





# VVWS STRATEGIC PLAN

## *Mission and Vision*

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

## MISSION

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

## VISION

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California Condors will be self-sustaining in coastal populations, no longer needing the day-to-day assistance from people to survive. This success will serve as a model and may also serve as a catalyst for new wildlife recovery projects developing worldwide. We also understand the value of contributing peer-reviewed publications to the scientific literature and becoming a regional leader in endangered and special-status species research, recovery, management and consultation. Access to meaningful outdoor education opportunities for youth will remain critically important to our approach to conservation as we will expand through collaboration. Ventana Wildlife Society will be helping to drive a better community as a whole where wildlife coexist with people and both thrive.

## OUR STORY

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Founded in 1977, Ventana Wildlife Society led the way to successful reintroduction of the Bald Eagle and the California Condor, two of the most iconic birds in the world, to native habitats in central California. Through the course of our work, we developed an organizational culture that strongly values science, education and collaboration, finds ways for both wildlife and people to benefit from one another. This “Ventana Way” is evident throughout our conservation projects including the work we do to provide meaningful outdoor education for youth that couldn’t otherwise afford to attend. The Ventana Way is about sticking to the facts and finding solutions for society as a whole. Our approach positions us well to address tomorrow’s ecosystem management challenges and inspire the next generation of wildlife stewards.

# *VWS-Owned Properties*



**NACIMIENTO WILDLIFE SANCTUARY**



**BIG SUR WILDLIFE SANCTUARY**



# STRATEGIC PLAN

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Goals

### 1 CONDORS

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

### 2 EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

Instill a conservation ethic and inspire youth to take action by fully integrating innovative scientific and ecological education.

### 3 RESEARCH AND CONSULTING

Become a regional leader 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 accomplish the goals, strategies and objectives of this plan.

### 6 FINANCIAL

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

*This document outlines Ventana Wildlife Society's strategic goals.*

—————> *The plan's six major goals establish our focus for the next five years.*

# THE PLANNING PROCESS

This 5-year Strategic Plan was developed after extensive input from the Board of Directors, the staff and key community stakeholders. The plan was created in an effort to serve our community while balancing environmental, human, and financial realities.

We will use this overarching plan in 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.

*For consistency, the terms used in the Strategic Plan are explained below and will be used in the annual plans.*

*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**



*VWS successfully restored bald eagles to central California  
between 1986 and 2000!*





# Goal #1

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

photo by  
Tim Huntington

## GOAL #1 STRATEGIES OBJECTIVES

GOAL #1 STRATEGIES	OBJECTIVES	Due
<b>Manage lead exposure threats to aid in survivorship for the wild population.</b>	• Conduct lead testing for all free-flying condors in central California.	ANNUALLY
	• Transport all lead-poisoned condors (tested above an established lead level) to a treatment facility and release those birds following successful treatment.	ANNUALLY
	• Collaborate with National Park Service and Institute for Wildlife Studies on outreach to hunters and ranchers in Monterey and San Benito counties.	ONGOING
	• Provide 200 boxes of large-caliber non-lead ammunition through a summer raffle intended for fall hunting season.	ANNUALLY UNTIL 2019
	• Provide 500 free boxes of small caliber non-lead ammunition (rimfire) to ranchers with potential for condor activity on their land.	ANNUALLY UNTIL 2019
	• Maintain strategically-located feeding areas to enhance natural foraging on the Big Sur coast.	ONGOING
	• Lease land in southern San Benito or Monterey County to facilitate community outreach and to provide a non-lead food source for condors.	SPRING 2016
<b>Manage collision threats and other potential forms of take to aid in survivorship for the wild population.</b>	• Maintain liaison role between utility companies and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to mitigate power line and wind turbine threats as they arise.	ONGOING



GOAL #1 STRATEGIES OBJECTIVES *continued*

Due

*Manage reproductive threats so that the wild population achieves adequate fledging success.*

- Increase the number of active breeding pairs in central California to at least 10 with half successfully raising a chick.
- Monitor all accessible condor nests in the central coast region.
- Switch non-viable eggs laid in the wild with viable ones from captivity.
- Enhance chick survival with vaccinations, health exams, and treatment for all accessible nests.
- Conduct 4-6 micro-trash cleanup days in Big Sur from May through August when condor chicks are most vulnerable.

SPRING 2017  
ANNUALLY  
ANNUALLY  
ANNUALLY  
ANNUALLY

*Assist development of a new release site in northern California.*

- Support completion of environmental documents with key partners: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, and California Department of Fish and Wildlife.
- Assist in the first release of free-flying condors in northern California.

SUMMER 2017  
FALL 2018

*Expand distribution of condors in relatively low-risk areas with suitable habitat and food resources.*

- Release captive-bred condors near San Simeon elephant seal colony.
- Release captive-bred condors near Ano Nuevo elephant seal colony.

FALL 2016, 2017, 2018  
FALL 2020

*Continue positive condor recovery collaboration with federal and state agencies.*

- Maintain all permits necessary for managing the central California Condor population.
- Submit annual reports summarizing the fulfillment of all permit requirements.

ANNUALLY  
ANNUALLY





# Goal #2

Instill a conservation ethic and inspire youth to take action by fully integrating innovative scientific and ecological education

## GOAL #2 STRATEGIES OBJECTIVES

		Due
<b>Maintain and enhance interpretive center(s) for community outreach</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop new activities in the Discovery Center for park visitors to enhance understanding of condor recovery and other regional wildlife.</li> </ul>	SPRING 2016
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> </ul>	ONGOING
<b>Provide meaningful outdoor education experiences for youth</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage 1,200 youth (ages 4-17) through innovative school year classes and seasonal and year-round programs with approximately 50% underserved annually focusing on nature awareness and stewardship.</li> </ul>	ANNUALLY
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assess need for bilingual services and determine best approaches.</li> </ul>	FALL 2016
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop new opportunities to maintain youth enrollment at current levels beyond 2017.</li> </ul>	WINTER 2017
<b>Expand outdoor education opportunities for youth in Monterey County</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop at least one new partnership in southern and northern Monterey County as well as adjacent counties.</li> </ul>	ANNUALLY
<b>Give presentations and attend tabling events to share the results of our work and expertise for the public</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attend 10 tabling events and give 25 public presentations.</li> </ul>	ANNUALLY



# Goal #3

## Become a regional leader in Endangered and Special-Status Species Research, Recovery, Management, and Consultation

GOAL #3 STRATEGIES	OBJECTIVES	Due
<p><i>Expand research and monitoring opportunities for regionally significant wildlife and collaborate with other researchers</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determine feasibility of at least one new research project involving regionally significant wildlife species.</li> <li>• Survey VWS-owned properties to identify species of conservation concern.</li> <li>• Contract with agencies, companies, nonprofit organizations and others to research and monitor species of conservation concern.</li> </ul>	<p>ANNUALLY</p> <p>ANNUALLY</p> <p>ONGOING</p>
<p><i>Conduct research on California Condor lead exposure, reproduction, and survivorship</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain database of GPS satellite tracking data and improve filtering portals for analyzing potential impacts of local projects.</li> <li>• Maintain a database of eggshell thickness measurements to determine temporal effects of marine contaminants.</li> <li>• Conduct a population viability analysis to evaluate self-sustainability of central California condors.</li> </ul>	<p>ONGOING</p> <p>ONGOING</p> <p>FALL 2018</p>
<p><i>Keep abreast of proposed projects affecting wildlife and develop management solutions to the problems at hand</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify proposed projects in central California that might significantly affect California condors or other wildlife and propose management solutions for affected resources.</li> <li>• Network at three or more regional wildlife or ecological conferences, workshops, and symposia per year.</li> </ul>	<p>ONGOING</p> <p>ANNUALLY</p>
<p><i>Develop the capabilities, size, and leadership of the staff</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and maintain staff skills inventory of full-time regular staff and independent contractors (associates) and identify and fill the “experience gaps”.</li> <li>• Update Statement of Qualifications to be used for securing contracts based on the current capabilities.</li> <li>• Provide support and training for key staff to receive permits on listed species in Central California as well as leadership courses.</li> </ul>	<p>ONGOING</p> <p>ANNUALLY</p> <p>ANNUALLY</p>

# Goal #3 *continued*

## GOAL #3 STRATEGIES    OBJECTIVES *continued*

### *Publish peer-reviewed articles based on our research*

- Prepare and submit a manuscript on eggshell thickness in California condors in California.
- Prepare and submit a manuscript on bald eagle reintroduction on the central California coast.
- Present at least twice per year at technical meetings or conferences.
- Maintain publication library on website to demonstrate past success and release new publications while coordinating with journals and media.

*Due*

SPRING 2016

SPRING 2016

ANNUALLY

ONGOING



# Goal #4

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

## GOAL #4 STRATEGIES OBJECTIVES

		Due
<p><i>Determine feasibility of an expanded role at Andrew Molera State Park (AMSP) to enhance visitor experience and overnight camping</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seek renewal of concession agreement at AMSP to include the creation of a Youth and Family Camp.</li> <li>• Construct Youth and Family Camp.</li> </ul>	<p>FALL 2016</p> <p>SPRING 2018</p>
<p><i>Identify meaningful ways to bring an asset or expertise to a common goal or issue to benefit all collaborating agencies</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and execute new agreements as necessary to support this plan.</li> <li>• Maintain a master list of collaborators and review agreement renewal dates.</li> </ul>	<p>ONGOING</p> <p>ANNUALLY</p>
<p><i>Promote our mission through collaborations with government agencies and non-government organizations</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Forge stronger relationships by meeting annually, at all levels with CDFW, USFWS, NPS, and regional agencies such as Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District to keep abreast of emerging issues or species of concern.</li> <li>• Identify land trusts, zoos, Native American Tribes and other conservation organizations that have the potential for effective collaborations. Meet with key partners annually.</li> <li>• Regarding youth education, maintain current partnerships with Monterey peninsula groups and forge new relationships with other youth-serving organizations to provide opportunities for southern and northern Monterey County as well as adjacent counties.</li> </ul>	<p>ANNUALLY</p> <p>ANNUALLY</p> <p>ONGOING</p>

# Goal #5

Build the organizational capacity and sustainability while fostering a culture to further our mission and accomplish the goals, strategies and objectives of this plan

## GOAL #5 STRATEGIES OBJECTIVES

***Maintain a healthy, productive, collegial, and collaborative work environment and culture***

- Conduct annual board evaluation in terms of donated time and money and other factors of influence.
- Hold at least one board meeting a year at the VWS office or the Discovery Center to facilitate staff inclusion and team building as well as schedule staff to present their work at board meetings.
- Establish on-going board/staff coordination for annual fundraising event and at least three small gatherings for major donors.

Due  
ANNUALLY  
ANNUALLY  
ANNUALLY

***Enhance the size and capabilities of the staff***

- Identify and provide staff training opportunities through professional seminars and classes.
- Conduct employee satisfaction survey.
- Hire as needed additional staff for expanded offerings at Andrew Molera State Park.
- Provide competitive salaries at midpoint or higher via survey of similar nonprofits.
- Ensure staff reviews are completed in a timely manner.

ANNUALLY  
BI-ANNUALLY  
SPRING 2017  
SPRING 2018  
ANNUALLY

GOAL #5 STRATEGIES OBJECTIVES *continued*

***Enhance the size and capabilities of the board***

- Create new board committees to meet the needs of this plan.
- Maintain active participation of all four board standing committees.
- Maintain a list of prospects for consideration and prioritize attributes needed.
- Expand to at least 12 board members representing key areas of need and diversity through ongoing recruitment and succession planning.
- Expand to at least 14 board members through ongoing recruitment and succession planning.

Due  
 SPRING 2016  
 ONGOING  
 ONGOING  
 WINTER 2016/2017  
 WINTER 2017/2018



# Goal #6

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

## GOAL #6 STRATEGIES OBJECTIVES

GOAL #6 STRATEGIES	OBJECTIVES	Due
<i>Enhance our development and communications capabilities</i>	• Identify and cultivate major gift prospects and update annual fund plan.	ANNUALLY
	• Engage, inform, and retain 800 contributing individual members .	SPRING 2017
	• Hire a full-time Development Director or Director of Strategic Initiatives to lead the organization in development and communications.	SUMMER 2018
	• Engage, inform, and retain 1,000 contributing individual members.	SPRING 2019
<i>Improve our financial health</i>	• Achieve and retain three months of operating reserves.	FALL 2017
	• Achieve and retain six months of operating reserves.	SPRING 2020
	• Maintain little to no debt.	ONGOING
<i>Expand and increase fee-for-service contract opportunities and rental income</i>	• Increase earned income to represent one-third of organization revenue.	SPRING 2018
<i>Redefine how individual members can contribute to VWS with specific benefits and well-defined approaches</i>	• Research what other similar nonprofits are doing and prepare draft membership benefits and approaches.	SPRING 2016





*Name a wild condor!*

...see VWS membership benefits at [www.ventanaws.org](http://www.ventanaws.org)

# OUTCOMES

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

## GOAL #1 - *Condors*

By 2020, the California condor in central California will be showing signs of becoming self-sustaining, with a positive rate of population growth. This will be realized because of the provisioning of non-lead ammunition to hunters and ranchers where it's needed most and the passage of time after the phasing in of the statewide lead ammunition ban set to be completed by 2019. There will be a minimum of 10 nesting pairs in central California ranging from Big Sur to San Simeon and inland to San Benito and southern Monterey County. New condor releases will take place near Ano Nuevo in Santa Cruz County and in northern California near the Oregon border.



## GOAL #2 - *Education and Outreach*

Meaningful outdoor youth experiences will be provided to 1,200 individuals totaling approximately 25,000 contact hours annually focusing on nature awareness and stewardship. Program offerings will occur throughout Monterey County including southern and northern portions as well as adjacent counties. We will maintain an emphasis on overcoming a transportation barrier by owning and operating a fleet of at least three, 15-passenger vans. Roughly half of participants will come from underserved communities.



## GOAL #3 - *Research and Consultation*

We will develop new skills and expertise to get involved with wildlife species not currently a focus so that we become a regional leader in endangered species and special status species research and consultation. Several peer-reviewed publications will be contributed to the scientific literature to further the understanding of endangered species recovery. We will keep abreast of development projects affecting wildlife so that we can propose and implement solutions to problems addressed in the planning process.



## 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 to benefit all collaborating agencies. Specifically, we will develop an expanded role at Andrew Molera State Park. We will expand collaboration with other youth-serving non-governmental organizations to reach underserved communities and in terms of condor recovery we will maintain and develop new key partnerships to achieve success.

## GOAL #5 - *Organizational Capacity*

Ventana Wildlife Society will maintain an active board of directors fully utilizing four standing committees focusing on financial integrity while advancing the organization forward and providing executive oversight. The board will grow in size to 14 members and staff salaries will be competitive compared to similar nonprofits in the area by 2018.

## GOAL #6 - *Financial*

In the next few years we will engage 800 contributing members, increasing to 1,000, to further strengthen the organization. We will recruit a full-time development director by 2018. Concurrently, we will develop new recurring revenue in the form of earned income so that one-third of the total annual revenue is from these sources. We will attain six months of operating reserves by 2020 further strengthening the organization to carry out its mission for years to come and maintain little to no debt.



# VENTANA WILDLIFE SOCIETY

*VWS' mission is conserving native wildlife and their habitats through science, education and collaboration*



## **Ventana Wildlife Society**

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[www.ventanaws.org](http://www.ventanaws.org)

[www.mycondor.org](http://www.mycondor.org)

[www.condorspotter.com](http://www.condorspotter.com)

*Strategic Plan*  
2016 - 2020