

On the Wild Side



NEWS BRIEF SPRING 2012 PREMIER ISSUE



VWS - MAKING NEWS

Helping Hunters and Ranchers to Help Condors

We are so convinced that lead from spent ammunition is the number one problem for condors in the wild that we're putting our money where our mouth is and are now providing free of charge two boxes of nonlead ammunition for residents of San Benito and Monterey Counties. Funding for this program was raised entirely from private individuals who are passionate about wildlife conservation and who support safe hunting. Their gift enabled VWS to launch and administer this pilot project. On March 26, we announced our offer in local press and we took 500 applications, enough for 1,000 boxes of ammunition, in just two days! We in turn placed these orders on behalf of the applicants and Cabela's is sending the ammunition directly. The response was overwhelming and quickly exhausted the funding we had available. While it is very encouraging that there is such a demand for nonlead ammunition, it is an eye-opener for us that we have more work to do to expand the scope of this program.

As we continue to closely follow the progress of the condors we released to the wild, we know that some ongoing lead ammunition use continues, despite the ban now in place requiring the use of nonlead ammunition in condor country. And at the same time, we understand that making

a switch can be difficult for some people. In this pilot program, we made a broad selection of calibers and brands available and received a great deal of positive remarks. We only wish we have more to give out at this time. Our mission is to conserve native wildlife and their habitats and we also understand that for the California condor, the use of nonlead ammunition is critically important for their ongoing survival in the wild. Using nonlead ammunition just makes sense from a variety of standpoints and it is the right thing to do if you hunt or shoot in condor country. A big thank you to all those who have switched to nonlead ammunition. 



Lead ammunition fragments upon impact, where as non-lead alternatives stay intact.

Condor Field Notes

by David Moen, Condor Crew Leader

FEBRUARY 2012

As winter weather holds off for yet another month, Condor breeding is kicking into high gear. Without the winter storms we are used to we are witnessing earlier courtship and mating this year. Based on individual movements and behaviors, it is likely we already have three active nests this season! Condor pairs (male/female) 209/231, 194/171, and 167/190 have each been documented spending time alone at their nest cavities with mates switching out every few days, key signs of pairs incubating eggs.

Since it takes a Condor egg about 54-60 days to hatch, trading off incubation duties every 3-4 days ensures that each adult can feed before their next shift begins. We were even lucky enough to spot the wild egg for pair 194/171, which is a rare sight when observing these clandestine nesters. While it is not unprecedented, it has been a long time since we have had this many nests on the Central Coast before March. The warm weather and other early signs of spring seem to have jump-started egg-laying this year.

We continue to watch all of our established pairs very closely and are crossing our fingers for more nesting attempts (and successes!) for the breeding season as seven are possible. We are still hopeful to see nest attempts from pairs 199/231, 168/208, 204/222, and 219/310.

continued on page 2

2012 VENTANA WILDLIFE SOCIETY - SUMMER CAMP PROGRAMS



For Ages 4-17 Years Old

To REGISTER, VISIT
WWW.VENTANAWS.ORG
OR CALL 831-455-9514

SINGLE DAY ADVENTURES FOR AGES 8-15

COST:
\$55/PARTICIPANT
CAMP HOURS:
8:00AM-5:00PM

2012 CAMP DATES:

- SANTA CRUZ MOUNTAINS
JUNE 5; JUNE 25; JULY 5; AUG 15
- PINNACLES NAT'L MONUMENT
JUNE 6; JUNE 26; JULY 6; AUG 13
- BIG SUR/CONDORS
JUNE 7; JUNE 27; JULY 2; AUG 14

In Big Sur, experience the endangered and majestic California Condor through an in-depth look at our recovery efforts. **EASY.** In Santa Cruz, we'll walk through old growth redwoods, overlook a waterfall, and chase down Banana Slugs while learning about redwood forest ecology. **MODERATE.** At Pinnacles National Monument, explore talus caves and the strange rock formations and watch for condors and raptors wheeling around the cliffs. **MODERATE.**

NATURAL SCIENCE DISCOVERY FOR AGES 8-12

COST:
\$310/PARTICIPANT
\$250/VWS MEMBERS
CAMP HOURS:

MON, TUES, WED:
8:00AM-4:00PM
THURS 8:00AM TO... FRI 12:00PM

2012 CAMP DATES:

- OCEANS ODYSSEY
JUNE 11-15 AND JULY 30-AUG 3
- HOORAY FOR HABITATS
JUNE 25-29
- MOUNTAINS ROCK
JULY 16-20

Each week includes swimming, hiking, and a Thursday night campout in Big Sur! Whether it's kayaking in search of sea otters, harbor seals, and sea lions or looking for spouting whales and playful dolphins on a boat ride in the Monterey Bay...join us as we explore tide pools and fresh water habitats, cool redwood forests, dry canyons, sunny meadows, and golden hills!

CONDOR WILDERNESS FOR AGES 13-17

COST:
\$425/PARTICIPANT
\$350 VWS MEMBERS
CAMP HOURS:

TUES 8:00AM...THURS 4:00PM

2012 CAMP DATES:

JULY 17-19
JULY 31-AUG 2

Condor Wilderness Camp is for teens interested in learning what it takes to be a wildlife field biologist. Three day/two night experience - learn about the Condor Reintroduction Program, utilize radio telemetry in tracking wild condors and participate in a food placement for the wild flock (optional). Meet wildlife field biologists, and assist in a work project benefiting the environment.

DROP OFF LOCATIONS:

- **SINGLE DAYS:** Laguna Grande Park across from DMV in Seaside
- **DISCOVERY CAMP:** Larsen Field next to Carmel Mission
- **CONDOR CAMP:** Del Monte Center
- **WEE ONES:** Via Paraiso, Coast Guard Pier in Monterey, Laguna Grande in Seaside

WEE ONES IN THE WOODS FOR AGES 4*-7

COST:
\$25/PARTICIPANT
CAMP HOURS:
8:30AM-11:30AM OR
12:30PM-3:30PM



*Youth must be able to request the bathroom

2012 CAMP DATES:

- NATURE TALES
JUNE 4-PM AND JUNE 28-AM
- CREEPY CRAWLY HUNT JULY 3
- AMAZING ANIMALS AUG 13
- SUN-SATIONAL TIME AUG 14
- TIDE POOL TRAIPISE AUG 15
(please inform of AM or PM choice)

Join us for storytelling, exploring and creating! In Nature Tales we will hop across rocks and dodge leaves, creating our own nature adventure story. While on Creepy Crawly Hunt no stone or log will be left unturned! Amazing Animals will get kids excited about the critters that share our earth, while a Sun-sational Time will be had learning about the sun as we catch it's rays in a unique sun print - and what is summer without a Tide Pool Traipse?

LIMITED SCHOLARSHIPS ARE AVAILABLE - Applications can be found online at www.ventanaws.org, or call our office to have one mailed to you. Please visit our website for our full refund policy. Staff are CPR/First Aid Certified and drivers possess a Class B commercial license.

VWS DISCOVERY CENTER

Open Memorial Day through Labor Day
Saturdays, Sundays, and all holiday Mondays from 9:00AM - 4:00PM

ENJOYED BY
ALL AGES!



Come visit our Discovery Center in Big Sur, California located at Andrew Molera State Park, where you can see and interact with the exhibit *Bringing the Condors Home* and learn about the endangered and majestic California Condor and the efforts we're making to recover these breathtaking birds to the wild. The Discovery Center is a great place for anyone interested in spending time in beautiful Big Sur, going on great hikes with views of the mountains and ocean. Bring your family or friends and have a picnic, sign up for a Sunday* 2-hour VWS Condor Tour, or interact with on-site biologists and naturalists. We manage over 60 free-flying condors in Central California and are hoping for a plentiful breeding season...

*Check our website for currently offered tours

Condor Field Notes

continued from pg 1

Happily, our four recently released captive-bred birds (559, 566, 569, and 583) are doing well. 566 flew stealth for a while after his new radio transmitter quit unexpectedly, but we are tracking him now after we trapped him for a new one. All four have been feeding regularly and exhibiting proper social conduct towards the older, more dominant Condors in the flock- a good sign that these birds are developing the necessary skills for survival in the wild. Read more about their profiles and nicknames, soon to be uploaded to our adopt-a-Condor website: www.MyCondor.org

Our Friend Remembered



November 30, 2011: Condor 566 was released by Mike Tyner less than 12 hours before the wind storm picked up, that took his life. During that short period after the release Mike was elated. He was engulfed in joy in our last sight of him - laughing and happy on his ATV - and it was a kind of release all its own; a release from mentoring, a release from the uphill battle of conservation that he so passionately invested in. Mike gave his life to help endangered species flourish and his life is a reminder that we can all play a part in devoting ourselves to making the world a healthier and more beautiful place. Releasing a young condor into the wild was not only Mike's last act of service to our earth community, it was an act that captured the essence of Mike's legacy - one that will go on indefinitely. With everyone's help Condors will continue to have a chance at fulfilling their purpose as a tribute to Mike in the way he fulfilled his purpose as a tribute to them. 🐾

FROM THE ARCHIVES

Posted Online Monthly by VWS Field Biologists

NOTES FROM THE FIELD, MARCH/APRIL 2007...

In early March, a team of biologists entered the(condor) nest to extract the fertile egg and replace it with a dummy egg during the incubation period. A constant watch was kept on the nest site throughout this time, as we observed the pair (male 168 and female 208) switching out every 3-4 days. A normal pair invests equal time incubating their egg, and this pair seemed to have the pattern down. In early April, we re-entered the nest and removed the dummy egg and replaced it with a hatching egg and around April 8th, our first chick was hatched in the wild! We are continuing our surveillance of this

nest throughout the chick's development and anticipate its first flight from the nest around September.

We also discovered another egg in mid-April laid by female 190. She and her partner, 167, had attempted to nest in this redwood cavity last season with no luck, but this year produced an egg! We again replaced the egg with a dummy, and plan on replacing it in May with a hatching egg... 🐾

In 2007, we had 3 breeding pairs, this year we're predicting we'll have 6 breeding pairs!

...TO READ MORE, GO TO:

www.ventanaws.org/species_condors_fieldnotes/2007CondorFieldNotes

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VWS ONLINE

- VENTANAWS.ORG
- MYCONDOR.ORG
- CONDORSPOTTER.COM
- ARE YOU OUR FRIEND ON FACEBOOK? www.facebook.com/VentanaWildlifeSociety

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If you wish to receive our e-newsletters

that are sent out monthly, go to www.ventanaws.org and "sign up" today. VWS does not share email addresses with anyone and you may unsubscribe at any time.

2011 ANNUAL REPORT can be viewed at www.ventanaws.org/newsletter. To request a copy be mailed to you, please call (831) 455-9514.

VWS MERCHANDISE now available online! For the current fashions that make great gifts for any occasion (and helps conserve wildlife), go to www.ventanaws.org/store



CALIFORNIA CONDORS IN CALIFORNIA



LEFT: VWS Condor Biologist David Moen,
CENTER: VWS Condor Crew Leader, (in memory) Mike Tyner,
RIGHT: VWS Condor Intern Elyse DeFranco

Release of Condor 167 after routine health check-up in spring 2011.

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NEWS BRIEF SPRING 2012

In This Issue

- ▷ VWS Making News - *Helping Hunters and Ranchers to Help Condors*
- ▷ Condor Field Notes - February 2012
- ▷ From the Archives - March/April 2007
- ▷ 2012 VWS Summer Camp Programs - Ages 4-17
- ▷ VWS Discovery Center - *open from Memorial Day-Labor Day*
- ▷ *Our Friend Remembered*
- ▷ Current California Condor Range, in California
- ▷ VWS Online
- ▷ 2012 Calendar of Events



2011 VWS Summer Camp students assist trainers in giving instruction to the sea lions at S.L.E.W.T.H.S. in Moss Landing

Printed on recycled paper with soy ink.

Go to www.ventanaws.org for more details

June 10 - at Holman Ranch, 3:30AM-7:30PM, Adult \$125 (or five for \$500), Children 6-17 \$50, Under 5 free
RSVP to cathyhamilton@ventanaws.org or (831) 455-9514

CALIFORNIA CONDOR BENEFIT

Feathers in Flight



2012 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- Condor Viewing Tours
2nd Sunday of every month, Big Sur, 12:00-2:00PM, \$50/person contact mikestake@ventanaws.org to sign up
- VWS Summer Camp Programs
March 15 - Registration Begins, see page 2. Information and forms avail online: www.ventanaws.org/education_summercamp

MAIL PREFERENCE:
If you prefer to receive the VWS News Brief in electronic form (rather than recycled paper), please let us know by email at cathyhamilton@ventanaws.org.

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