

SEPE CONDOR SANCTUARY

TAR CREEK CLOSURE

LOS PADRES NATIONAL FOREST



Santa Barbara
Museum of Natural History

Partners In Managing Our Public Lands

Tar Creek Closure

The user created trail to Tar Creek (within the Sespe Condor Sanctuary) is closed to public entry. Public visitors to Tar Creek expose condors to human food, microtrash and direct human contact. This exposure increases the risk of injury as documented by the death of a condor in 2008. Failure to adhere to this closure may result in a citation which carries a penalty up to \$5,000 and/or six months in jail.

Sespe Condor Sanctuary

In 1947, the Sespe Condor Sanctuary was established in the Los Padres National Forest to provide critical habitat, wildlife refuge and protection for California condor. To minimize human contact, the Sanctuary was closed to public entry with the exception of quarter-mile wide travel corridors (Sespe Creek, Agua Blanca Creek, Alder Creek Trail, and Bucksnot Trail) which allow recreational access through the area.

The California condor heavily utilizes the Sanctuary to breed, nest, roost and forage. Areas of high-quality habitat without human contact are necessary and play an important role in the recovery of the condor.

California Condor

California condors are one of the most endangered species in the world. They were placed on the federal endangered species list in 1967. In the 1980's, due to a decrease-

ing population, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service began a captive breeding program teaming with the Los Angeles Zoo and the San Diego Wild Animal Park. In 1987, a controversial decision was made to bring all remaining condors (22 individuals) into captivity and the last wild bird was captured in 1987. At that time, it was uncertain if the California condor would ever soar again in the wild. Through the efforts of many organizations and individuals, reintroduction of California condors began in 1992 and now has a population of over 230 animals living in the wild.

Today, the greatest threat to condors in the wild is humans. Condors forage exclusively on dead animals; they are especially susceptible to lead exposure from carcasses left in the field and lead poisoning is often fatal. Furthermore, human habituation can lead to the likelihood of condors associating food with people, resulting in reduced reliance on natural foraging behavior. Humans also leave microtrash (bottle caps, broken glass, litter, etc.) which condors feed to their young often resulting in death of the chick.

How Can You Help

- Please respect the closure of the Sespe Condor Sanctuary and travel only in designated travel corridors.
- Don't litter. Microtrash is one of the leading causes of death in condors.
- Hunting is not allowed in the Sanctuary. Use lead free ammunition when hunting in areas outside of the Sanctuary.

More Information

For additional information, please contact the Ojai Ranger District at 805-646-4348 or visit the Los Padres National Forest website at:

<http://www.fs.usda.gov/lpnf/>

Condor Facts

- * Largest flying land bird in North America, with a wingspan of up to 9½ feet.
- * Weighs up to 26 pounds.
- * Soar and glide at speeds up to 50 MPH.
- * Can travel up to 100 miles in a day.
- * Opportunistic scavengers that feed on large, dead mammals.
- * Live up to 60 years old in the wild.
- * Sexually mature at 5-7 years old and mate for life.
- * Produce one egg every other year.
- * Parents share incubation and feeding responsibilities.



United States
Department of
Agriculture



Forest Service
Pacific Southwest Region

Los Padres National Forest
Ojai Ranger District