



NEWS RELEASE

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Contact

Susan Whaley, The Peregrine Fund, (208) 362-8274

Jeff Humphrey, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, (602) 242-0210, ext. 222

Lynda Lambert, Arizona Game and Fish Department, (623) 236-7203

Rachel Tueller, Bureau of Land Management, (435) 688-3303

Kirby Lynn Shedlowski, Grand Canyon National Park, (928) 638-7779

Mark Hadley, Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, (801) 538-4737

David Hercher, Kaibab National Forest, (928) 643-8110

Two of three wild-hatched condors have fledged, joining the wild flock of over 70 condors in northern Arizona and southern Utah

Program biologists from The Peregrine Fund and Zion National Park have confirmed that two California condor chicks have left their nests and taken flight in northern Arizona, but hopes of a third chick successfully reaching the fledgling milestone in southern Utah have been dashed by a lack of visual observation. The third chick was Utah's first wild-hatched condor chick.

Observations of the condor parents visiting the Utah nest cave suggested all was going well during the six months leading up to fledging, but by late November, a month after the predicted fledge date, biologists noted that something was wrong. The Utah chick quit coming out to the cave opening, and soon after, the parents decreased their visitation to the cave. After multiple trips to investigate, biologists concluded that the chick had not survived.

"Although two out of three 2014 condor chicks surviving to fledging remains encouraging, the loss of Utah's first chick is a hard reminder that critters have a tough go of it in the wild. It's just a shame that we weren't able to recover a carcass to examine what might have provided clues as to the cause of death," said Chris Parish, Condor Program Director for The Peregrine Fund, which manages the wild Arizona-Utah flock.

As for the other two condors now gracing Arizona's skies, both birds appear to be doing well since fledging. Condors, like other wild animals, are most vulnerable in their first few months. That is why condor parents tend to their young for a year after fledging.

There are now 73 condors in the wild in Arizona and Utah, including the two new fledglings. A total of 25 chicks have hatched in the wild since condors were first introduced in Arizona in 1996.

The recovery effort is a cooperative program by federal, state, and private partners, including The Peregrine Fund, Arizona Game and Fish Department, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Arizona Strip Field Office of the Bureau of Land Management, Grand Canyon and Zion national parks, Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, and Kaibab and Dixie national forests.

DID YOU KNOW?

- Prior to reintroduction, the last wild condor in Arizona was sighted just south of the Grand Canyon in 1924.
- Condors reach maturity at about six years of age. They usually produce one egg every other year.
- The condor is the largest land bird in North America. The birds can weigh up to 26 pounds and have a wingspan up to 9½ feet.
- Condors were added to the federal Endangered Species List in 1967.
- Lead poisoning is the leading cause of diagnosed death for California Condors in Arizona and Utah, with 29 lead-caused deaths confirmed since 2000.

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