

CALIFORNIA CONDOR
(GYMNOGYPS CALIFORNIANUS)

Navajo/Federal Statuses: NESL G4 / listed endangered 11 MAR 1967 (32FR:4001); experimental, non-essential population designation for northern Arizona reintroduction 16 OCT 1996 (61FR:54044), includes Navajo Nation west of US Hwy.191 and north of Interstate Hwy.40; MBTA.

Distribution: Once widely distributed through North America, occupied range was restricted to southern CA by mid-20th century; two extant populations exist in southern CA and northern AZ resulting from reintroductions in the 1990s. Northern AZ population was reintroduced adjacent to the Navajo Nation at Vermilion Cliffs and now use much of Marble and Grand canyons for foraging and breeding, and to a smaller extent western Navajo Nation for foraging. Condors are now breeding in the wild in northern AZ, but not yet on the Navajo Nation; roosting on the Navajo Nation is mostly restricted to Marble Canyon.

Habitat: Ill-defined nest, if any, composed of existing debris within overhung cliff ledges, crevices, potholes, or caves; in northern AZ, nesting will likely be within walls of major river canyons or tall, steep cliffs within desertscrub and grasslands. Nest locations allow easy approach from the air, at least partial shelter from weather, and are usually inaccessible for terrestrial predators.

Similar Species: Despite its massive size, un-feathered head, and distinctive coloration, condors may be confused in-flight with smaller raptors, including: Golden Eagle (which has relatively longer tail, further-projecting head, and unique under-wing coloration), immature Bald Eagle (which has more underbody mottled-white appearance; and Turkey Vulture (which has upturned (dihedral) wings and much less steady flight).

Phenology:

- e.NOV-l.JAN: pair formation (pairs remain together on year-round, multi-year basis once formed)
- m.JAN-e.APR: egg laying, incubation (57 days)
- l.MAR-e.JUN: nestling period (5½-6 months)
- e.SEP-m.NOV: fledging of young (young independent from adults after 6 months)
- year-round: non-migratory wide-ranging residents

Survey Method: Contact the Navajo Nation Dept. of Fish and Wildlife which should have current information on nesting and roosting sites on the Navajo Nation; or ≥1 survey in suitable habitat with high-powered optics year-round. Rather current information may be obtained in the “Notes from the Field” link on www.peregrinefund.org.

Avoidance: No activity within 1.6 km (1 mi) of nest site during 1 FEB-30 JUN; avoidance period may be extended at either end depending on project; and no activity within 0.8 km (0.5 mi) of communal roosts while occupied by condors. If condor(s) occur at project site: activity should cease until condor(s) leave on their own; Navajo Nation Dept. of, or U.S., Fish and Wildlife should be contacted immediately; allow no human interaction with the bird(s), especially non-permitted hazing; project sites should be cleaned at the end of each day to minimize attracting condors.

References: [Federal Recovery Plan - 1996](#)

Snyder, N.F.R., and N.J. Schmitt. 2002. California Condor (*Gymnogyps californianus*). In *The Birds of North America*, No.610 (A.Poole and F.Gill, eds.). The Academy of Natural Sciences, Philadelphia, PA, and the American Ornithologists' Union, Washington, D.C. (description p.2)