



BACKGROUND

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ABOUT THE ANIMALS FEATURED IN CALIFORNIA TRAILS

- Endangered or Threatened California Native Species
- New Exhibit of California Condor – One of Only Three Zoos in the World Featuring These Critically Endangered Birds
- Also on View: Channel Island Foxes, Desert Tortoises, Bald Eagles and Endangered Local Reptiles and Amphibians
- *California Trails* Opens on Earth Day, April 22, 2009

On Earth Day, April 22, 2009, the Santa Barbara Zoo opens *California Trails*, a new exhibit complex showcasing threatened or endangered California native species including critically endangered California condors, plus Channel Island foxes, bald eagles, desert tortoises, and local reptiles and amphibians. The Santa Barbara Zoo is now one of only three zoos in the world to display California condors, a species which was on the brink of extinction. Numbering only 22 individuals in 1982, there are now 321 birds, with more than half of the population flying free. But there is still much work to be done to “save” all these species. For more information, visit www.sbzoo.org.

CALIFORNIA CONDOR



Four juvenile California condors are housed in a spacious hilltop aviary overlooking part of their historic range, the Santa Ynez Mountains. With this exhibit, the Santa Barbara Zoo becomes one of only three zoos in the world to display the endangered, California condor, joining Condor Ridge at the San Diego Wild Animal Park and the Chapultepec Zoo in Mexico City.

Habitat/Range: Though they once ranged from British Columbia to northern Baja California, condors are now only found in areas where these huge birds have been rereleased including: Big Sur, southern and central California, northern Arizona, and Baja California, in large areas of remote country with isolated rocky outcrops and cliffs.

Description: Adults have mostly bald head and neck with skin in shades of pink, red, orange, yellow, and light blue (the color changes with the birds' behavior). Feathers are mostly black, with white under-wing linings. Weighing more than 20 pounds as adults, and with a wing spread of more than nine feet, they are one of the largest flying birds in the world. The beak is long, sharp, and powerful. Juveniles, such as those on exhibit at the Zoo, have black skin and heads; the coloration won't develop until the birds are mature, which is between ages six to eight.

Breeding: These monogamous birds, once paired, may take up to three years to begin breeding. They nest in caves among boulders on cliffs, and the female lays a single aqua-colored egg on the cave floor. The parents share duties in caring for the egg during the 54 to 58 day incubation and both care for the chick.

Diet: Consists of medium and large-sized dead mammals (carrion) like cattle, sheep, deer, horses, and marine mammals in any state of decay. Condors may travel several hundred miles in search of food, which they find by sight or by following other scavenging birds. On average, condors consume two to three pounds of meat each time they eat.

Status: Condors are "critically endangered" according to the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN). The California condor has been listed as "endangered" under the Endangered Species Act since 1967 and by California state law since 1971. In 2008, the number of California condors in the wild became greater than the number in captivity for the first time in over twenty years.

Fun Facts: Condors do not have vocal cords but they can make hissing and grunting noises, and when scared, they regurgitate (throw up) their stomach contents.

The Zoo's Condors: The Zoo's four juvenile birds are listed by the Condor Recovery Program as numbers 432 (male), 433 (female), 439 (male) and 440 (female). They were all hatched at the Peregrine Fund's World Center for Birds of Prey (Boise, ID) within a two-week period from April 12 through 24, 2007, by different pairs. They won't display the distinctive red coloration on their faces until they are mature, which is between ages six to eight. The birds displayed at the Zoo may change over time, depending on the needs of the Recovery Program. There are no plans for breeding at the Zoo at this time.

CHANNEL ISLAND FOX



Renovation of the Channel Island fox exhibit has enhanced viewing opportunities of this endangered species, found only on the islands off the California Coast. The Santa Barbara Zoo is one of only a few facilities breeding these small, colorful animals and this renovation allows space for two separate breeding pairs. This year marks the 10th anniversary of the Zoo's collaboration with the U.S. National Park Service regarding conservation of the Channel Island fox.

Habitat/Range: Restricted to the six largest Channel Islands.

Description: The largest Channel Islands native mammal, this descendent of the mainland gray fox evolved into a unique species over 10,000 years ago. Markings are similar to its ancestor, but the island fox is one-third smaller, about the size of a housecat (four to five pounds). The San Clemente Island subspecies, which the Zoo holds, is littler still: it is the smallest U. S. fox species. They can

be active by day or night, but are most often seen foraging during early morning and from late afternoon to early evening.

Breeding: Generally monogamous (mate for life) and breed only once a year. Litter size ranges from one to as many as five pups, but two or three is average. The sires play an important role in the rearing of young.

Diet: They primarily eat insects and land snails, but also feed on rodents, birds, eggs, reptiles, fruits and other plants. They adapt to their surroundings: on Santa Cruz Island, foxes climb tall shrubs to reach berries and to eat flying insects. On San Nicolas Island, they enter gull colonies to prey on eggs and chicks.

Status: Four subspecies of island fox were listed as “endangered” under the Endangered Species Act in March 2004; they are listed as “critically endangered” by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature. They face predation by golden eagles, habitat destruction by feral pigs, and canine distemper. Through collaborative efforts, these populations are starting to make a recovery.

Fun Fact: Island Chumash regarded this fox with special reverence and crafted quivers, capes, blankets, and ceremonial headdresses out of the hides. The foxes served as totems, dream helpers, and characters in legends.

The Zoo’s Channel Island Foxes: The Zoo has been involved with the research and care of these animals since 1999, and works closely with the National Park Service to study their behavior and to increase captive populations. Offspring from the Zoo’s foxes have gone to the Los Angeles Zoo and the Charles Paddock Zoo in Atascadero. Two of the Zoo’s five foxes came from San Clemente Island, another from Santa Rosa Island, and two were born at the Santa Barbara Zoo.

DESERT TORTOISE



A new habitat has been created for the endangered desert tortoise in what was once the Zoo Playground. Once commonplace in the California deserts, they now face threats from car and off-road traffic and suburban sprawl, among other factors. Large, prehistoric looking chuckwalla lizards will eventually share this exhibit space.

Habitat/Range: Desert areas in southwestern U.S., northwestern Mexico, excluding Baja California.

Description: Medium-sized with upper shell (carapace) average 14 inches that is brown or horn-colored, usually without definite pattern. Lower shell (plastron) is yellowish. Limbs are stocky, forelegs are covered in large conical scales, and toes have large claws. Mouth has sharp beak and no teeth.

Breeding: They don’t reach reproductive maturity until 25 to 30 years of age. Males fight for females by trying to turn each other over. Eggs have an incubation of 90 to 120 days and the hatchlings’ gender is determined by temperature: eggs incubated at 79 to 87 degrees become females, and eggs incubated at 88 to 91 degrees become males. There is no parental care.

Diet: Grass, leaves, weeds, cactus, other succulent plants, and flowers.

Status: The official reptile of California has been listed as vulnerable by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature due to human activities such as off-road traffic, suburban sprawl, and illegal collecting for the pet trade.

Fun Fact: They can live in places where the ground is as hot as 140 degrees; though they take shelter from extreme heat and cold in burrows. They can go for up to a year without ever drinking, getting most of the water they need from the plants they eat.

The Zoo's Desert Tortoises: The Zoo has displayed three male tortoises for several years in a different location. Three females, from the Living Desert in Palm Desert, have recently arrived at the Zoo and will join the males in the new exhibit.

Western Chuckwalla – Not Yet on View



Habitat/Range: Southern desert areas of Utah and Nevada through deserts of California and Arizona to Sonora and eastern half of Baja Mexico; in rocky hillsides, lava flows and rock outcroppings.

Description: They are the second largest native lizard found in the U.S. and an adult male can measure up to 18 inches in length. Their color changes with age and varies with the color of the habitat, and they also are able to change color from dark to light in order to reflect or absorb heat. Males are usually dark brown to blackish with red or orange coloration along their sides, with tails and sides of light gray or cream, sometimes reddish. Females and young are often brown to blackish with bands across the body and tail.

Breeding: They breed from April to June with five to 16 eggs laid from June to August. Females may only lay eggs every two or three years.

Diet: Eats a variety of vegetation, especially creosote flowers, leaves, fruit, and occasionally insects.

Status: A Federal “Special of Special Concern” in areas of active desert development. Without disturbance, the populations appear to be stable.

Fun Fact: When disturbed, a chuckwalla will retreat into a rock crevice, inflating its body with air and using its strong claws and rough skin to tightly wedge itself into the crevice to make extraction difficult.

The Zoo's Chuckwallas: The Zoo will obtain chuckwallas for this exhibit in coming months.

NORTHERN BALD EAGLE



The Zoo's current pair of bald eagles is included in *California Trails*. The use of DDT as a pesticide in the 1960s caused bald eagle populations to crash and landed them on the Endangered Species list. The species is rebounding and their status was changed from Endangered to Threatened in 1995.

Range/Habitat: Most of North America and northern Mexico. Wide range of habitats but usually found close to water; large trees and rocky cliffs are chosen as nesting sites.

Description: Adults are easily recognizable by their distinct white heads and tails. Wing span can top seven feet and weight as much as 14 pounds, though the averages are much less. As with most raptors, the females are larger than males. The characteristic white head appears around age four. Spiny scales on the toes (spicules) and sharp talons are for gripping slippery fish.

Breeding: Sexual maturity is at four or five years and eagles mate for life (though if one dies, the survivor often accepts a new mate). Eagle nests (or *aeries*) are typically around five feet in diameter. As pairs often return to the same nest year after year, some become enormous. One to three eggs are laid, and the 35-day incubation duties are shared by both parents. Eggs hatch in the order they were laid. At six weeks, the eaglets are nearly as large as their parents and can take their first flights ten to 13 weeks after hatching.

Diet: Fish are a staple food, but bald eagles will also take small mammals and scavenge. Pursuit flight is either a swooping down or a direct dive, prey is then captured with talons.

Status: Species was once classified as “endangered” under the Endangered Species Act, primarily due to DDT poisoning. The population has recovered well and is now listed as “threatened.”

Fun Fact: The head helps explain how they got their name: bald eagles are really bald, they are “balde” – an Old English word for “white-headed.”

The Zoo’s Bald Eagles: As a result of injuries in the wild, neither of the Zoo’s birds can be re-released into the wild; one is missing a wing, the other is missing an eye.

RATTLESNAKE CANYON



This new exhibit showcases reptiles and amphibians found in the Los Padres National Forest and eventually feature the endangered red-legged frog. The Zoo works in the field with the U. S. Forest Service to monitor this species, which has been decimated due to non-native predators, pollution and habitat loss. Rattlesnakes and gopher snakes, frogs, and newts currently inhabit the exhibit, with more species to be added soon.

Southern Pacific Rattlesnakes and Gopher Snakes

Is it a Southern Pacific rattlesnake or a gopher snake? These two species – one venomous, the other a harmless look-alike – are shown side-by-side so guests can learn their differences. One hint: a rattler’s head is thick and triangular; the gopher snake’s is slim and barely distinguishable from its neck.

California Newts

California newts are found in wet forests, oak forests, chaparral, and rolling grasslands in the ranges along the coast and coast range mountains from Mendocino County to San Diego County. They can be seen moving together in large numbers during the day in breeding season.

Pacific And California Chorus Frogs

Pacific and California chorus frogs are also share these exhibits, adding their vocalizations.

Arboreal Salamander

This salamander breathes through thin moist skin instead of lungs. They live in damp places on land but are adapted for climbing with long toes and rounded tail – some have been found as high as 59 feet above the ground.

Red-Legged Frogs and Western Toads – Not Yet on View

They may be small, the endangered red-legged frog is the focus of a big conservation effort. The species is listed as “vulnerable” by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and “threatened” under the Endangered Species Act.

The Zoo works in the field with the U. S. Forest Service to monitor this species, which has been decimated due to pollution, habitat loss, and non-native predators, such as bullfrogs. Sharing the exhibit will be Western toads, now also facing habitat loss.

Monterrey Ensatinas – Not Yet On View

Though their name sounds like a dish served with salsa, Monterrey ensatinas are actually very special salamanders – they breathe not through lungs, but through their thin skin. They need moist environments to “breathe,” and will be displayed with California newts in a humid exhibit.

BARNYARD

The Zoo's Barnyard exhibit has been renovated and now features breeds that played an important role in California's ranching history: San Clemente Island goats, Navajo-Churro sheep, and Guinea hogs.

San Clemente Island Goat



Habitat/Range: Goats were left on San Clemente Island in the late 1800s and became a part of ranching on the Channel Islands. They later became feral and destructive and grew in population until the U.S. Navy initiated a goat removal program in the 1980s to save native endangered wildlife.

Description: Fine-boned, deer-like, and very graceful; only slightly taller than dwarf goats. Most show a dark “buckskin” pattern; however, they display a wide variety of color variations ranging from all-brown to all-white. Impressive horns on the bucks sweep back and twist out; spreads can be over three feet wide.

Breeding: On the island, they had several breeding seasons per year. Does usually had twins, but often had single or triplet births. The size of the island goat population affected the birthrate. When goats were fewer, the birth rates increased and more births were triplets.

Diet: They were able to thrive on the plants available on the island. As there are no freshwater streams on the island, they relied on watershed seeps and pools that formed in canyons.

Status: The American Livestock Breeds Conservancy (ALBC) lists this breed of goat as “critical,” with fewer than 200 annual registrations in the United States and estimated global population less than 2,000 – “a heritage breed on the brink of extinction.” There are some large commercial breeders, though is the mostly breeders with smaller herds who are essential in saving this breed.

Fun Fact: These goats have excellent temperaments, are gentle, hardy and easily tamed.

The Zoo's San Clemente Island Goats: The Zoo has four males: three that are “weathers,” (gelded); and, one buck that is a potential breeder. They arrived in March from a private breeder near Valencia, California.

Navajo-Churro Sheep



Habitat/Range: Descendants of Churro sheep were the first domesticated sheep in the New World, as the Spanish brought them to the Southwest U.S. more than 400 years ago. Due to a need for more wool during the Civil War, flocks of this breed were crossed with fine wool sheep, dramatically decreasing the number of purebred Churro sheep. They are found mostly on farms scattered throughout the United States and Canada.

Description: Coat varies widely, but generally white, light tan, brown, black, or grey. Females weigh 100-120 lbs., while males weigh 160-200 lbs. This sheep has a long tail, no wool on its legs, and little or no wool on its belly.

Breeding: Mothers have strong herding instincts and tend to have twins.

Diet: Hay or grasses.

Status: Though rare, true purebred flocks can be found in some parts of northern New Mexico and remote areas of Navajo reservations. American Livestock Breeds Conservancy (ALBC) lists them as “threatened,” meaning there are fewer than 1,000 annual registrations in the United States and estimated global population less than 5,000.

Fun Fact: Navajo-Churros are famous for their long, lustrous “double-coated” fleece which grows about an inch a month and weighs four to six pounds.

The Zoo's Navajo-Churro Sheep: The Zoo's new sheep came from a private breeder in Northern California late last year. The two pregnant females gave birth on January 11 and 12, 2009, to three female lambs, bringing the Zoo's total number of sheep to five.

Guinea Hogs



Habitat/Range: Originated in Guinea (western Africa) and has been domesticated and is now found in many areas. They can survive in a wide variety of environments, from deserts to mountainous terrain, and were a mainstay in early California ranching.

Description: Usually weigh between 90 to 100 pounds but can weigh much more, and are 15 to 20 inches tall. They have 44 teeth and use their snouts to dig in soil to find food.

Breeding: A guinea hog's gestation period is about 115 days; litters contain one-to-ten young and are weaned at three to four months of age.

Diet: In the wild, they will eat weeds, bird eggs, snakes, grasshoppers, and even manure. At the Zoo, they eat grains, fruits, and vegetables.

Status: The American Livestock Breeds Conservancy (ALBC) classifies this breed as “critical” on the Conservation Priority List.

Fun Fact: Because of their incredible sense of smell, pigs have been used to sniff out everything from drugs and bombs.

The Zoo's Guinea Hogs: The Zoo's two hogs are brothers that came from a breeder located near Redding, California. Keepers expect the pair to possibly reach about 200 pounds as they are hearty eaters.

RAPTOR ROOST



Adjacent to California Trails is an exhibit of California birds of prey. Two red-tailed hawks and one turkey vulture, for various reasons, cannot be returned to the wild. But these longtime Zoo residents offer additional examples of raptors found in the Golden State and are a striking contrast, in size alone, to their condor neighbors.

Red-tailed Hawks

Range/Habitat: All over North America from Alaska and northern Canada (except Arctic tundra) to Panama and the West Indies. In or near forest margins, low-lying open woodlands, plains, valleys, and mountain slopes

Description: Red-tailed hawks are up to two feet long, have a wingspan of four or five feet and can weigh more than three pounds. Females are larger than males. Coloration can vary widely, but they all share the distinctive brick-red tail.

Breeding: Red-tailed hawks usually pair for life and mate during March and April. Courting displays involve pairs circling and grooming each other. Their nests consist of platforms of sticks in forks of trees or on the edge of cliffs. Females lay up to five eggs each season which hatch after about a month. Chicks fledge (take their first flight) at about 45 days and are independent in about ten weeks.

Diet: Mostly small mammals, but also amphibians, reptiles, fish, and occasionally smaller birds

Status: Protected

Fun Fact: Red-tailed hawks are the most widely distributed hawks in North America; they have great eyesight and can spot a rabbit at a distance of 1,000 yards.

The Zoo's Hawks: The Zoo has two red-tails, a male, Charlie and a female, Dakota.

Turkey Vultures

Habitat/Range: Turkey vultures exist in a wide range of habitats from deserts to savannas and grasslands, to tropical and temperate forests. Their range extends across much of the continental United States, into Central America, and throughout most of South America. Birds in the northern limits of its range migrate south as far as South America.

Description: One of North America's largest birds of prey, they reach 32 inches in length with a wing span of six feet. Overall color is brown-black with a featherless, red head, white bill and yellow feet among mature adults. Immature birds have a darker face. Silver-gray flight feathers look lighter than the black lining feathers of the underwing. Its long tail extends beyond its legs and feet in flight. Although usually silent, they occasionally emit a soft hiss or groan.

Breeding: Nests in small caves, on the ground under bushes, or in hollowed stumps and logs. The female lays two eggs that are incubated for 38 to 41 days. Unlike most birds of prey, the chicks are fed regurgitated food, not fresh pieces of meat. The young vultures fledge (first fly) in ten to 11 weeks.

Diet: Best known for their practice of feeding on dead animal carcasses, but will occasionally attack young and helpless animals as well. One of the few birds of prey able to use smell to locate food.

Fun Fact: Their common name refers to the red skin on the head and dark body feathers that resemble the wild turkey. Turkey vultures have been called buzzards, John Crow, red-necked buzzard, and carrion crows. Turkey vultures, black vultures, and California Condor comprise the *cathartidae* family, referred to as the American Vultures.

The Zoo's Vulture: The Zoo's turkey vulture was hand-raised after being found abandoned as a chick. She is "imprinted" on humans and cannot be rereleased into the wild.

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The Santa Barbara Zoo is open daily from 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.; general admission is \$11 for adults, \$9 for children 2-12 and seniors 60+, and children under 2 are free. Parking is \$4.

The Santa Barbara Zoo is accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA). AZA zoos are dedicated to providing excellent care for animals, a great visitor experience, and a better future for all living things. With its more than 200 accredited members, AZA is a leader in global wildlife conservation, and is the public's link to helping animals in their native habitats.

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