



PRESS RELEASE



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CALIFORNIA TRAILS OPENS ON EARTH DAY **CALIFORNIA CONDORS AND OTHER ENDANGERED** **SPECIES FROM STATE'S "BACKYARD"**

- Earth Day, Wednesday, April 22 at 10:30 a.m.: Ribbon Cutting – **PHOTO OPP for Media**
- Saturday, April 25, 10 a.m. - 1 p.m.: *California Trails* Celebration – for the Public
 - Public to be "Banded" with Numbered Condor Wing-Bands
 - Chumash Singers and Dancers to Perform
 - Keeper Talks, Animal Encounters, Theatre Gone Wild Shows, Jumpers, Climbing Wall & More
 - *Early Admission for Members Only: 9 a.m.*

(*Santa Barbara, CA, April 14, 2009*) The Santa Barbara Zoo officially "cuts the ribbon" opening new exhibit *California Trails* on Earth Day 2009, Wednesday, April 22 at 10:30 a.m. Zoo officials, representatives from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, dignitaries, donors, and other supporters will be on hand for the debut of the \$7.5 million exhibit complex that features California condors and more local endangered and threatened species. This is followed by a community celebration on Saturday, April 25 (see below) *Press invited to April 22 Photo Opportunity. Details to follow.*

PUBLIC CALIFORNIA TRAILS CELEBRATION ON SATURDAY, APRIL 25



The Santa Barbara community is invited to a day-long, activity-filled celebration at the Zoo on Saturday, April 25, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. in honor of the new exhibit (early admission for Zoo members at 9 a.m.).

In addition to the new exhibits, including California condors, the public can enjoy keeper talks about endangered and threatened animals in *California Trails*, plus close-up, live animal encounters with several creatures including Finnegan (above), a Channel Island fox who was hand-raised at the Zoo.

The Samala Dancers and Singers from the Santa Ynez Band of the Chumash Indians will perform local Native American songs and dances at 11:30 a.m. (see bio at end of release). The Zoo's theatre troupe Theatre Gone Wild will present animal-related, kid-friendly skits, plus there will be jumpers, a climbing wall, condor crafts, and more.

As all California condors (both in captivity and in the wild) are tagged with wing-band numbers, the first 700 Zoo guests on Saturday will be "banded" with an arm-band containing the number of one of the Zoo's four California condors or one of their ancestors. Banded guests will receive special gifts at the new Explore Store and can visit special webpage at www.sbzoo.org to read the life history of "their" bird. Saturday activities are free with Zoo admission.

ABOUT CALIFORNIA TRAILS

California Trails is the largest construction project in the Zoo's nearly 50-year history and includes new and renovated exhibits, plus a new food concession area called *The Wave*, and the new *Explore Store* that connects how buying "green" directly helps protect the habitats of endangered creatures from California and around the world.

"This exhibit creates a sense that the animals and plants around us are not only significant, but interesting," notes Zoo CEO Rich Block. "People in California tend to take their resources for granted. This exhibit celebrates the natural capital of California."



Four **California condors**, featuring a nine-and-a-half foot wing span, are on view in *Condor Country*, a new, spacious hilltop aviary overlooking part of their historic range, the Santa Ynez Mountains. The four juvenile birds hatched within a two week period in April 2007 at the Peregrine Fund's World Center for Birds of Prey (Boise, ID). The exhibit covers 6,000 square feet and 174,000 cubic feet of "glide space," and includes redwoods, oaks, wooden "snags," a stream, and two different pools. Numbering only 22 individuals in 1982, California condors have recovered from the brink of extinction. There are now 321 birds, with more than half of the population flying free. The Santa Barbara Zoo is now one of only three exhibits in the world displaying this highly endangered species.



Five **Channel Island foxes**, found only on the islands off the California Coast, have a renovated exhibit. 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.



Once commonplace but now facing habitat destruction, six **desert tortoises** are in a new exhibit that will soon also feature chuckwalla lizards.



Bald eagles are making a comeback after pesticides ravaged their numbers in the 1960s and their Federal listing was changed from endangered to threatened in 1995. As a result of injuries in the wild, neither of the Zoo's eagles can be re-released into the wild: one is missing a wing, the other is missing an eye.



Rattlesnake Canyon is a new exhibit of reptiles and amphibians found in the Los Padres National Forest and will eventually feature the “vulnerable” red-legged frog. The exhibit currently includes a Southern Pacific rattlesnake and gopher snake, California and Pacific chorus frogs, California newts, and an arboreal salamander, with more species to be added soon.



The Zoo's longtime **Barnyard exhibit** has been renovated and now features animals that played a part in California's ranching history: San Clemente Island goats, Navajo-Churro sheep, and Guinea hogs.



Adjacent to California Trails is ***Raptor Roost***, an exhibit of California birds of prey including two red-tailed hawks and a turkey vulture who, for various reasons, cannot be released into the wild.

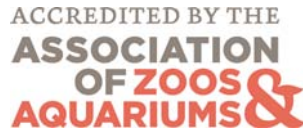
ABOUT THE SAMALA DANCERS AND SINGERS



The five-person troupe, who sing in *Samala*, the language of the Santa Ynez Chumash, were initially tribal “Language Apprentices.” After nearly a year of translating songs into Samala and learning the dances of their ancestors, they began performing in 2007 and have represented the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians in performances all across the country.

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.



CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:

Saturday, April 25, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. (9 a.m. early admission Zoo members only)

Santa Barbara Zoo's

***CALIFORNIA TRAILS* Opening Celebration**

Celebrate the opening of the Zoo's newest exhibit which features endangered species including rare California condors, with keeper talks, animal encounters, jumpers, climbing wall and more family activities, plus a performance by the Samala Dancers and Singers at 11:30 a.m.

Celebration activities free with admission: \$11 for adults, \$9 for children 2-12 and seniors 60+, and children under 2 are free. Parking is \$4.

Information: (805) 962-5339, www.sbzoo.org.
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