

NEWS RELEASE

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Press Contacts:

Jennifer Zacharias, JZPR (805) 886-9078 or jennifer@jzpr.com

Lauren Gonzales (805) 962-5339 or lgonzales@sbzoo.org

SANTA BARBARA ZOO WELCOMES THREE NEW CALIFORNIA CONDORS

Zoo also bids farewell to four condors 174, 327, 524 and 603

(January 21, 2020) Santa Barbara, CA -- Three California condors are settling into their new habitat at the [Santa Barbara Zoo](#). These new condor arrivals - 860, 946 and 727 - bring the total number of condors cared for by the Santa Barbara Zoo to 14 over the past ten years. The Santa Barbara Zoo is one of a handful of zoos to exhibit these highly endangered scavengers – the largest land birds in North America, with wingspans topping 9½ feet.

The Santa Barbara Zoo's condors are part of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service California Condor Recovery Program and wear wing tags that identify them as individuals. Generally, the lower the number, the older the bird. Condor 860 is a female, hatched on March 31, 2017, and a sibling to male 916. She was reared by her parents and will remain at the Santa Barbara Zoo until age 6–8, at which time she will go on to breed elsewhere. Condor 916, hatched on May 29, was raised by a 'foster mom' and will also remain at the Zoo until age 6–8, at which time he also will go on to breed elsewhere. 727 is a slightly older female, hatched on March 13, 2014. She was released at the Grand Canyon, but did not thrive in the wild and was recaptured. She will be a mentor bird for siblings 860 and 916.

As part of the recovery program, the Zoo recently bid farewell to four condors, 174, 327, 524 and 603, who they had been caring for since 2017. 327 and 524 went to Los Angeles Zoo, and 174 and 603 went to the Oregon Zoo as they are ready to join the breeding program. They will spend next year bonding with their new mates and will hopefully breed the following season.

"It's always hard to see animals you've cared for over the years leave the Zoo, but it's also exciting to see the progress they've made and that they're ready for their next step," shared Rachel Ritchason, Director of Animal Collections. "We're happy to know these birds will continue to thrive and contribute to the recovery of their species. We're already enjoying getting to know the new birds we recently welcomed to the Zoo!"

The Zoo's condor exhibit, opened in 2009, is designed to accommodate up to six condors in transition into or out of the captive breeding program.

“The Santa Barbara Zoo has been an active collaborator with the California Condor Recovery Program since 2002, providing veterinary, logistical, and other support for condor reintroduction efforts,” shared Ritchason. “We are really proud to be part of the success story of this species’ return to the wild.”

Efforts over the last 20 years have brought the condors back from the brink of extinction. Down to only 22 birds remaining in 1982, there are now more than 500 birds, with more than half of the population flying free. The goal is to maintain stable populations of condors both in captivity and the wild so that this magnificent bird will not disappear from the skies over its native habitat.

About The California Condor Recovery Program

The California Condor Recovery Program is a multi-partner effort, led by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, to recover the endangered California condor. Partners in condor recovery include the U.S. Forest Service, National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Geological Survey, Arizona Game and Fish Department, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Utah Department of Fish and Wildlife, the federal government of Mexico, the Yurok Tribe, San Diego Zoo Global, Los Angeles Zoo, Oregon Zoo, Phoenix Zoo, Santa Barbara Zoo, Chapultepec Zoo, The Peregrine Fund, Ventana Wildlife Society, University of California at Santa Cruz, West Virginia University, Colorado State University, Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology, Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, and the Smithsonian Institution. Visit <https://www.fws.gov/cno/es/calcondor/Condor.cfm>.

About The Santa Barbara Zoo

The Santa Barbara Zoo is open daily from 10 AM to 5 PM; general admission is \$19.95 for adults, \$11.95 for children 2-12, and free for children under 2. Parking is \$11. 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. Visit www.sbzoo.org.