



**3/11/2003**

## **NEWS MEDIA ADVISORY**

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## **FOUR CONDORS TO BE RELEASED MARCH 20, 2004 Public Invited to Attend**

**Note to Editors:**

To obtain still images of California Condors, please contact:

Linda Behrman, The Peregrine Fund 208-362-3811

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Or go to: [http://www.peregrinefund.org/press/images/condor\\_transport\\_photos.html](http://www.peregrinefund.org/press/images/condor_transport_photos.html)

**Who:** Everyone is invited. Project biologists will be on site to provide program information. No structured program, however, will be provided.

**What:** Release of four young California Condors from the Bureau of Land Management's Vermilion Cliffs National Monument in Arizona.

**When:** Scheduled for 10:00am, Saturday, March 20, 2004.

**Where:** At the far west end of the Vermilion Cliffs, 27 miles west of Marble Canyon, Arizona on Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Road 1065 (a.k.a. Upper House Rock/Coyote Valley Road) three miles north of US Highway 89A (at the western end of Vermilion Cliffs). This is a graded, sedan-accessible road. From this vantage point, attendees will have a clear, but distant, (one mile away and 1,000 feet up) view of the release facility atop the Vermilion Cliffs.

**How:** All are advised to bring warm, layered clothing (temperatures can range from 20-60° F), snacks, warm beverages, plenty of water, spotting scopes, binoculars, and folding chairs.

At 10:00am on March 20, 2004 biologists from The Peregrine Fund will release four young California Condors from an aviary in the Bureau of Land Management's Vermilion Cliffs National Monument in Arizona. This is the 17th release in Arizona and will increase the southwest's population of North America's largest flighted bird to 45 in the wild, including one young condor that hatched in the wild in 2003.

A total of ten condors arrived at the release site on December 19, 2003. The other six young condors will be held in the aviary until they are ready for release. All ten of the young condors hatched in 2003 at The Peregrine Fund's World Center for Birds of Prey. Since their arrival from Idaho, the condors have been maturing and acclimating to their new surroundings. After they are released, the birds are expected to stay close to the release site and slowly explore their new home. Regular updates are being provided on The Peregrine Fund's home page ([www.peregrinefund.org](http://www.peregrinefund.org)).

"This may be the last year that there are more condors in captivity than in wild," stated Bill Burnham, Ph.D., President of The Peregrine Fund. "The steady progress we have made in the recovery of this species is a credit to the adaptive nature of the condor and the skilled field crew," finished Burnham.

"The California Condor recovery effort was extremely successful in 2003," stated Joe Alston, Superintendent of Grand Canyon National Park. "Last fall, Grand Canyon National Park became home to the state's first condor chick born in the wild. We continue to be pleased with the recovery efforts and look forward to another successful year in the southwest," finished Alston.

"This release is the first milestone in what should be another great year for the California Condor recovery effort in Arizona," said BLM Arizona State Director Elaine Zielinski. "The growing success of this project reflects the cooperation among its many partners, including private organizations, federal and state agencies, and local governments," finished Zielinski.

"Late winter is such an exciting time for the condor project," said Andi Rogers, Condor Biologist for the Arizona Game and Fish Department. "Not only do we have new fledglings being released, but condor courtship is in full swing. Every new release contributes to more breeding-age birds in the population, which brings us closer to our recovery goals," finished Rogers.

"If you haven't yet seen this majestic bird in its red rock realm, I encourage you, your family or your community group to make the trip," said Steve Spangle, Fish and Wildlife Service Arizona Ecological Services Supervisor. "Being part of a California condor release instills a real sense of personal ownership in the recovery of our endangered wildlife."

The historic Arizona reintroduction is a joint partnership among the Bureau of Land Management, The Peregrine Fund, Arizona Game and Fish Department, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, Southern Utah's Coalition of Resources and Economics, and others. Funding for the project is being provided by the partners, Peter Pfendler, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Nina Mason Pulliam Charitable Trust, Chichester DuPont Foundation, Disney Wildlife Conservation Fund Awards, Steve Martin/Natural Encounters, Toledo Zoo, Grand Canyon National Park Foundation, Kearney Alliance, Grand Canyon Trust, Patagonia, Globe Foundation, Earth Friends, Arizona Public Service, Mattie Wattis Harris Foundation,

Arizona Community Foundation, Oracle Corporation, Grand Canyon Conservation Fund, and others.

The California Condors are being released as a "non-essential/experimental population" under section 10(j) of the Endangered Species Act. Section 10(j) provides that the species can be released in an area without impacting current or future land use planning. However, in Grand Canyon National Park condors are provided full protection as a federally protected endangered species. This authority has been spelled out further in an "Implementation Agreement" between the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and local governments.

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