

GREATER CALIFORNIA CONDOR RECOVERY EFFORT



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The Peregrine Fund and California Condors

The Peregrine Fund (TPF) became involved in the California Condor recovery effort at the request of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) after the species teetered on extinction in the early 1980s. The dramatic decline of North America's most critically endangered raptor stumped scientists and a handful of organizations were called to action.

The Peregrine Fund's leadership in the Peregrine Falcon recovery effort in North America, resulting in delisting of the species from the U.S. Endangered Species List in 1999, made us a valuable partner. Over the last 30 years, we've led a comprehensive captive-breeding effort that supports wild reintroductions across the full, current range of the condor. By monitoring and analyzing collected data on individual birds in the Canyonlands population in Arizona and Utah over decades, TPF confirmed the primary impediment to recovery and number one cause of mortality; lead poisoning. Additionally, TPF research identified primary sources, specifically residues (fragments and shot) of spent lead-based ammunition left on the landscape in the remains of shot animals. Without further reductions of lead in the food chain, condor recovery is doubtful.

In 2018, TPF co-founded The North American Lead-free Partnership, a group of nearly 70 hunting, conservation, and wildlife management organizations and industry partners backing voluntary, incentive-based programs and public-private partnerships to promote a voluntary switch to lead-free ammunition for big game hunting. The Peregrine Fund and The Partnership were founded by hunters, and our approach to condor recovery is to work with hunters, agencies, and industry to mitigate threats to wildlife and the wild places that are important to our conservation and hunting heritage.



Recovery of the Condor is possible, but it will take a multi-channel approach of public-private partnerships, propagation, reintroduction, and evidence-based management practices to realize delisting in our lifetime.

- **Propagation:** We manage the largest captive breeding program for California Condors in the world, with over 85% hatching success and 95% nestling survival. Young condors are raised in an environment where they can interact with adult mentors, ensuring they learn vital survival skills.
- **Release Techniques:** Our team in Arizona works diligently to track and monitor released condors, ensuring their successful reintegration into the growing free-flying flock. Since 1996, we've released 258 birds; currently, 85 condors are free-flying after recent, significant setbacks to the population from lead poisoning and HPAI totaling 37 individuals.



- **Management:** We monitor condor movements and behaviors through telemetry and GPS, adjusting management practices as necessary. The health and survival of each condor is tracked, and intervention is made as needed, particularly in cases of lead poisoning.
- **Recovery:** Through scientific research, education, outreach, and application, The Partnership works to eliminate the primary threat to recovery, lead poisoning, while preserving our wildlife conservation and hunting heritage.
- **Public-Private Partnership:** We work in a balanced, non-partisan approach to mitigate risks on a landscape-scale through collaborative efforts that achieve proven and lasting results.

Informing the Conversation

The Peregrine Fund is currently partnering on work to inform an updated USFWS California Condor Recovery Plan. Updating the plan is critical for developing targeted strategies to ensure the species' persistence and eventually delisting from the U.S. Endangered Species List. Our contributions, underwritten by a private donor, are developing two Population Viability Analyses (PVAs) that incorporate

threats like HPAI and lead poisoning - two factors that stand to hinder full recovery of the species. These PVAs specifically evaluate the impact on the Arizona and Utah populations, where The Peregrine Fund has enough data to analyze and inform management practices across the range of the condor.

Overcoming the Lead Challenge

Lead poisoning remains the leading cause of death for California Condors and a hidden — but solvable — risk to wildlife across North America. Tiny fragments of lead-based ammunition in the food chain can poison condors and other scavenging wildlife, making it the single greatest preventable obstacle to condor recovery.

To address this threat at its source, The Peregrine Fund co-founded the North American Lead-Free Partnership (NALP) in 2018. Working alongside agencies, hunters, tribes, and NGOs, NALP promotes lead-free ammunition while preserving sustainable hunting traditions.

With more than 55 years of species-recovery experience, The Peregrine Fund brings proven field

credibility to this work. Solving the lead challenge is the final hurdle to condor recovery, and North America's next great conservation success story, adding to the list of recovered delisted species like the Peregrine Falcon and America's symbol of freedom, the bald Eagle.

Partnering for Recovery

The Peregrine Fund is committed to seeing California Condor Endangered Species Recovery through to the end. In the last 30 years, The Peregrine Fund has spent \$30M on California Condor Recovery. We have raised 70% of those dollars – the other 30% has come from federal partners. We also provide 100% of the boots on the ground in Arizona and Utah, in addition to the work of the Lead-free Partnership and running the largest Captive Propagation program for these birds in the world. We anticipate the full cost of recovery to be another \$100M in the next three decades, largely focused on expanding The Partnership while maintaining captive propagation, release, and monitoring. We expect our \$3M annual budget to double over the next 3-5 years.



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Greater Condor Recovery FY 2026 Budget: \$3.27 million

FY26 expected income: \$1.825 million

FY26 expected revenue shortfall: \$1.45 million

