

VULTURE SNIPPETS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

Lappet-faced Vulture in East Griqualand, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

In 1991 a farmer phoned the then Natal Parks Board to say he had a Bearded Vulture *Gypaetus barbatus* killing his sheep lambs. A week later he phoned to say he had made a mistake and that it was actually a Lappet-faced Vulture *Torgos tracheliotos*. After being ignored for a while he got a bit angry. I got to hear about the story soon after, and John Crowson and I went down on 6 August 1991 to visit the farmer whose farm was between Kokstad and Franklin. The farmer was a bit off at first but did offer us coffee (a good sign!), and then took

us to the other end of his farm. As we came over a hill, there was this immature Lappet-faced Vulture standing on a dead lamb, with another couple of dead lambs lying nearby! Here was a Lappet-faced Vulture way out of known distribution, and clutching onto a lamb. However, I cannot say the bird had killed the lamb(s) or found them dead. The farmer asked what he should do, and I said that it being a young bird it was likely it would not stay long, but that we could arrange to have someone attempt to trap it and take it away. The farmer wouldn't hear of it, and actually became proud of the fact that he had a Lappet-faced Vulture on his farm – it became the talk of the town. After a week or so the bird left.

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Diclofenac remains a threat to Nepal's vultures

The population of endangered vultures continues to decline, as diclofenac – a veterinary painkiller – continues inundating the market, taking a steady toll on the “large flyers”. Conservationists cry foul over the continued production of diclofenac in Nepal, despite a “ban” on the drug since June 2006. Drug

manufacturers say the government has not ordered them to refrain from production with the raw material already in stock. “Continued production of the drug by Nepal's two drug manufacturers and its smuggling through the porous Nepal-India border have pushed the vulture to the brink of extinction,” says Dr Hem Sagar Baral, an ornithologist, who is also executive chief at Bird Conservation

Nepal (BCN). Environmentalists say the scavenger birds, after feeding on carcasses of livestock previously treated with diclofenac, suffer kidney failure and die. A team of experts that visited four terai districts, Nawalparasi, Rupandehi, Kapilvastu and Chitwal, last February, found that six vultures died in Nawalparasi, three in Lumbini and one in Butwal. The cause of death was found to be ingestion of diclofenac while scavenging the carcasses of animals previously treated with the deadly drug. A field report prepared by experts associated with BCN states that the vulture population in the country is on the decline. Drug manufacturers have been producing diclofenac since the early 1990s. "The deaths indicate that the vulture population is declining at an alarming rate," says Dr Baral. Ornithologists say there are less than 500 nesting pairs of vultures left in Nepal. As part of immediate initiative, the Department of Drug Administration sent a letter to drug manufactures on

6 June to stop producing the drug. General Manager of CTL Pvt Limited, Ravi Krishna Shrestha, said it continued producing the drug until the raw material ran out. 'The DDA did not prevent us from producing the drug until we ran out of the raw material,' he said, adding, 'Due to mounting pressure, we are compelled to halt the production and we are also ready to take back the produced drugs already in the market.' DDA chief Bhupendra Bahadur Thapa said the government had not banned the production. 'We only requested the manufacturers not to produce, taking into account its adverse impact on the environment,' he said. Drug manufacturers have already started production of meloxicam, a safe drug to replace diclofenac. But meloxicam could not replace diclofenac as the latter is three times cheaper and easily available in the market. 'If the number of vultures declines at the current rate, you will see no more vultures in the Nepalese sky after a decade,' Dr Baral said.

Post B. Bastnet, 23 March 2007.

From: <http://www.kantipuronline.com/kolnews.php?&nid=103315>



Vultures breeding in palm trees

In our area, the northern Tsumeb district of Namibia, White-backed Vultures *Gyps africanus* breeding in makalani palms *Hyphaene petersiana* is a common occurrence where these trees

are available. In fact, I have not seen vultures breeding on trees other than the makalanis. Furthermore, the vultures make their task easier by selecting palms with existing nests of Red-billed Buffalo-weavers *Bubalornis niger*. These weavers

build a strong construction in the top of the palms and the vultures then make the roof of this structure the bottom of their nest. As the palm sheds its dry leaves from the bottom, the weaver nest gets torn down too, but they just keep on building by adding material to the top part. I have also not noticed vultures breeding on these nests more than once. During the winter of 2005, I had found such a nest and then made an effort of going there on a regular basis to check

on the development of the chick. The vulture seemed very opportunistic to me because it had nested in a very small weaver nest structure. The chick was past downy stage and was mostly perched on the petiole of a leaf. In August, after a very windy day, the weaver nest had been blown down and the chick was gone. At the base of the makalani, I found the remains of the weaver nest, but no chick or the remains of it.

Günther Friederich

From: Raptors Namibia, Newsletter No. 4, April 2007.



Nepal 'restaurant' serves health food for vultures

Conservationists in Nepal have opened a special "restaurant" to offer safe food to vultures, whose existence is being threatened by cattle carcasses treated with drugs. Scientists says South Asia's vultures are on the brink of extinction largely due to farmers dosing their cattle with diclofenac, a drug used to treat inflammation, poisoning the scavenging birds one step up the food chain. Numbers of Oriental White-backed Gyps bengalensis, Long-billed Gyps indicus and Slender-billed Vultures Gyps tenuirostris in the region have plummeted. The vulture population in Nepal is estimated to have fallen to a mere 500 nesting pairs from at least

50 000 pairs in 1990, according to a local conservation group, Bird Conservation Nepal. But now a special feeding centre set up by the conservation group at Kawasoti, about 100 km south-west of the capital, Kathmandu, is trying to ensure vultures get a chance to eat chemical-free cattle carcasses. "Our effort is to let at least some vultures eat safe food," the group's chief, Hem Sagar Baral, said on Saturday. Kawasoti, a roadside town, has a large concentration of vultures, prompting Baral's group to set up the feeding centre there. At the centre, which Baral describes as a "restaurant", sick and dying cows that have never been treated with diclofenac are brought in, and when they die they are left for the vultures. The use of diclofenac is prohibited in Nepal

and neighbouring India, but the ban is widely ignored. Baral said his group

plans to open more such safe feeding facilities for vultures in the country.

Source: http://www.mg.co.za/articlepage.aspx?area=/breaking_news/breaking_news_international_news/&articleid=298678&referrer=mgnewsflash
10 February 2007.



Monitoring the success of released rehabilitated vultures using cellular tracking devices and or patagial tags

The success of a vulture release is reflected in the wellbeing of the free-ranging vulture over an extended period of time. It is not known what the survival rate is of released rehabilitated vultures. Because vultures are not restricted in movement by structures such as fences, human habitation or high mountain ranges, their follow-up monitoring by way of observations can only be problematic. The use of cellular tracking devices, where the exact location of each bird fitted with a tracking device can be plotted (even when out of cellular coverage), offers an effective way of monitoring the long-term survival of released vultures. Only the expense of the device prohibits its use with the release of every vulture. Patagial tags offer an effective way of identifying a tagged vulture, allowing anyone to report on the sighting of a vulture, be it alive or dead. AWT-GSM GPS backpack cellular tracking devices (African Wildlife Tracking, Pretoria, RSA), using a harness

made of nylon ribbon and tygon tubing (total average weight of 240 g) and patagial tags (Axxon, RSA), were fitted to three vulture species, namely; a Lappet-faced Vulture (*Torgos tracheliotos*) (n=1), African White-backed Vultures (*Gyps africanus*) (n=3) and Cape Vultures (*Gyps coprotheres*) (n=6). Twenty-two Cape Vultures were tagged only and then released. The released vultures spent anywhere from less than two months (n=21) to more than a year (n=11) in captivity. The released vultures were monitored for as long as possible and the monitoring only stopped when dead or weak vultures were recovered or the tagged vultures were no longer sighted. Ten birds died or were recaptured in a weakened state, with one disappearing altogether; all of them having been in captivity for a year or more. The birds that spent two months or less in captivity flew off. However one of these later drowned, one was electrocuted, and one removed its cellular device via the 'weak' link, all within two months of release. Two of the vultures fitted with cellular devices are still being tracked. The cellular tracking device functioned

as specified with three readings per day. More readings per day would give a better indication of the path flown but should be weighed up against a decrease in battery life and thus the long-term usefulness of the device. It appears as if the success of these vulture releases can be attributed to the period of time the birds were held in captivity, namely two months or less having the best success. Factors that may be negatively affecting the success rate of released

vultures include fitness (decreased fitness over time when held in captivity), disorientation (releasing vultures far from where they were originally found) and excessively fat vultures (increased fat to muscle ratio over time in captivity). Patagial tags were well tolerated by the vultures and facilitated easy identification of vultures; however, it is recommended that both wings be tagged for easier identification.

P. Bartels, W. van't Foort & K. Wolter



Vulture starvation

Farmers in southern Spain are alarmed over recent attacks on their livestock by starving vultures. The state news agency EFE reports that about 100 vultures recently killed a cow and her newborn calf. Ranchers say attacks on live animals have increased since a vulture-feeding station set up for farmers to dump their animal carcasses was closed several

months ago. Concerns over mad-cow disease have prompted officials to ban the dumping of dead livestock at such feeding troughs. A spokesman for a union called the Farmers and Ranchers Coordinator says this has resulted in vultures becoming so hungry that they have lost their wariness of humans, and now swoop down on farms to feast on live animals such as cattle and pigs.

From: The Seattle News, 11 May 2007.



Cape Vulture sighting at Suikerbosrand

On 9 April 2007 while birding in the Suikerbosrand Nature Reserve, Gauteng, South Africa, an immature Cape Vulture

Gyps coprotheres was observed roosting on an electricity pylon (26°30'80", 28°15'53"). This is the first sighting for me of a vulture in this area since the mid-1970s.

Stan Madden; e-mail address: stmadden@mweb.co.za.

Allo-preening Hooded Vultures

The photo was taken within the western sector of the Sabi Sands Game Reserve, while on drive from Savanna Lodge, on 18 February 2007. A very old Buffalo *Syncerus caffer* bull had succumbed within a small mud wallow and was very quickly found the following morning by Spotted Hyaenas *Crocuta crocuta* and vultures. In the end there were approximately 20 hyaenas, which allowed very little access to the vultures. As expected there were predominantly African White-backed Vultures *Gyps africanus*, but these two Hooded Vultures *Necrosyrtes monachus* were by far the nearest to the kill. It was

approximately 10h00 when we viewed this example of allo-preening.



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Cinereous Vulture seen in Senegal

On 13 February 2007 I saw a Cinereous Vulture *Aegypius monachus* at Nianjing, near Mbur, in Senegal. The bird was with

one Eurasian Griffon *Gyps fulvus*, one Lappet-faced Vulture *Torgos tracheliotos*, three Hooded Vultures *Necrosyrtes monachus*, and 22 Rüppell's Griffons *Gyps rueppellii*.



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Egyptian Vulture (*Neophron percnopterus*) in the Mahazat as-Sayd Protected area in west-central Saudi Arabia

The Egyptian Vulture's *Neophron percnopterus* current status is Least Concern (BirdLife International 2004), and there has been a sharp population decline in Europe and elsewhere in the world. If the population is also declining in other parts of its range, then the species would warrant upgrading to the Vulnerable (or even Endangered) status.

In Saudi Arabia it was never a common species, but regularly seen in the west-central part of Saudi Arabia. In March 2007, we saw ten Egyptian Vultures feeding on a carcass in the Mahazat as-Sayd protected area. Such a large aggregation of the species has not previously been recorded in Saudi Arabia.

The Mahazat as-Sayd protected area in Makkah province is 219 000 ha in size. It is fairly flat area, 900-1100 m

a.s.l., comprising sandy plains and a few rocky outcrops. Mahazat is a special nature reserve and it was established in 1988 for the reintroducing of Arabian Oryx *Oryx leucoryx*, Arabian Gazelle *Gazella arabica* and Houbara Bustards *Chlamydotis undulata*. Mahazat as-Sayd is about 175 km north-west of Taif and south of al-Muwayh. It is fenced and moderately to well vegetated with *Acacia totilis*, *Indigofera* spp and *Salsola* spp as dominant shrub/trees. The Mahazat as-Sayd protected area has a large breeding population of Lappet-faced Vultures *Torgos tracheliotos* and Egyptian Vultures are regularly observed.

We plan to start detailed surveys of Egyptian Vultures in Saudi Arabia in order to determine their population and breeding status and the extent of their population decline.

We acknowledge HH Prince Bandar bin Saud Al Saud (Secretary General NCWCD) for his support to carry out studies in Mahazat as-Sayd protected area.

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Palm-nut Vulture in Limpopo Province, South Africa

We saw a Palm-nut Vulture *Gypohierax angolensis* near the Limpopo River at about 13h00 on 6 April 2007. It was on a gravel road near the river in the Steenbokpan area, not far from the (closed) Buffelsdrift border post. It was

sitting next to the road on the ground and flew away before I could take a photo. I looked in the archives of SABirdNet and saw that Herman and Zephné Bernitz saw a juvenile Palm-nut Vulture between Lephalale and the Stockpoort border post in September 2006, which is in the same area.

Drinie van Rensburg; e-mail address: drinie@wrc.org.za.



Buzzards foil body-farm plan

Texas State University's plan to build the nation's largest "body farm" is on hold over concerns that buzzards could endanger nearby planes. The university scrapped its proposed site and began scouting a new location for what would be only the third such facility in the nation. The farms are used by scientists who bury cadavers to study human

decomposition to help police better determine time and manner of death at crime scenes. Texas State had hoped to begin burying bodies later this year on a 17-acre site on Texas Highway 21 near the San Marcos Municipal Airport. But after meeting with the airport's commission, the university dropped the plan out of concern that buzzards would pose a risk to pilots.

From: The Seattle News, 11 May 2007.



Bearded Vultures breeding in Switzerland

For the first time in over 100 years Bearded Vultures *Gypaetus barbatus* are breeding in Switzerland. The species was extinct in the Alps and reintroduced

since 1986 in Austria, Italy, Switzerland and France. The first breeding took place in France, later in Italy. Now two pairs in Switzerland, one in Derborence, Valais, the other in the Swiss National Park are breeding and are expected to raise young from April on.

More information can be found at: http://www.wild.unizh.ch/bg/index_e.htm

Namibia: vultures 'dying out'

Namibia, renowned for its natural beauty and unique variety of fauna and flora, is on the verge of losing several bird species unless people urgently adopt a more positive role in managing the environment. A recent trip with the Vultures Namibia Study Group into the Namib-Naukluft Park (NNP) produced irrefutable proof that extinction is looming for several species

of the country's big birds. Seven of the world's 22 vulture species are found in Namibia. The future of all seven local species is threatened and immediate efforts to preserve their dwindling populations are crucial. The monitoring and ringing of Lappet-faced Vultures *Torgos tracheliotos* – Africa's largest vulture – by Vultures Namibia in the NNP is the longest running project of its kind in the country.

Elma Robberts, The Namibian (Windhoek), 14 December 2006.

Full story at: <http://allafrica.com/stories/200612140692.html>

**Bearded Vultures in the Drakensberg**

At 08h00 on 21 March 2007 en route from Black Mountain to Sani Top Chalets we were treated to the viewing of a lifetime over the Sani River. Ten juvenile Bearded Vultures *Gypaetus barbatus* in two groups of four and six, all in sight at the same time. There seemed to be carrion on the ground, judging by the presence of

White-necked Ravens *Corvus albicollis*, but all the vultures were in flight. Two were involved in a slow revolving talon-clash and even inverted flight, typical of other raptors. Not a single adult was observed. Only one bird had pale belly plumage. All had dark heads. In 25 years of trips up the Sani Pass, I have never seen more than three Bearded Vultures together. The presence of so many young birds must surely be good news.

Malcolm & Gail Gemmell; e-mail address: buttonbirding@futurenet.co.za.



Vultures fall prey to kite festivities

Ahmedabad: When kites jostled for space in the skies, little did one imagine that it will leave a trail of dead and injured birds including the endangered species of vultures. An animal welfare organisation in the city has received over 700 birds injured by kite-strings during Uttarayan, which is celebrated as the festival of kites in the State. The enormity of the problem can be gauged from the fact that veterinary experts from Zoological Society of London are camping at the Animal Help Foundation on the outskirts of the city to treat the injured vultures. "Zoological Society of London has been working along with animal welfare organisations in India for the protection of vultures whose number has seen an alarming decline in the last six to seven years," said Dr Andrew Routh, chief veterinary

officer of UK's renowned Regent's Park London (London Zoo). "We came here as we knew that a large number of birds, including a number of vultures, get seriously injured during the kite flying season in Gujarat," Andrew said. He is accompanied by his wife Dr Sorn Routh and Natalie Reed, an expert bird-handler from London zoo. Other experts from BNHS and a bird-handler from Sri Lanka are also assisting the foundation in treating the injured birds. "This year, the first vulture casualty was reported on 27 December and to date we have received a total of 10 injured vultures," said Soham Mukherjee, a member of the foundation. "Seven of these vultures are the endangered White-rumped Vultures *Gyps bengalensis* and the rest are migratory Egyptian Vultures *Neophron percnopterus*," Mukherjee said adding that four of the White-rumped Vultures succumbed to their injuries.

From: Ahmedabad Newslines, 21 January 2007.

<http://cities.expressindia.com/fullstory.php?newsid=218600>



Red-headed Vulture breeding programme launched

The near-extinct Red-headed Vulture *Sarcogyps calvus* will soon be soaring above the forests of Uthai Thani, Thailand, again if a new breeding and reintroduction programme to release

the birds back into the wild proves successful. The Red-headed Vultures will be the first vulture species to be bred and reintroduced into the wild under the five-year joint programme by the Zoological Park Organisation (ZPO) and Kasetsart University (KU). Prateep Duangkhae, of

KU's forestry faculty, said Red-headed Vultures were last seen in the wild in Huay Kha Khaeng wildlife sanctuary in the western province of Uthai Thani in the early 1990s. Vultures were once abundant in Thailand, but disappeared

from forests here due to poisoning and over-hunting, he said. The last big flock disappeared in early 1992, after eating a poisoned deer carcass. The carcass had been contaminated with toxic chemicals by tiger hunters using the deer as bait.

Julawan Doloh

Source: http://www.bangkokpost.com/News/25Jan2007_news13.php



First captive-bred Asian vulture chicks die

New Delhi – Two rare vultures said to be the first of their species bred in captivity have died after only a few weeks, a scientist said on Thursday, in a blow for conservationists trying to save the endangered South Asian birds from extinction. The Oriental White-backed Vulture *Gyps bengalensis* chicks had been warmly greeted when they hatched in January at a breeding centre in Pinjore in the north Indian state of Haryana. Both chicks died later in January, Vibhu Prakash, the principal scientist of the Bombay Natural History Society's vulture breeding programme, told Reuters on Thursday. Prakash blamed the parents. "They were first-time parents and they just didn't know what to do with their chicks," he said. "That

happens very often even in the wild." The society is trying to save South Asia's Oriental White-backed, Long-billed *Gyps indicus* and Slender-billed vultures *Gyps tenuirostris* from extinction. The population of these birds has dropped by more than 97 percent in the last 15 years, according to Britain's Royal Society for the Protection of Birds. Scientists say the decline is largely due to farmers dosing their cattle with the anti-inflammatory drug diclofenac, poisoning the birds one step up the food chain. Prakash said the society was taking the bad news in its stride. "This is just a part of what happens in nature" he said. "We were not expecting breeding to happen so soon anyway." He said dozens of vultures at the centre would reach parenting age in the next two or three years, when breeding would begin in earnest.

From: Planet Ark, 23 February 2007.

<http://www.planetark.com/dailynewsstory.cfm/newsid/40468/story.htm>

Oregon Zoo's condor breeding a hit

The good news: Five of the Oregon Zoo's six breeding pairs of endangered California Condors *Gymnogyps californianus* have produced eggs this season and there could be more to come, making it the breeding programme's most successful year yet. The bad news: Two of those eggs are infertile. On Tuesday, keepers inspected the newest egg, laid on 11 March at the zoo's Jonsson Center for Wildlife Conservation in Clackamas County. They "candled" the egg, holding it up to an intense light. When they did, said assistant curator Shawn St. Michael, they saw an embryo about the size of a pencil eraser surrounded by blood vessels inside the fist-sized, gray-green egg. North America's largest land birds, California Condors grow to

be about three feet tall, weigh up to 30 pounds, and have wings that span nine to ten feet. Two decades ago, 17 of the big, bald-headed birds remained in the wild; they were captured in an effort to save the species from extinction by breeding them in captivity. The Oregon Zoo joined the effort when it opened its breeding programme three and a half years ago. It has hatched seven chicks, six of which survived. At last count on 31 January, 279 California Condors survived at breeding sites or in the wild. This season, all three of the zoo's fertile eggs will remain in incubators for about two months. When the chicks begin to hatch, keepers will return them to the nests for their parents to raise. "Until now," St. Michael said, "we've been laying the groundwork. The coming seasons should be even better."

Katy Muldoon, e-mail address: katymuldoon@news.oregonian.com.



Recent vulture observations in Namibia

17 May 2007 – Thirteen Lappet-faced Vultures *Torgos tracheliotos* at a Springbok *Antidorcas marsupialis* carcass next to the park fence near the Gemsbokwater turn-off (22°56.587' S 15°37.168' E), one tagged individual, tag no F027.

18 May 2007 – Fifty-nine Lappet-faced Vultures and one Cape Vulture *Gyps*

coprotheres were seen on a Gemsbok *Oryx gazella* carcass next to the Ganab – Hotsas road (23°03.612' S 15°27.936' E). Two Lappet-faced Vultures were tagged, but we could not approach close enough to read the alphanumericals on the tags.

18 May 2007 – Three Lappet-faced Vultures and four Warthogs *Phacochoerus aethiopicus* on an Common Ostrich *Struthio camelus* carcass just off the main

Windhoek – Swakopmund road near the eastern park boundary (22°54.495' S 15°35.058' E). The vultures were not tagged.

21 May 2007 – Eleven Lappet-faced

Vultures at a Gemsbok carcass near the Ganab weather station (23° 07.309' S 15° 32.301' E); two birds were tagged but I could not get close enough to read the tags.

Holger Kolberg; e-mail address: holgerk@mweb.com.na.



Cyprus zoo boosts local vulture stocks

Efforts are underway on the island to boost the local vulture stocks, as their numbers are dangerously dwindling. Limassol Mayor Andreas Christou handed over a vulture egg to Forestry Department officials, saying that the municipality “attaches great significance to this effort”. This was the fourth time the town’s council has provided the Forestry Department with vulture eggs from Limassol Zoo to breed the species, which is under the threat of extinction. He said these birds are in danger from poisoned food and material which people leave to control vermin. “Such practices result in the extermination of a very useful and important bird for our

island, the vulture, and for this reason we appeal to all Cypriots, farmers, shepherds and everybody else not to use poison”, the Mayor added. Forestry Department official Haris Nicolaou said that the egg will be taken to Paphos for the incubation period. After three months, the new born vulture will be returned to its parents to become accustomed to its environment and then it will be released into the wild when it is one year old. “The vulture is a species on the verge of extinction and if no drastic action is taken by the state or by environmental organizations, we will only be able to see vultures in photographs”, he added. Limassol Zoo vet Lambros Lambrou said that in 20 days another egg is expected by the mother vulture which will be incubated this time by the parents.

From: Financial Mirror, 21 February 2007.

http://www.financialmirror.com/more_news.php?id=6165&nt=Politics



Articles on Asian Vulture Crisis

There is a somewhat long, but well-written article on the Asian Vulture crisis from Smithsonian Magazine, and two shorter related articles.

The Vanishing

Little noticed by the outside world, perhaps the most dramatic decline of a wild animal in history has been taking place in India and Pakistan. Large vultures, vitally necessary and once numbering in the tens of millions, now face extinction. But why?

<http://www.smithsonianmagazine.com/issues/2007/february/vulture.php>

Soaring Hopes

The first two Asian vultures breed in captivity.

<http://www.smithsonianmagazine.com/issues/2007/february/vulture-side.php>

Fantastically Repulsive

In this interview, Susan McGrath, author of "The Vanishing", describes getting up close and personal with vultures.

<http://www.smithsonianmagazine.com/issues/2007/february/vulture-author.php>



Condor returns to San Diego County

Wildlife biologists on both sides of the border cheer the news, as well as the discovery of a pair's egg in Baja.

It's been a heady few days for scientists involved in the complex effort to restore the California Condor *Gymnogyps californianus* to its once native habitat. To begin with, researchers spotted the first California Condor egg laid in Baja California since condors were reintroduced into the Sierra San Pedro de Martir National Park in 2002. And now, a condor known as No. 321 was tracked flying across the Mexican border near Jacumba and then continuing to the Anza-Borrego area. The sighting, announced Thursday, was the first of a

California Condor in San Diego County since 1910. The bird, outfitted with a tiny global positioning device, was hatched at the San Diego Zoo's Wild Animal Park and released into the wilds of Mexico in 2005. The once plentiful California Condor disappeared from Mexico in the late 1930s. The effort to bring back the condor, which has suffered its share of disappointments, is a joint effort by wildlife specialists on both sides of the border. As such, binational joy reigned first because of the egg and then the flight of condor No. 321. "The reintroduction of the California Condor in Mexico is a story of success," said Adrian Fernandez Bremauntz, president of Mexico's Instituto de Ecologia. This

is a momentous occasion," said Mike Wallace, condor project leader and scientist with the San Diego Zoo's center for Conservation and Research for Endangered Species. Researchers had thought that condors No. 217, a female, and No. 261, a male, were in a breeding mood. We had been suspicious of nesting activity over the past month," Wallace said. The female had been hatched at the Los Angeles Zoo and released into the wild. After scaling a 75-foot cliff, Wallace

found a nest and an egg. Although initial indications are that the egg is fertile, it will remain unclear for days whether a tiny condor will emerge, scientists said. Now that No. 321 has apparently migrated north, 10 condors remain in Mexico. Five more are slated to be released next month. The California Condor, with its 9-foot wingspan, is the largest bird in North America. Along with its size, the bird is known for the white triangle across the middle of the wings.

Tony Perry, Los Angeles Times, 6 April 2007.

<http://www.latimes.com/news/science/environment/la-me-condor6apr06.1.5566309>



GARFIELD | *Jim Davis*

