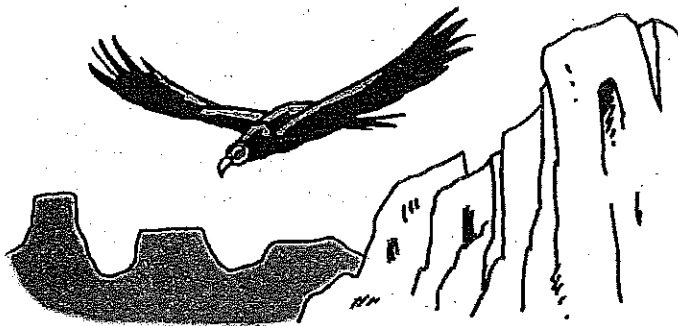


# Condor Comeback?

One of the world's largest birds often soars miles above California, Arizona, and Mexico. Against the sky, its nine-foot wing span projects power and glory. The California condor, a sharp-eyed scavenger that once lived along much of the east and west coasts of North America, is now an endangered species. (1) What could *imperil* a bird that was once so widespread? As with other endangered species, there are many answers to this question.



(2) Perhaps the most important factor still *subverting* the survival of the California condor is habitat loss. Additionally, they are hampered by a very slow reproductive rate, the dangers of power lines, and illegal shooting. (3) Also, condors accidentally eat *injurious* substances. Harmful pesticides and other chemicals are now found in the animals that condors eat. Sometimes, ranchers poison the carcasses of dead livestock in attempts to kill predators. Because condors—like vultures—eat dead animals, condors are often accidental victims. Finally, some hunters still use lead ammunition. Animals killed by lead ammunition and left behind can poison condors that later eat the carcass. (4) Lead poisoning can *incapacitate* or kill condors.

The birds face more subtle problems, too. (5) Condors have been *maligned* for their eating habits because they eat dead or rotting meat. They actually are relatively neat eaters that provide a valuable service. (One expert called them “nature’s clean-up crew!”) But many people find it hard to care about condors. (6) Also, the birds’ unattractive, bald-headed appearance tends to *alienate* people. Right or wrong, people find it easier to rally around cute, cuddly creatures than around less attractive ones like the condor.

Additionally, early efforts to capture and breed condors were ineffective. (7) One program, started in the 1950s, was so unsuccessful that the National Audubon Society and other groups publicly *censured* it, claiming it was harming the birds. (8) The failure of this program and others like it led some experts to *scoff* at the idea of captive breeding. By 1982, there were fewer than twenty-five wild California condors. Five years later, experts could confirm the existence of only one. That male was captured and bred with captive females.

At that point, the fate of the entire condor species was in human hands. Unfortunately, the birds’ handlers made some early mistakes. They allowed the birds to get too accustomed to people. When the birds were released, their natural fear of humans was gone. They got too close to humans, even perching on hot tubs. When the condors came into contact with humans, they didn’t fly away in fear. (9) This was *detrimental* to the condors. Some people attacked condors that had found their way inside buildings. Many of the birds died.

(10) After *admonishments* from experts, breeding programs began to improve. Condor chicks have been raised differently, and their survival rates have increased. In late 2004, there were more than 200 California condors flying free in our southwestern skies. The future of this enormous bird is far from certain, but at least for now, there is hope.

Each sentence below refers to a numbered sentence in the passage. Write the letter of the choice that gives the sentence a meaning that is closest to the original sentence.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. What could \_\_\_\_\_ a bird that was once so widespread?  
 a. criticize                      b. ridicule                      c. endanger                      d. disable
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Perhaps the most important factor still \_\_\_\_\_ the survival of the California condor is habitat loss.  
 a. weakening                      b. warning                      c. causing hunger to                      d. making hostile
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Condors accidentally eat \_\_\_\_\_ substances.  
 a. necessary                      b. damaging                      c. evil                      d. spoiled

- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Lead poisoning can \_\_\_\_\_ or kill condors.  
a. put off                      b. mock                      c. criticize                      d. disable
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Condors have been \_\_\_\_\_ for their eating habits.  
a. killed                      b. warned                      c. admired                      d. criticized
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. The birds' unattractive, bald-headed appearance tends to \_\_\_\_\_ people.  
a. lose the support of      b. cause to criticize      c. make sick                      d. warn against
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. The National Audubon Society and other groups publicly \_\_\_\_\_ it.  
a. praised                      b. warned                      c. criticized                      d. spied on
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. The failure of this program and others like it led some experts to \_\_\_\_\_ the idea of captive breeding.  
a. be afraid of                      b. make fun of                      c. cause harm to                      d. work to stop
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. This was \_\_\_\_\_ to the condors.  
a. evil                      b. harmful                      c. dangerous                      d. critical
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. After \_\_\_\_\_ from experts, breeding programs began to improve.  
a. war cries                      b. painful shots                      c. mild criticism                      d. bad reports

Indicate whether the statements below are TRUE or FALSE according to the passage.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. California condors serve no useful purpose in nature.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. California condors tend to appear attractive to human beings.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Experts are now certain the condor species will survive.

### WRITE THE DERIVATIVE

Complete the sentence by writing the correct form of the word shown in parentheses. You may not need to change the form that is given.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. We were all relieved to learn that Grandmother's tumor was not \_\_\_\_\_.  
(*malign*)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Loss of habitat is \_\_\_\_\_ many species of birds. (*imperil*)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Stop \_\_\_\_\_ at what you don't understand! (*scoff*)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. The scientist who misrepresented the data was \_\_\_\_\_ by the university's administration. (*censure*)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Though the father meant his words to be a mild \_\_\_\_\_, his son burst into tears. (*admonish*)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. One person's \_\_\_\_\_ is another person's "fighting for freedom." (*subvert*)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. The \_\_\_\_\_ of smoking is no longer in question. (*injurious*)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. One symptom of hypothermia, or abnormally low body temperature, is mental \_\_\_\_\_. (*incapacitate*)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. The loss of so many animal species is \_\_\_\_\_ to us all. (*detriment*)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Your \_\_\_\_\_ was obvious from your scowl and cold manner. (*alienate*)