

Business & Ag

California Condor

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In January 2014, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) addressed letters to both the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), and the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW), stating that the "...purpose of this letter is to address formal and informal inquiries that we have received for several years regarding establishment of a California Condor (*Gymnogyps californianus*) release site in northern California and/or Oregon... The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) has contributed for several years to the Yurok Tribe's wildlife program with the potential for the development of such a program in mind..."

The letter mentions the participation in the California Condor Recovery Program, of the Oregon Zoo, one of only a few captive breeding sites for the Condors, and, the only one in the state. The Oregon Zoo's Johnsson Center for Wildlife Conservation, a 52-acre, isolated facility in rural Clackamas County that first received Condors in 2003, can house up to 53 of the birds, including 11 breeding pairs.

The Condor, the first species listed under the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973, consisted of a population of 22 birds in the wild in 1982, and 1987 was the first year they were captured for breeding programs. By the time the first Condors arrived at the Jonsson Center, in 2003, the captive population was 131, with 83 in the wild (the first release was in 1992, however, the Oregon Zoo has not released any into the state). Today, the population is more than 400, with the majority in the wild.

The USFWS, in the same letter addressed to both the California and Oregon Departments of Fish and Wildlife, attached a list of issues (dated 12/30/2013) associated with the issuance of a recovery permit for a new release site, including: state wildlife agency support; funding and management responsibility; coordination/cooperation with the overall Condor Recovery Program partners; addressing threats, especially lead; evaluation of habitat potential; flight pen and release site; and permitting and other environmental compliance.

A reoccurring theme in documentation regarding threats to the Condor is lead ammunition poisoning, either directly, or indirectly, through ingestion from animal carcasses, for example. In its 5-year

review of the listing status of the Condor, however, the USFWS identified and assessed 13 threats, including habituation, power lines and poles, vehicle traffic, and firefighting dip tanks, in addition to lead poisoning.

The process to release California Condors isn't a quick one, because it requires a number of permits, according to the USFWS, including, but not limited to: a recovery permit (ESA section 10(a)(1)(A) permit), a Migratory Bird Treaty Act permit, a Federal Bird Marking and Salvage permit, and any required state permits. In addition, a number of environmental reviews are required, including, but not limited to, a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review, consultation under section 7 of the ESA regarding issuance of a recovery permit, and any required state-level environmental compliance review. In addition, a possibility is that the USFWS could choose to amend the recovery plan prior to approving a new northern release site.

On March 4, 2014, The Yurok Tribe, of northern California, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the USFWS, the National Park Service (NPS), the California Department of Parks and Recreation, and the Ventana Wildlife Society (VWS), providing a framework for the cooperation and encouragement of close coordination between the parties, the goal of which is to support proactive conservation efforts for the Condor, according to the MOU.

The Condor, known as "Prey-go-neesh" to the Tribe, is "...one of our most sacred animals," according to Yurok Tribe Chairman Thomas P. O'Rourke, Sr. Various Condor feathers, in particular the large wing feathers (the wingspan of a California Condor can be around 10 feet), are used in the construction of ceremonial regalia, and are a key part of ceremonies, such as the Jump Dance, and the White Deer Skin Dance, according to the May 2014 issue of Yurok Today.

The Tribe's ancestral territory, home to some of the last remaining old-growth redwood trees--ideal nesting for the Condors--is located south of the border between California and Oregon, and it is the center of the historical Condor range, which spanned from British Columbia to Baja California, Mexico, according to Yurok Today.

The March MOU included the following language, which states the Tribe's position regarding the release of Condors:

non-native invasive plants across the District.

The analysis also addresses other invasive species and noxious weed treatment methods which could be used either separately or as a component of programs which includes the proposed added herbicides.

These methods include prescribed fire, targeted grazing, seeding, planting, and seed bed preparation.



Submitted Photo.

The California condor, sacred to the Yurok tribe.

"WHEREAS, the parties agree that further assessment of condor habitat in the greater Yurok Ancestral Territory and its historical range in north coastal California should be undertaken, guided, and based upon sound science, up to and inclusive of the experimental release of condors to clarify the potential for success and identify challenges to condor recovery in the region."

In June of 2014, ODFW and Oregon State University (OSU) collaborated on an effort to survey hunters in the state regarding their use and knowledge of lead ammunition, a national issue, because of the impacts to wildlife and humans, according to ODFW Wildlife Division Administrator Ron Anglin. The 8-page survey was sent to 4,200 hunters (they were chosen at random, in different regions in the state). "There is no proposal to ban or limit use of lead ammunition in Oregon, but developments outside of Oregon could affect the use of lead ammunition within the state. The Environmental Protection Agency was petitioned to ban the use of lead in ammunition on a nationwide basis and there is the potential of condors being restored in northern California," he said.

According to ODFW Director Roy Elicker, later that year, a survey of the non-hunting public was conducted. "The survey effort was prompted due to the increasing effort to restore California condors throughout their historic range, which includes portions of Oregon," he said.

Anglin said, of the lead survey, "I haven't posted any results yet. The main analysis is being done by OSU, and they are working on it this winter. The department is in the final stages of finishing up a high level of series of summary graphs, and hopes to have that out soon."

"An outright ban on the use of lead ammunition for hunting could have a significant impact on hunting, wildlife management and ODFW funding. Hunting is an important tool for managing wildlife populations. Additionally, revenue from the sale of hunting and fishing licenses and the related federal excise tax on firearms, ammunition, fishing rods, tackle and other equipment provides more than forty-percent of the department's funding... The survey effort is not, as some allege, the first step towards a ban on lead ammunition... The use of lead ammunition for hunting is legal in Oregon with the general exception of waterfowl hunting. The department sees no reason to change that. A well-designed voluntary program should be sufficient to meet the USFWS requirements to address lead exposure should condors appear in Oregon," Elicker said.

OSU research suggests, in addition to areas in western Oregon as possible ideal future release sites for the Condors, the Hells Canyon area, according to detailed models which include factors such as vegetation, proximity to water sources, prey, cliffs, etc.

ODFW East Region Manager Bruce Eddy said, "The potential for condors to reinhabit the West has been a subject of conversation for some time. I'm unaware of plans to release them in Oregon... I've talked to others about the potential for condors to migrate to Oregon (including Hells Canyon) if the Yurok Tribe proceeds with their northern California reintroduction plans. Most biologists think it likely."

If released from northern California as planned, once Condors appear in Oregon, they would have the full protection of the federal ESA, Elicker said.

Vale BLM releases EA on weeds

The Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) Vale District is asking for public input on two environmental documents.

The first of these documents is an Environmental Assessment (EA). This document analyzes the potential effects of expanding the District's integrated weed management program to make an additional ten herbicides available for use on

The overall goal of the treatments analyzed in the EA is to increase the efficacy of weed treatments and to improve restoration efforts.

The second document is a draft of the conclusions of this EA—a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI).

All of these documents are available for viewing at <http://1.usa.gov/1mwy1HW> under the documents link

on the left side of the page. Comments can be submitted electronically or by mail to District Manager, Vale District BLM, 100 Oregon Street, Vale, OR 97918.

Email: blm_or_invasive_plant_ea_comments@blm.gov
Subject: "Vale Invasive Plant Management EA
To be considered, comments must be postmarked by February 5, 2016.

— WEEKLY HAY REPORT —

Friday, December 18, 2015 — Eastern Oregon
*Report unchanged from last week due to holiday.

Prices trended generally steady compared to week ago prices. The upcoming holidays have slowed sales. Many producers have decided to hold on to their hay for now, in hopes for higher prices. Snow has hit some of the hay producing areas.

| Tons | Price Range | Wtd Avg |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|---------|
| Alfalfa —Large Square Premium | 320 190.00-190.00 | 190.00 |
| Alfalfa —Large Square Good | 245 125.00-125.00 | 125.00 |

Two weeks ago:

Timothy Grass — Large Square, Good
65 200.00-200.00 200.00

Timothy Grass— Small Square, Good
5 200.00-200.00 200.00

USDA Market News Service—AMS.USDA.gov

— CATTLE MARKET REPORT —

Wednesday, December 16, 2015
Vale, Oregon

Cattle sold through the auction: 1,528

*Report unchanged from last week due to holiday.

Steer Calves

| | | |
|----------|----------------------|------------|
| 300-400# | Bulk 171.00 - 196.00 | Top 228.00 |
| 400-500# | Bulk 162.00 - 203.00 | Top 216.00 |
| 500-600# | Bulk 151.00 - 180.00 | Top 180.75 |

Heifer Calves

| | | |
|----------|----------------------|------------|
| 300-400# | Bulk 151.00 - 176.00 | Top 178.00 |
| 400-500# | Bulk 137.00 - 172.00 | Top 175.00 |
| 500-600# | Bulk 136.00 - 160.00 | Top 160.50 |

Yearling Steers

| | | |
|------------|----------------------|------------|
| 600-700# | Bulk 134.00 - 162.00 | Top 163.50 |
| 700-800# | Bulk 128.00 - 139.00 | Top 152.75 |
| 800-900# | Bulk 123.00 - 136.00 | Top 137.00 |
| 900-1,000# | Bulk 120.00 - 129.00 | Top 135.00 |

Yearling Heifers

| | | |
|------------|----------------------|------------|
| 600-700# | Bulk 122.00 - 144.00 | Top 146.50 |
| 700-800# | Bulk 118.00 - 131.00 | Top 132.00 |
| 800-900# | Bulk 112.00 - 123.00 | Top 124.50 |
| 900-1,000# | Bulk N/A | Top N/A |

| | |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| Thin Shelly Cows | 37.00 - 47.00 |
| Butcher Cows | 48.00 - 55.00 |
| Butcher Bulls | 52.00 - 62.00 |
| Stock Cows Yng. | 1175.00 - 1475.00 |
| Younger Hfrts. | 74.00 - 111.00 |
| Stock Cows Older. | 935.00 - 1125.00 |

ProducersLivestock.com
541-473-3136

— LOG PRICE REPORT —

Price per 1,000 board feet: Northeast Oregon

| | |
|-------------------|------------------------------------|
| Doug Fir | is \$415.00/mbf |
| White fir | is \$365.00/mbf |
| Ponderosa Pine | is brought sold on diameter splits |
| 6 to 11 inch dib | \$300 to \$310/MBF |
| 12 to 17 inch dib | \$350 to \$375/MBF |
| 18 to 23 inch dib | \$400 to \$430/MBF |
| 24 inch plus dib | \$450 to \$500/MBF |

DIB is diameter inside bark at small end of log.

MBF is thousand board feet lumber, net scale.

People interested in selling logs should call and get specific quotes from saw mills.

Courtesy of Arvid Andersen, Andersen Forestry Consulting

— PRECIOUS METALS REPORT —

Price per ounce, USD

Gold: 1,093.30

Silver: \$14.00

Platinum: \$876.25

Palladium: \$509.35

Bloomberg.com

— AG COMMODITIES —

| | |
|----------------|------------------|
| Corn: | \$353.25/bu/USD |
| Wheat: | \$462.75/bu/USD |
| Soybeans: | \$864.75/bu/USD |
| Oats: | \$212.00/bu/USD |
| Rough Rice: | \$11.83/cwt/USD |
| Canola: | \$486.10 CAD/mwt |
| Live Cattle: | \$163.53/lb./USD |
| Feeder Cattle: | \$165.45/lb./USD |
| Lean Hogs: | \$60.83/lb./USD |

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