

Tribe names an Oregon Zoo condor chick

Effort is part of a larger push to re-establish condors in the Pacific Northwest

By Ron Karten

Smoke Signals staff writer

Oregon Tribal Elders and cultural specialists, including those from the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, have provided the names for condor chicks hatched in 2008 at the Oregon Zoo under the California Condor Recovery Program.

The Grand Ronde name, Tuality (the preferred spelling is atfa'lat'i), refers to "a group of Kalapuya folks that lived up around Gaston and Forest Grove," says Tony Johnson (Chinook), Education Coordinator for the Tribe's Cultural Resources Department.

The Tribe has long known about condors in the Willamette Valley. In fact, indigenous people are go-to sources on condors in the area back through history, says Oregon Zoo Condor Conservation specialist David Moen, an AmeriCorps worker.

Moen has been in touch with Tribal members in the Grand Ronde Cultural Resources Department for the last few years to learn about "our history of condors," said Cultural Resources Department Manager and Tribal member David Lewis.

"Not a lot of people think of the condor associated with the Northwest ecosystem," Moen said, "but it is a part of our vital ecology. Condors once ranged from Baja (California) to as far north as British Columbia in Canada. Part of restoring the bird is helping people understand that it's missing."

"All the Tribes have oral histories of their relations with condors," Lewis said. "Lewis and Clark reported on condors in the Gorge."

Ultimately, though, late 19th century settlers altered the environment enough that condors nearly



Photo courtesy of David Moen

Tuality, a condor that was hatched at the Oregon Zoo in 2008 as part of the California Condor Recovery Program, was named by the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde.

disappeared from the area.

The zoo wants to see if condors can be revived in the Northwest. In that regard, Tribal Elder and Culture Site Protection Specialist Don Day has joined the effort by looking for condor nesting areas.

"We're on an upswing of the population now," Moen said, "with about 300 birds (half free-flying and half in captivity in four breeding facilities, one being the Oregon Zoo), but the number was down to 27 birds in 1987. We pulled that bird out of the jaws of extinction." Today, the Oregon Zoo has 31 birds with room for 64 total birds, including 16 breeding pairs.

In the 1980s, saving condors meant rounding up the remaining birds to establish breeding pairs to help increase their population.

"It was very controversial rounding up those last birds in the mid-1980s," Moen said.

The recovery plan calls for "two or three distinct populations with 150 birds and a minimum of 15 breeding pairs in each population," Moen said.

Christening condor chicks

From David Moen, Condor Conservation specialist, Oregon Zoo:

- Female chick No. 496 was named Yak'Mo by the Yakama Nation in central Washington. This is a Sahaptin diminutive name for Yakama that means "Our little one" or "Young one of us." Yak'Mo was hatched to Woy and Wiloq and foster-reared by Atishwin and Ojai.

- Female chick No. 481 was named Ewauna (U-wana) by the Coquille (Ko-kwell) Indian Tribe at Coos Bay. She was named after a special Siskiyou woman who came to the coast with her father for a potlatch at Bandon. Ewauna was hatched to Mali and No. 174 and she was foster reared by two great parents, Tama and Mandan.

- Our lone male chick No. 479 was named Tuality by the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde in the northwest Oregon. The preferred spelling is atfa'lat'i and is the name of a Kalapuya Tribe that knew condors in the Willamette Valley. Atfa'lat'i's parents are Paxa and Sawlu, but after Paxa accidentally smooshed the egg last minute, Atfa'lat'i had to be puppet reared.

- Our female chick No. 487 was named Kalak-ala by the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians in the central Oregon coast range. She was named this Chinuk Jargon bird name for the sounds that birds make. Kalak-ala's parents are Nos. 137 and 147.

"Currently, we release them at sites in central and southern California, Arizona at the Grand Canyon. Tuality is bound for Arizona, probably next year, after he spends some time maturing at our holding site."

Tuality will be 2 years old then.

Condors are very good parents and both mother and father are very attentive, Moen said.

"Even after a chick fledges, they feed it and take care of it for a year of parental care," he said. "They generally skip a breeding season to teach the chick to look for food and socialize. They lay one egg every other year in order to teach juveniles their condor culture."

But the zoo is doing everything it can to increase the number of chicks hatched. "We put chicks with adult mentor birds so parents are free to breed every year," Moen said. "Parents and chicks are in flight pens next to each other, though, so they all have visual and auditory contact."

Condors are a long-lived bird and do not have a lot of natural predators. "There's one in captivity that lived 70 years," Moen said.

"He told me about the chicks," Lewis said, "and while I was on the phone, I said that I thought I could come up with a couple names right off the top of my head."

Lewis suggested Tuality, from the Tualatin Band, a group that ultimately landed in Grand Ronde as one of the Kalapuyan Tribes, and Chemeketi, both the original place-name spellings, he said. He received mutual agreement on the names from Johnson and Tribal member and Language & Culture Specialist Bobby Mercier.

"Restoring the condor will promote wellness to the whole landscape," Lewis said.

More about condors in Oregon can be found at www.oregonzoo.org/Condors/index.htm. Except by special invitation, the zoo's condor breeding program is not open to the public.

However, the zoo recently received funds for a condor exhibit on zoo grounds that will be developed in the next couple of years to help create public support for these special residents. With breeding programs ongoing, no condors are currently on exhibit. ■

Grand Ronde Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program

The Grand Ronde Tribe is operating its own Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) to assist Grand Ronde Tribal member households with energy payments (utility bills, firewood, etc.), energy emergencies and weatherization (e.g. furnace repairs). Income eligible households within Polk, Yamhill, Marion, Washington, Multnomah and Clackamas counties with a Grand Ronde Tribal member are eligible to apply. CTGR members in these counties need to contact Grand Ronde to receive assistance instead of from the community action agency in their area. Grand Ronde's program enables more CTGR members to be served than would otherwise have been possible.

If you are interested in obtaining services contact Social Services at 1-800-242-8196 for energy assistance and the Grand Ronde Tribal Housing Authority at 503-879-2405 for weatherization. The Tribe's LIHEAP program also serves all income eligible Indians on Grand Ronde Reservation or trust land.



Community Resource Center seeking donations

The Grand Ronde Community Resource Center has a few fundraisers and other projects planned this year and is seeking donations, etc., for the following:

- **Spaghetti Feed and Auction in September:** Seeking donated items for a live and silent auction and/or food donations for the meal. The center will provide documentation of your donation for tax purposes.

- **Community Cookbook:** Looking for your favorite recipe. If you have a recipe you'd like to share, please e-mail it to grc@hotmail.com or mail to GRCRC, P.O. Box 55, Grand Ronde, OR 97347. Please include the name of dish, recipe, your name for publication in the cookbook and a phone number to contact you if there are any questions. The center will advertise sale of the Community Cookbook as soon as they become available.

- **Food Preservation:** The center is still seeking food dehydrators for its food preservation program. If you have one you'd like to donate, please e-mail or call and leave a message at 503-879-5731.

- **Coupon Program:** The center is looking for food and non-food item coupons for its coupon program. The coupons are for client and Community Resource Center use.

The center greatly appreciates all the community support for the Community Resource Center. With your help, it is able to assist those in need within our community. ■