



Friends of Canada de los Osos Ecological Reserve

Spring 2024



From The Chair - Henry Coletto

Spring is here – the hills are green, covered with California poppies and many other wildflowers. The Reserve has had over 25" of rain this winter and spring. The ponds are full and many of the creeks will run until the end of May. Spring is also the time when our junior hunts begin. In April two junior turkey hunts were held. The hunts are put on by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife with the Friends of Cañada de los Osos volunteers. As hunters and their parents show up on the first day, the volunteers provide a lunch and a short training session on hunting wild turkeys before heading out into the field.

Wild turkeys are not native to California, but were brought in as a game bird in the 1960's and '70's. The turkeys we have in this area are the Rio Grande subspecies, originally found in the central plains states. In the 1980's about 10 turkeys were released on the private ranch that is now part of the Reserve. Since then the turkey population has continued to grow.

In 2001 The Nature Conservancy bought the ranch, then sold it to the Department of Fish and Wildlife. In 2002 an agreement was signed between the California Deer Association and the Department of Fish and Game for CDA volunteers to manage the property and run outdoor education programs, including junior hunts. In 2014 the Friends of Cañada de los Osos was formed by those volunteers, and this organization took CDA's place in managing the Reserve. Check out our website at CDLO.org for 2024's events.



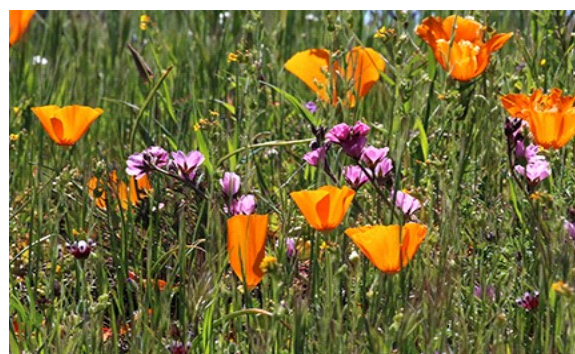
Wild Turkeys - An Introduced Species

I want to thank all of our volunteer who have helped with the junior hunts and other events over the last 20 years. It is our goal to not only provide hunting opportunities for young hunters, but to teach them about wildlife and habitat management, where food comes from (not just from a package in the store), and about hunting ethics.

We're making good progress on several projects. We now have heating in our Educational Center, and solar panels are up on the building.

Mark your calendars June 22 for our annual fundraising BBQ

Spring Wildflowers at the Reserve



Masters of the Air over Cañada de los Osos

David A. Jessup, Wildlife Veterinarian

After this year's junior pig hunts, remains from several pigs (killed with copper ammunition) were placed out on relatively bare ridge tops north of Pacheco Pass where they attracted various predators and scavengers, all recorded by trail cameras. Golden eagles came in large numbers to claim their share. But an even larger bird, the largest bird in North America, California condors, also came to feed. Their tags identify them as being from the population at Pinnacles National Park.

In the early 1980's there were only eight condors left in the wild in California, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife made the controversial decision to take all the remaining birds into captivity to maybe prevent extinction that seemed eminent. Forty years of research, captive breeding and several millions of dollars later significant numbers of California condors now fly free in Central and Southern California and Arizona. More and more condor sightings are being reported in California's coastal mountains, including the Mt. Hamilton range, and CDLO and adjacent Henry Coe State Park offer a large expanse of excellent habitat.

This is good news for condors and conservation, but significant problems still remain. One of the biggest health problems for condors, as well as for golden eagles and other raptor and scavenger bird species, is lead poisoning. Although it has been illegal to use lead shot and lead rifle bullets within the condor range since 2011, and illegal to use lead bullets for hunting anywhere in California since 2019, the problem remains. Forty eight percent of condor blood samples taken when birds are periodically captured or appear ill have lead levels that require treatment. This usually takes the form of chelation therapy and occasionally surgery. Of condors that died in California between 1992 and 2009, lead poisoning caused or contributed to the deaths of from 27% to 67% each year (Hawkins et al. 2023). Once in the environment lead bullets and fragments can last for hundreds of years. Clearly, some hunters are still using lead ammunition. This reflects poorly on hunting as a sport, and as a wildlife management tool. Golden eagles and other raptors and scavenging birds are still dying of lead poisoning too. It's way past time to **get the lead out**. Hunter education classes held at CDLO, and of course all youth hunts, use only non-toxic ammunition.

The ecological and conservation importance and ethics of these decisions are strongly emphasized. CDLO is proud to **teach young people well** about responsible hunting practices.

Hawkins M, K Woo. K Carr. 2023. Lead Intoxication in Raptors and Scavenging Birds. Pp 348-364 in: Wildlife Disease and Health in Conservation, D. Jessup and R. Radcliffe Editors Johns Hopkins University Press Baltimore, MD USA,



Trail cameras showed condors and eagles coming in to feed.



As many as 9 golden eagles came in, along with several bald eagles