

Critically endangered California condor shot and killed in Colorado

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A rare California condor passing through southwestern Colorado was shot and killed this year, and state and federal authorities on Wednesday asked the public to help track down those responsible.

A [critically endangered species](#), [condors](#) flying in the wild and rugged canyons of northern Arizona and southern Utah number only 85—a population hard hit in 2023 by [avian influenza](#). They're seldom seen in Colorado. But in late March this year, somebody killed one in a remote area northeast of Lewis and west of McPhee Reservoir in Montezuma County, Colorado Parks and Wildlife officials said in a news release.

This massive dead bird was discovered about 24 hours after it was killed, CPW officials stated.

"Previous leads have not yielded results," the officials said, so CPW and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service officials are asking for any information regarding the killing and those who are responsible.

California condors are protected under the Endangered Species Act, which means it is illegal for anyone to harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture or collect them. Anyone involved in killing this condor could face a third-degree felony charge of wanton destruction of protected wildlife, with a maximum fine of \$5,000, restitution of \$1,500, and a five-year prison sentence, CPW officials said.

In 1987, the California condor population had declined to just 22 birds in the wild. A federally led recovery program has relied on [captive breeding](#) and release of condors. The total world population numbers more than 560, officials said. More than half are flying free in Arizona, Utah, California, and Mexico.

Anybody with information about the bird's killing can call the Colorado Operation Game Thief hotline. Anybody providing information that leads to a successful prosecution may be eligible for a reward, CPW and USFWS officials said, adding that any requests for confidentiality will be respected.

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