**10.- Vulture culture**

This is a picture of an Andean condor. When it is flying, this huge vulture is one of the most amazing sights in nature. Let’s find out some facts about Andean condors and their behaviour.

**Where do they live?**

These vultures live in the mountain ranges of South America. They can glide for many hundreds of miles above the mountains, looking for food.

**What do they look like?**

The condor is the largest of the flying birds. Condors can weigh as much as 13 kilograms.

They can measure over 1 metre in height. From wingtip to wingtip, they can measure more

than 3 metres.

Condors are a mixture of black and white in colour. Their bodies are black, with some white on their necks and wings.

The eyes of a male condor are grey. The eyes of a female condor are red.

An odd feature of this vulture is its bold head.

The skin on the head is a blackish red.

**What do they eat?**

They eat animals of all kinds. But it is rare for a condor to kill one. Flying high above the mountains, a condor can spot an animal which has died or been killed. Then it dives down to eat it, using its beak and claws to pull the flesh apart.

But now and again, a condor will capture a baby animal to eat.

**How do they breed?**

Andean condors start to breed when they are 6 years old. Female condors lay their eggs in the summer – every two years.

They only lay one egg at a time. They don’t make a nest – they lay the egg on a bare ledge of rock on a cliff or in a cave.

Both parents keep it at the right temperature by sitting on it.

Nearly two months later, a condor chick hatches from the egg.

The chick can’t fly until it is about 6 months old, and its parents have to feed it.

It stays with its parents until it is at least 1 year old, but then it is ready for some adventures of its own.

A condor can live for as long as 50 years.

**The future**

In 1973, Andean condors were almost extinct, because too many had been hunted and killed.

But there are many more of them now, and the future looks good for these proud creatures. We will have the pleasure of seeing them for many years to come.

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**Speed words Grey 10**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **rare** | **bare** | **year** | **bodies** | **nearly** |
| **died** | **vulture** | **picture** | **temperature** | **behaviour** |
| **pleasure** | **colour** | **because** | **come** | **many** |
| **where** | **they** | **some** | **walk** | **two** |

**Questions to talk about**

What is an Andean condor? Where do they live?

What does from ‘wingtip to wingtip’ mean?

What is the difference between a male and a female condor?

What is odd about the condor?

What do condors eat? How do they eat their food?

What is unusual about where condors lay their eggs?

How do you think condors feel about their eggs?

Why do you think condor chicks stay with their parents for so long?

Why were condors at risk in 1973?

**Questions to read and answer**

1. Where do Andean Condors live?
2. What do condors look like?
3. What do condors eat?
4. When do young condors’ leave their parents?
5. Why do you think condors should be protected from hunters?