

LEVELED BOOK • H



Condors: Giant Birds



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Focus Question

What makes the condor an unusual bird?



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A Very Big Bird

Condors are huge birds.
One wing can be almost
as long as a bicycle.

How Big Is It?

Andean Condor

height: up to 4 feet (1.2 m)
wingspan: up to 10.5 feet (3.2 m)
weight: up to 33 pounds (15 kg)

California Condor

height: up to 4.6 feet (1.4 m)
wingspan: up to 9.7 feet (3 m)
weight: up to 25 pounds (11 kg)

Human

height: 6 feet (1.8 m)
weight: 175 pounds (79.4 kg)

Where Condors Live



Condor Homes

These big birds like wide-open spaces.
They need lots of room to **land**.

Condors fly high to look for food.
They can fly for a long time.



Condors can fly about
as high as ten tall
skyscrapers stacked
on top of each other.



Condors spend hours taking care of their feathers.

Condors live in high places.

They dry their wings in the sun after **bathing**.

They make **nests** on rocky **cliffs** and in trees.



Condors begin to hunt for food when they are about two years old.



Sharp beaks help condors eat.

Time to Clean Up

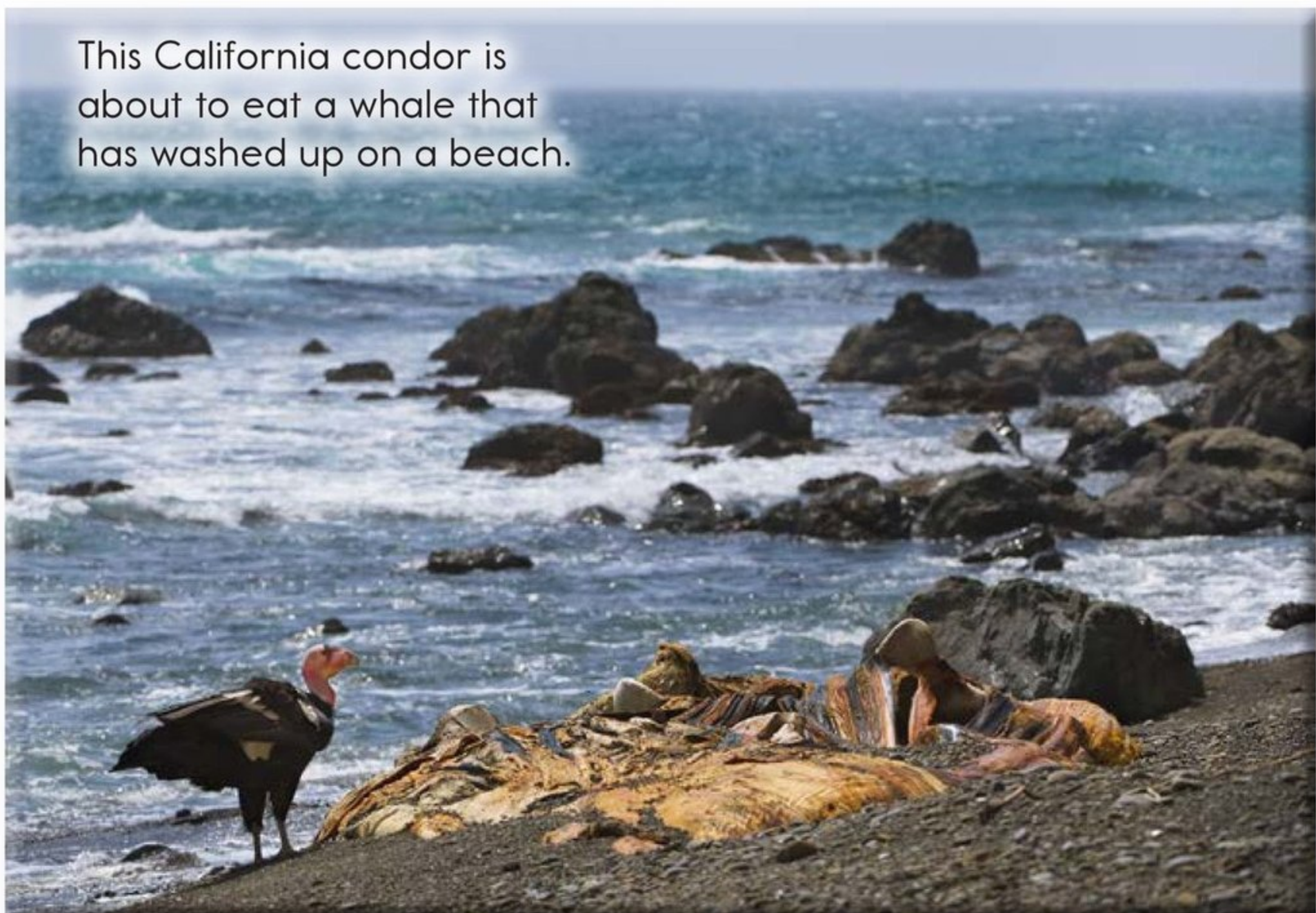
Condors can eat all kinds
of dead animals.

They may eat a small rabbit
or a big whale.



Condors often share their meals.

Condors can eat dead
animals without getting sick.



This California condor is
about to eat a whale that
has washed up on a beach.

What Makes a Condor a Bird?

A condor's bill is strong and sharp.

A condor's wings can reach as wide as 10.5 feet (3.2 m).

A condor has feathers on its body but not on its head.

A condor has strong legs and wide talons.

All birds

- have a backbone
- have feathers
- have wings
- have a bill
- lay eggs
- are warm-blooded



Male Andean condors have extra skin on their heads. This is called a *comb*.

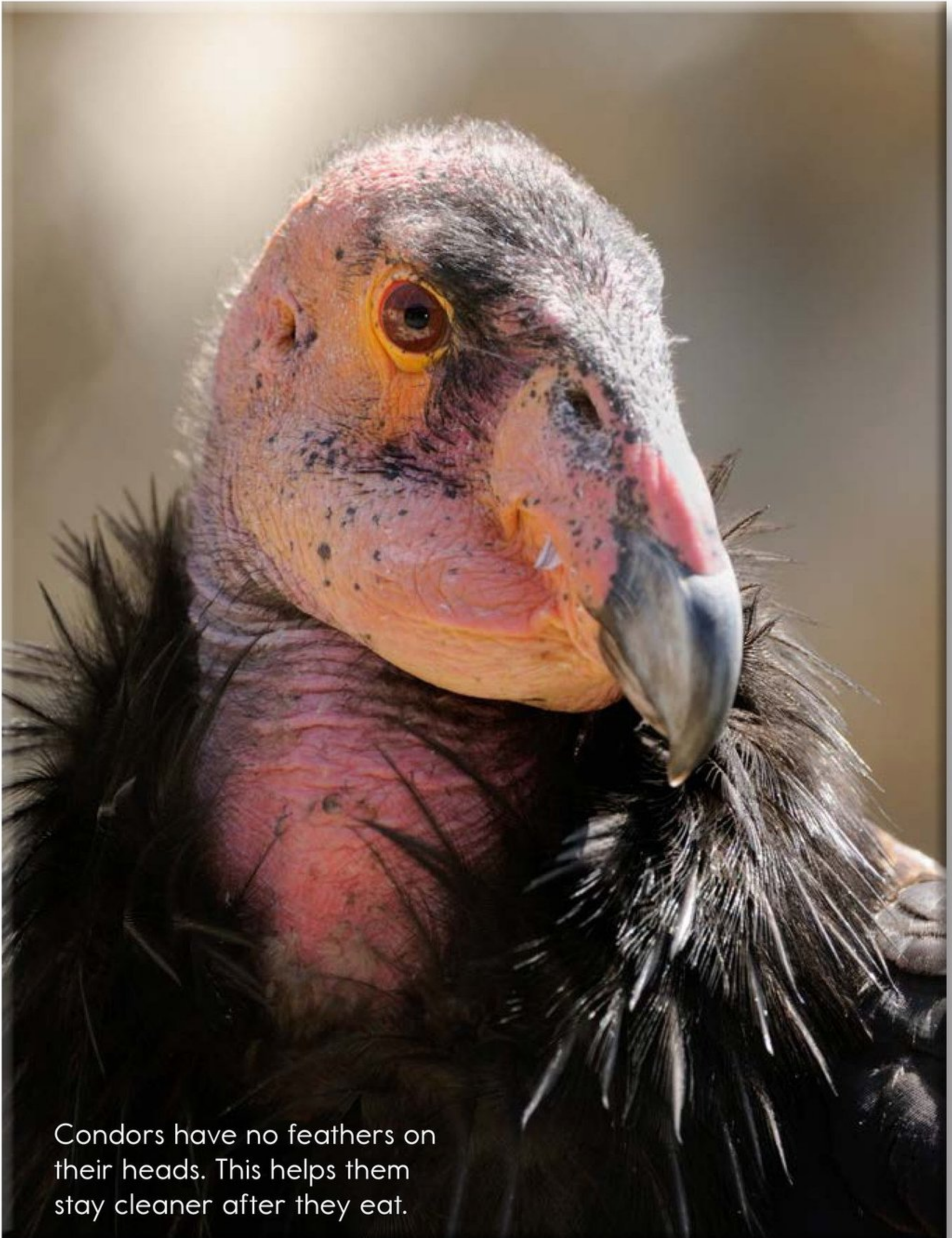
From the Neck Up

Some condors have white **feathers** around their necks.

Others are all black.

Condors do not have feathers on their heads.

Condor heads can change colors.
The color shows how the condors
are feeling.



Condors have no feathers on
their heads. This helps them
stay cleaner after they eat.



(top left) An Andean mother takes care of her egg in a cave.
(top right) A baby condor waits for its parents to bring food.
(bottom right) Male and female condors feed their chicks.

Condors Grow Up

Mother condors lay one egg every two years.

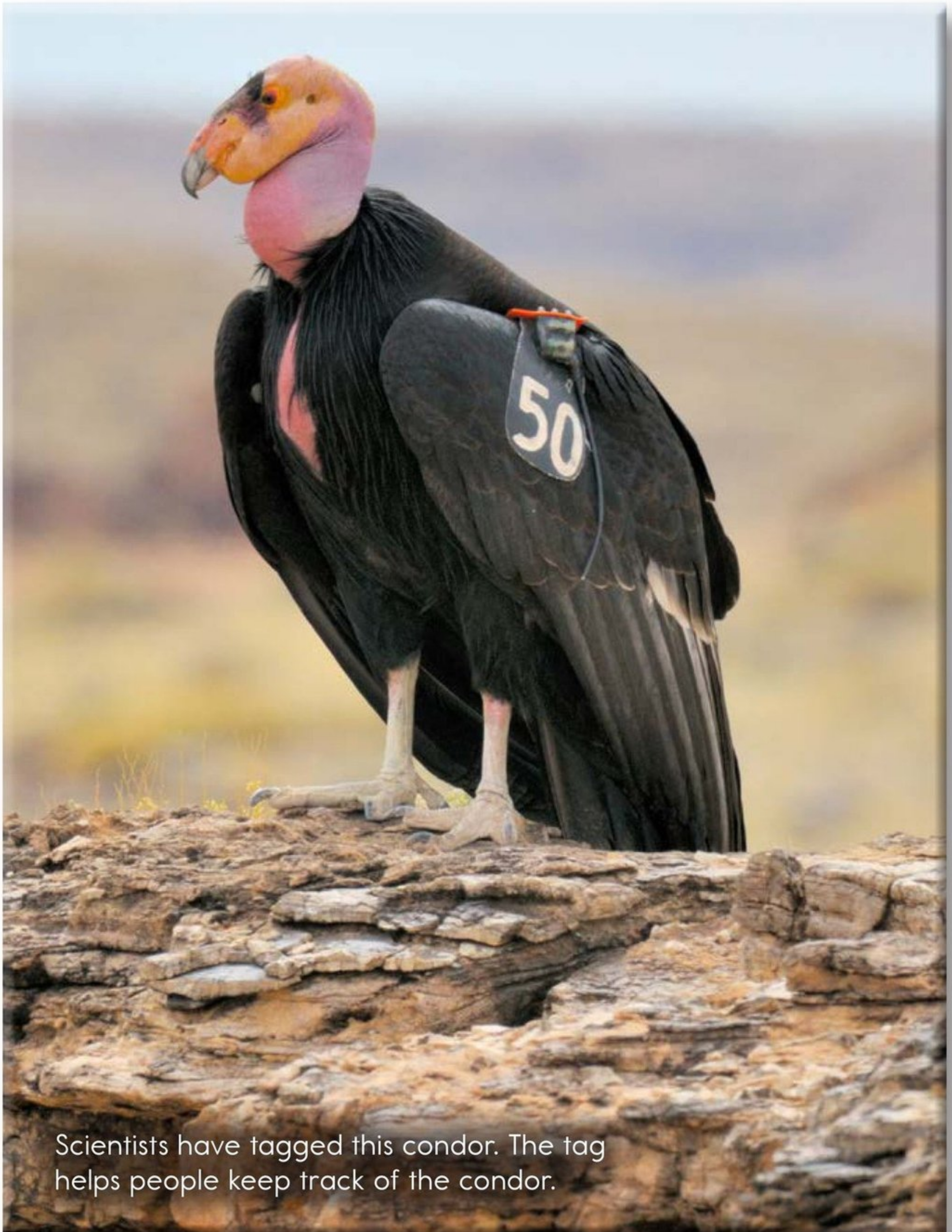
Both parents take care of the egg.

The baby condor comes out of the egg after two months.

Six months later, it starts to fly.

Condors can live almost as long as a person.

There are very few condors today.
People watch condors to keep
them safe.



Scientists have tagged this condor. The tag
helps people keep track of the condor.



Condors are good flyers.
They can fly for a long time
without flapping their wings.

Big Wings in the Sky

Condors are special birds.

They are some of the largest flying
birds in the world.

Glossary

bathing (v.) washing or soaking all or part of the body (p. 7)

cliffs (n.) steep faces of rock, dirt, or ice (p. 7)

feathers (n.) the soft, fluffy parts of a bird that cover its body and make up its tail (p. 11)

land (v.) to set down on a place (p. 5)

nests (n.) places where birds or other animals lay eggs and/or take care of their young (p. 7)

wing (n.) either of the limbs that help insects and birds to fly (p. 4)

Words to Know

bathing

cliff

feathers

land

nests

wing

Front and back cover: This young condor is in flight over Argentina.

Title page: Condors often sun themselves on tall cliffs.

Page 3: This male Andean condor lives in South America.

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Condors: Giant Birds
Giants of the Animal World
Level H Leveled Book
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