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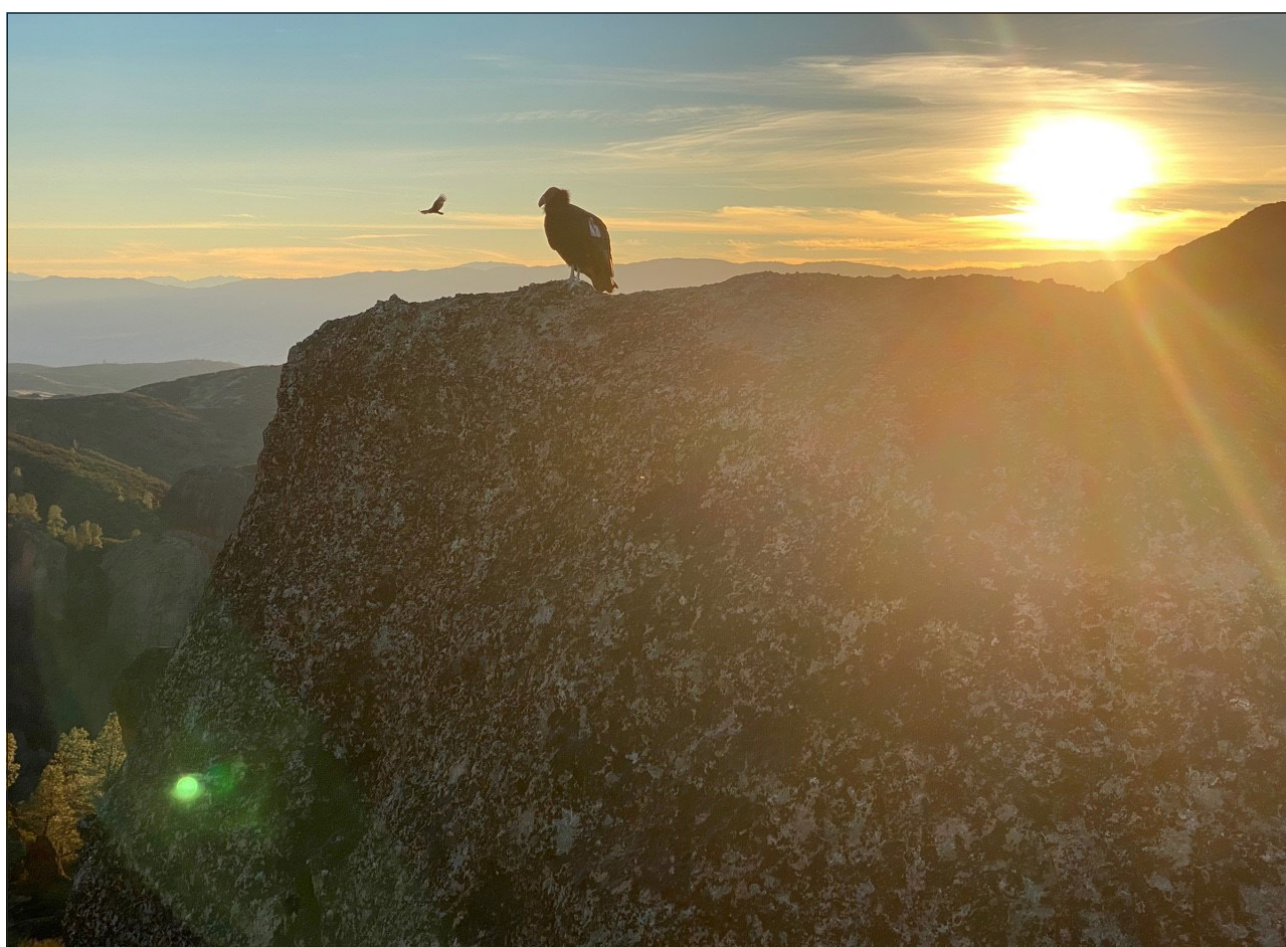
MONTEREY HERALD

Partly sunny
H: 76 L: 47
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ENVIRONMENT

CLIMBERS' MOTTO: GIVE THE RAPTORS RESPECT



CHRIS HENRY — SPECIAL TO THE HERALD

The raptor monitoring program at Pinnacles National Park is still going strong today, 36 years since it began.

By McKenzie Prillaman
newsroom@montereyherald.com

In Pinnacles National Park, falcons, hawks, eagles and other birds of prey occasionally glide right beneath climbers ascending the park's iconic rocky peaks. But in the mid-1980s, park-goers climbed too close to raptor nesting sites in the cliffs, causing the birds to abandon their nests.

The park initially responded by closing all climbing areas during the breeding season. But after frustration with the blanket closure, Pinnacles park managers and the climbing community came together to create a solution.

"What the park managers came up with was the raptor monitoring program," said Gavin Emmons, a wildlife biologist at Pinnacles National Park who currently oversees the program. "A biologist or somebody on staff was tasked with monitoring throughout the breeding season to determine exactly where nesting raptors — particularly falcons — were nesting."

The raptor monitoring program is still going strong

today, 36 years since it began.

Because of its unique rock formations, high concentration of climbing routes and moderate weather, the park is a popular climbing destination. Emmons estimates it hosts thousands of climbers annually, the busiest time being from December to April.

To help protect the park's raptor population, especially those that nest in cliffs, park officials have reinstated the annual climbing advisories as of Jan. 18. They request that off-trail hikers and climbers avoid the High Peaks, the Balconies Cliffs area, the Piedras Bonitas/Gargoyle area, Resurrection Wall, Little Pinnacles/Yaks Wall and the Egg Rock/Teapot Dome areas, according to a news release.

Today, Emmons and his team conduct monthly surveys for nesting sites throughout the raptor breeding season, which runs from January to July. The initial advisories are put in place in areas where birds have nested in the past five years. However, if no one observes nests in a particular location for three consecutive months, the climbing advisory in that region is lifted.



GAVIN EMMONS — SPECIAL TO THE HERALD

In the mid-1980s, climbers at Pinnacles National Park got too close to raptor nesting sites in the cliffs, causing the birds to abandon their nests.

"We've found that (these measures) have been pretty effective," Emmons said. "As long as (climbers) are kept in the loop about what's going on at the park — how advisories are going into effect and what areas they cover — they've been really receptive to that and really excellent stewards."

Emmons himself is a climber and is heavily involved in the climbing community at Pinnacles. He frequently serves as a liaison between climbers and the park service.

In 2021, according to a

news release, park staff observed 12 pairs of prairie and peregrine falcons, which produced 40 fledglings.

"Last year, we had a particularly successful year after some years of downturn for prairie falcons," Emmons said. He suspects that delayed seasonal rainfall resulted in poor vegetation coverage, making falcon prey species, like ground squirrels, easier to capture.

Other raptors spotted last year include American kestrels, golden eagles, red-tailed hawks, red-shouldered

RAPTORS » PAGE 4

UKRAINE CRISIS

Biden: 'Severe cost' of invasion

By Jim Heintz and Aamer Madhani
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON » President Joe Biden told Russia's Vladimir Putin that invading Ukraine would cause "widespread human suffering" and that the West was committed to diplomacy to end the crisis but "equally prepared for other scenarios," the White House said Saturday.

Biden also said the United States and its allies would respond "decisively and impose swift and severe costs" if the Kremlin attacked its neighbor, according to a White House description of the hourlong call.

"President Biden was clear with President Putin that while the United States remains prepared to engage in diplomacy, in full coordination with our Allies and partners, we are equally prepared for other scenarios," the White House statement said.

The two presidents spoke a day after Biden's national security adviser, Jake Sullivan, warned that U.S. intelligence shows that a Russian in-

UKRAINE » PAGE 6

PROTEST

Canada border block clearing peacefully as police start moving in

By Rob Gillies and Mike Householder
The Associated Press

WINDSOR, ONTARIO » A tense standoff at a U.S.-Canadian border crossing crucial to both countries' economies appeared to be dissolving peacefully Saturday as Canadian police moved in to disperse the nearly weeklong blockade and protesters began leaving without resistance.

Many demonstrators drove away from the Ambassador Bridge spanning the river between Detroit and Windsor, Ontario, as scores of police approached shortly after dawn. They had spent the night there in defiance of new warnings to end the blockade, which disrupted the flow of traffic and goods and forced the auto industry on both sides to roll back production.

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POLITICS
Dems ease up on approach to virus
As midterms approach, there's a shifting narrative on COVID-19 restrictions across the country. PAGE A5



POLITICS
Biden weighs top 3 candidates for court
One of the candidates has ready-made bipartisan support, which has complicated the decision. PAGE A7

POLITICS
South Carolina stalls on new hate crime law
As one of only two states without a hate crime law, proponents worry about the bill's slowing momentum. PAGE A6

COVID-19
Don't know how to make a booster appointment?
Visit Monterey County Health Department webpage at <https://bit.ly/3qtjYU0> for links to schedules and registration.

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Gentrain Society Lecture
Who Was Lilith?
Stephanie Spoto PhD, the Philosophy Instructor for The Gentrain Program, will provide a PowerPoint presentation on her recently released book *Lilith, Gender and Demonology* which addresses the impact of the figure of Lilith in early modern European culture. The work provides a brief introduction to the various occult philosophies in circulation between the fourteenth and seventeenth centuries: Neoplatonism, Hermeticism, Gnosticism, etc. before moving on to its primary focus. The main body of work concentrates on the appearance of Lilith and the feminine demonic in official documents as well as poetry. In addition many people have heard the story about Adam and Eve. *Lilith, Gender and Demonology* However, they rarely understand the story of the serpent's first wife, whose name is Lilith. In some religious texts, Lilith is believed to be the serpent in the Garden of Eden.

February 16, 2022 • MPC LF103 – 1:30 – 2:30pm.
Open to the public; no charge or registration is required (Free parking) • www.gentrain.org

