

# **Pinnacles National Park, Troop 64 Camping Plan**

## **Friday, October 23 to Sunday, October 25, 2015**

Troop 64 is going to America's newest National Park October 23-25. The park was an active volcano region millions of years ago split by the San Andreas fault and contains talus caves, lava tubes, and majestic rock spires. Pinnacles is one of four sites where captive-bred condors are released to live in the wild, and many of these birds live out their lives flying between Pinnacles and the Big Sur coast.

There are several great opportunities for hiking and exploring, and a good chance to see wild condors. Pinnacles was set aside as a monument by Theodore Roosevelt in 1908 and became a national park in 2013. For an introduction see the youtube video above.

We have a large group site and families are welcome. Flashlights are required for both caves. Pack flashlights for each hiker and be careful of wet surfaces. There are stairs in the cave as well as a long staircase beyond the caves that will lead you to the reservoir. The weather is warmer than the Peninsula. As a general guide, you can estimate the temperature by adding 10 degrees to the Hollister forecast.

Camp updates for this event are on the website at [troop64pv.org](http://troop64pv.org)

### Organizer

Dale Koop [dekoop@mac.com](mailto:dekoop@mac.com) 1-650-520-8108

### Campground

Check in October 23, 2015  
Check out October 25, 2015

Campground 124, 125, 126  
Camp reservations ~ \$20 per person

- Campground Store & Office Hours: Mon-Thurs., 3 p.m.-4 p.m.; Fri., Noon-5 p.m.; Sat-Sun, 9:30 a.m.-5 p.m.
- Campground fees do not include the per-vehicle entry fee to the park, charged upon arrival
- No gathering of firewood
- Campfires are permitted in the campground, but this is subject to change without warning
- Fires are prohibited due to extreme fire danger in and around the park
- Follow on [Facebook - The Pinnacles Campground](#).
- No RV's allowed in the group sites.

### Directions

Pinnacles NP campground is 101 miles and takes 1 hour and 50 minutes from Portola Valley.

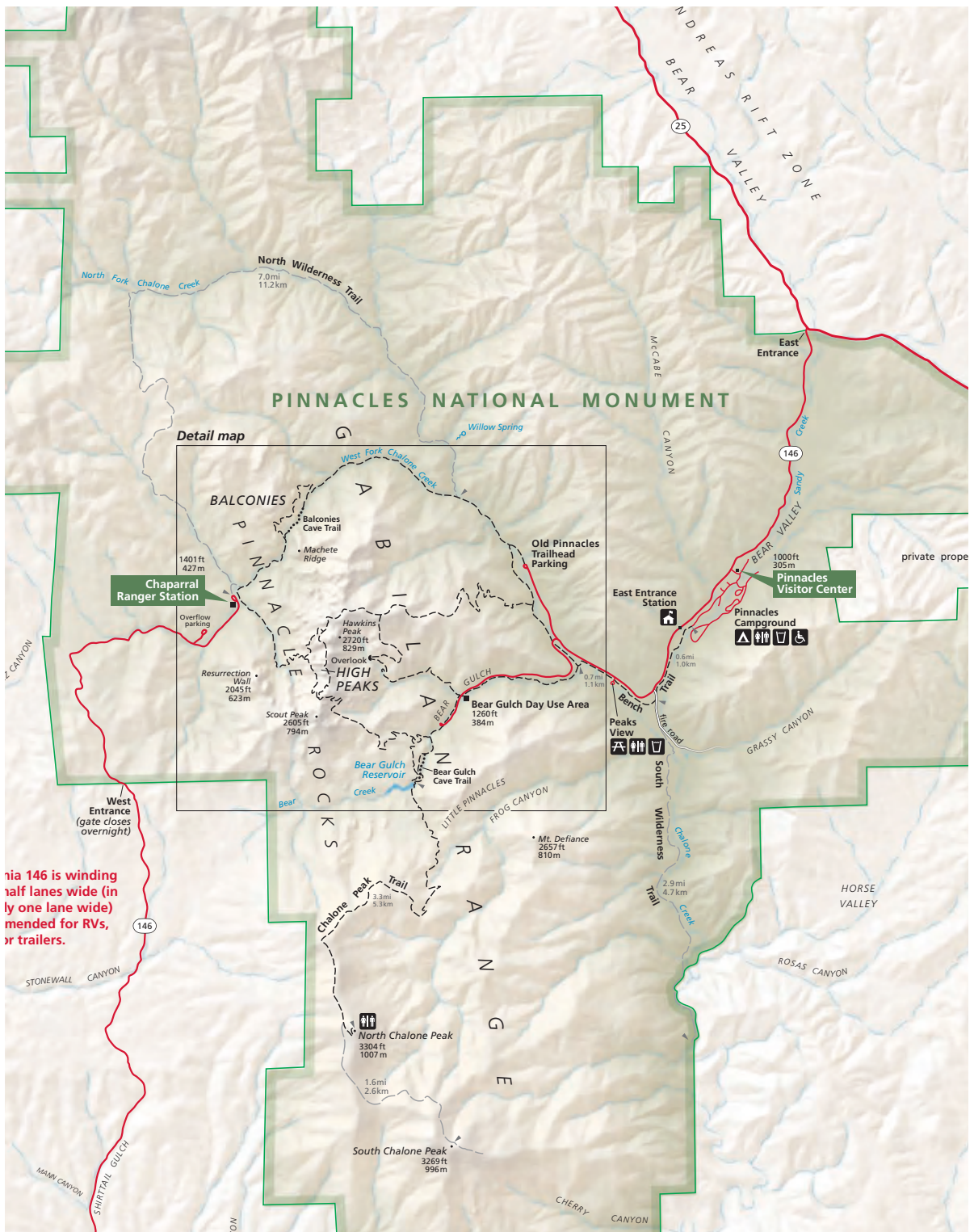
Pinnacles National Park is located 32 miles south of Hollister, CA on Hwy 25. Campground is located on the east side of Pinnacles National Park off Hwy 25.

Payments to drivers:

According to Troop 64 policy (Troop Committee Meeting 11/23/09), each Scout needs to pay his driver to help cover gasoline costs. In this case (202 miles round trip) the cost is \$20 for the round trip.

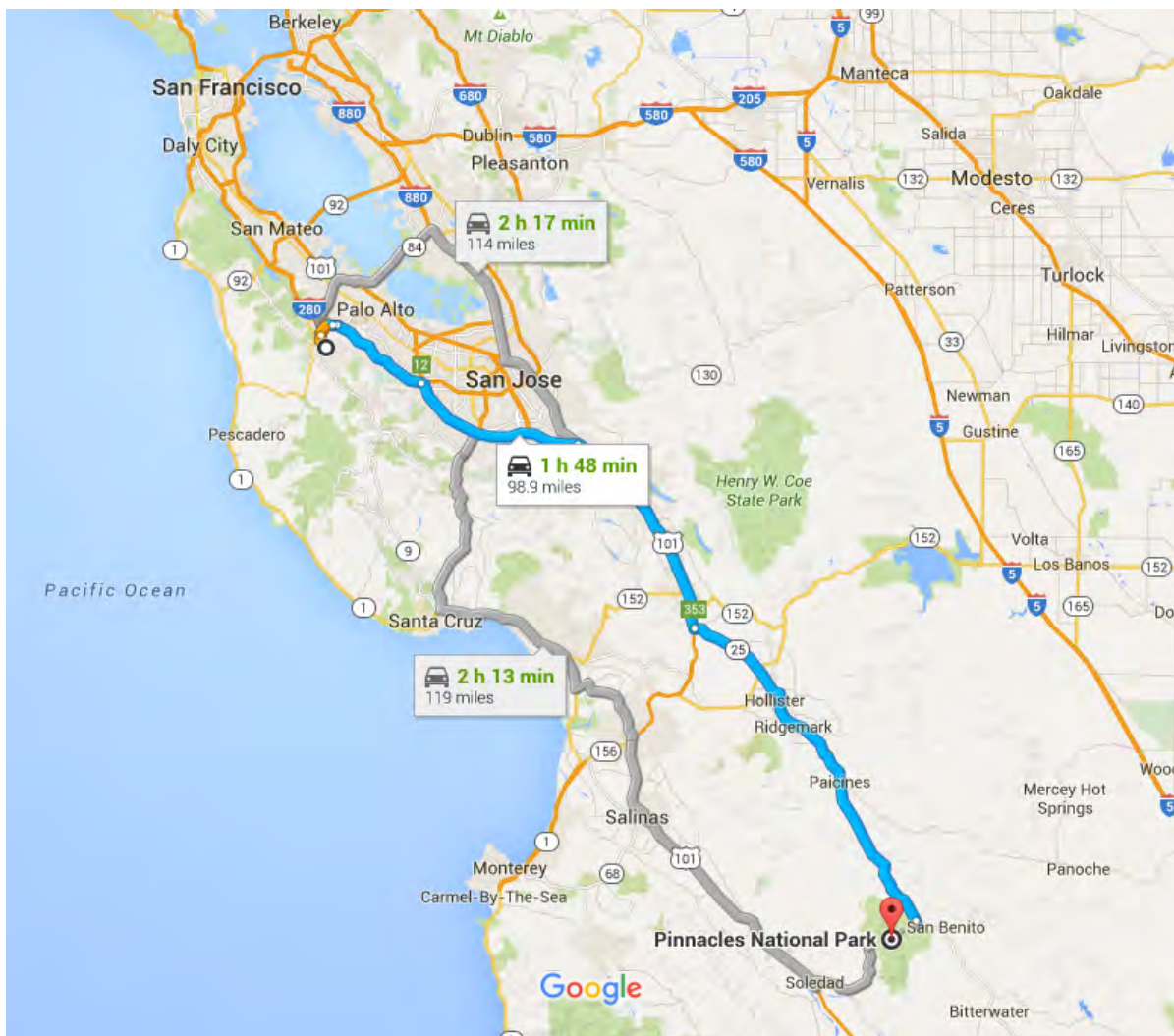
Advancement Opportunities

Second Class, First Class, and Cooking MB ad Camping MB meal planning and cooking; camping nights.





Google Maps Portola Valley, CA to Pinnacles National Park Drive 98.9 miles, 1 h 48 min



Map data ©2015 Google 10 mi



## California Condor Frequently Asked Questions



California condor (*Gymnogyps californianus*)

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### What is a condor? Why are they important?

California condors are the largest flying land birds of North America. They are members of the vulture family and are strictly scavengers, eating only carrion (dead animals). They are important because they are the “waste management” of the animal world. By eating carrion, condors recycle important nutrients and material back into the ecosystem for other organisms to use.

### How many condors are there in the park?

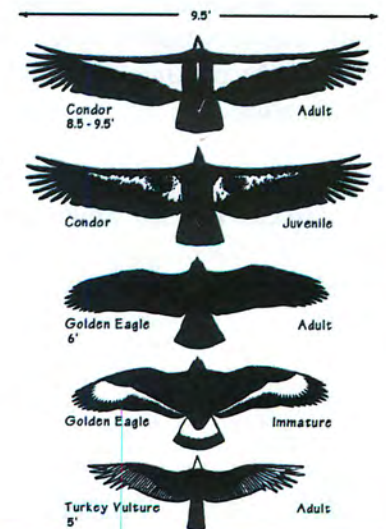
There are 33 condors that have been released or hatched at Pinnacles National Park, along with the 36 released or hatched at Big Sur that make up the Central California flock. The condors will intermingle between here and Big Sur and vice versa. On any given day you could see upwards of 20 condors in the park, a few, or none at all.

### Where is the best place to see a condor in the park?

The best place is to get closer to where condors like to be, which is up high. The High Peaks Trail offers the best chance at seeing a condor in the park. There are also two scopes by the East Visitor Center and Campground that are pointed to a ridge where condors occasionally roost at night. Condors can be seen at any time during the day, but are most likely to be seen in the late morning before they leave roost sites to forage for food and late afternoon before they roost.

### What is the difference between condors and turkey vultures?

Size is one of the more obvious differences, but can be hard to tell when the bird is in flight. Turkey Vultures typically have a 5 foot wingspan while California condors can have 9.5 foot wingspans. The underside of the bird is another great way to tell the difference. Turkey vultures have a lighter color on the lower part underneath their wings. Condors have a mottled grey or white section at the leading or top edge of the underside of their wings.



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**How big are they? How much do they weigh? What is their wing span?**

They can weigh approximately 20 lbs. with a height between 45 to 55 inches. They have an impressive wingspan (largest of any North American bird) of about 9.5 feet.

**How long do they live?**

Though no one has studied condors for long enough to know for sure, the best estimates are they can reach 45-55 years old.

**What do they eat?**

Condors are strictly scavengers and feed on carrion (dead animals). They have been observed feeding on animals as small as ground squirrels and as big as gray whales. Part of what they are doing while soaring high above the ground is searching for food.

**Do they all have radio transmitters? Why?**

Yes, all of the released and wild-fledged condors have radio transmitters. We place tags on them so that we can keep track of how they're doing. This is a way to make sure that they are perching, roosting, or nesting in areas that are safe for them (i.e. not next to roadways or low to the ground where predators could harm them). Having them radio-tagged also allows us to locate where a condor may have died so we may collect the remains for a necropsy, a test to determine a cause of death.

**When do they reach maturity/nest? How many eggs do they lay? How long until fledged?**

Condors do not reach sexual maturity until they are around 6-7 years of age. Condors lay only one egg during each nesting attempt. They are cavity nesters and do not build a typical nest. At Pinnacles N.P., condors use the large cavities in cliff faces. Along the coast, they will also use large hollowed out redwoods for nesting. After hatching, the young bird spends around six months in the nest before fledging (leaving the nest). The fledgling condor will normally stay with the parents for up to a year before going off on its own. This type of reproductive strategy means condors cannot sustain high mortality levels because it takes about ten years for a pair to breed and produce two offspring.

**Why are they endangered?**

There are several reasons for the decline in condor populations. Habitat destruction, lead poisoning and shooting of condors for museum and private collections all played a role. Egg collectors impacted condor breeding productivity as well. Currently, lead poisoning is the major threat for the wild population of condors. Since condors are scavengers they only eat animals that are dead. Some of the dead animals on the landscape have been shot with ammunition made of lead. When animals are shot with lead ammunition, the bullets fragment and deposit lead in the carcass. Condors, and other scavengers, may unintentionally ingest small pieces of lead while feeding on these food sources. Hunters can help by making the switch to non-lead ammunition. Visit <http://www.huntingwithnonlead.org/> for more information.

**Where can I go for more information?**

Pinnacles National Park Website: <http://www.nps.gov/pinn/naturescience/condors.htm>

Hunting With Non-lead Website: <http://www.huntingwithnonlead.org/>