Have you met Gomez and Lurch, the turkey vultures that call ZooMontana home? Turkey vultures are one of three vulture species found in North America. You can tell turkey vultures apart from California condors and black vultures by their bright pink bald heads! These bald heads help keep turkey vultures faces clean as they eat carrion and other decomposing items.



Turkey vultures can be found throughout the western hemisphere but are only found in Montana in the summer months. In the winter, they migrate to warmer climates in the southern U.S., Central and South America. When flying, turkey vultures take advantage of columns of rising warm air called thermals. By placing themselves in thermal columns they are effortlessly lifted high into the air.

- To see if it's a turkey vulture soaring above you, look for the characteristic white undersides of their flight feathers on their wings.
- Turkey vultures are one of the only birds that have an excellent sense of smell! They use it to find rotting carrion.
- The stomach acid of a turkey vulture is acidic as battery acid! If they need to defend themselves, they can vomit their acidic stomach contents a distance of 6 feet!

Color in this flock of turkey vultures in a desert habitat!



There are three species of vultures in North America; the turkey vulture, black vulture, and California condor. Color in each species based on their descriptions below!

Turkey vulture	Black vulture	California condor
Bald red head, black wings, red feet, white beak, large nostrils	Black bald head, black wings, grey beak, grey feet, small nostrils	Orange bald head, 10ft wing span, black feathers,



Turkey vulture



Black vulture



California condor

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