



***Press Event: Monday, Feb. 18, 11:00 AM at the Los Angeles Oiled Bird Care and Education Center located at 3601 South Gaffey Street, San Pedro CA 90731 (next to the Marine Mammal Care Center). IBR center manager Julie Skoglund will be answering questions. Visuals are washing oiled birds, staff and volunteers attending to birds in care. Please do not call the center!***

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Oiled Seabirds Flood Rescue Center**

**Natural seep off Santa Barbara coast is taking toll on birds and resources of non-profit caring for them**

**LOS ANGELES (February 17, 2013)** — International Bird Rescue’s (IBR) Los Angeles center is working overtime to wash and rehabilitate dozens of oiled seabirds found beached and coated with crude oil and tar. The birds are imperiled due to known natural seeps deep in the ocean off Southern California’s coast.

Since February 1, IBR’s center, located in San Pedro, has received 77 oiled birds, mostly Common Murres — diving birds that nest on high cliffs and spend most of their lives on the open water. Western Grebes and Loons have also been affected by the natural seepage, and have been found emaciated and suffering from hypothermia on beaches from Malibu to Newport Beach.

“Since this isn’t an official oil spill, there isn’t an organized effort to capture these birds,” said IBR’s executive director Jay Holcomb. “They are found by the public one at a time and brought to our center for care. We estimate there are more birds out there that are not being picked up.”

Because these oiled birds are affected by natural seepage rather than a human-caused oil spill, the high cost of rehabilitating these animals falls largely on IBR and other area wildlife groups.

“Our staff and volunteers are in the midst of an oil spill with many birds needing daily care at our center,” Holcomb said. “Little attention is paid to these natural events because there is no responsible party, such as an oil company, to pay the costs. The responsible party in this case is Mother Nature, and she does not come with a credit card.”

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Natural oil seepage occurs in many places along the Southern California Coast. Coal Oil Point in the Santa Barbara Channel, for example, is the world's largest natural seep, emitting thousands of gallons of oil every day.

[Click here](#) for recent photos of oiled birds in IBR's care. Photo credit: International Bird Rescue.

### **How the Public Can Help**

If you see an oiled bird in distress that needs rescue, **please call (866) WILD-911 for help**. To report oiled wildlife sightings, please call (877) UCD-OWCN.

Some of IBR's costs for natural seep events are offset by support from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. But the nonprofit bears the brunt of these expenses and is asking for donations at [www.birdrescue.org](http://www.birdrescue.org).

**About us: International Bird Rescue (IBR)** has been helping seabirds and other aquatic birds around the world since 1971. Our team of specialists operates two year-round aquatic bird rehabilitation centers in California, which care for more than 5,000 birds every year. IBR's Oil Spill Response Team has led oiled wildlife rescue efforts in more than 200 oil spills in a dozen countries around the world.

Blog: <http://blog.bird-rescue.org/index.php/2013/02/oiled-common-murres-fill-international-bird-rescues-los-angeles-center/>



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