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International Bird Rescue Partners with the Port of Long Beach to Protect Local Wildlife

As part of its Green Port Policy, the Port of Long Beach has made a \$20,000 commitment in 2014 to sponsor the care of injured marine birds at International Bird Rescue's nearby wildlife center

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LONG BEACH, CA (August 19, 2014) — One of the nation's busiest seaports is teaming up with a leading wildlife group to better protect birds that live in local ecosystems and the urban environment.

International Bird Rescue, a global expert in oiled wildlife emergencies and aquatic bird care, announced Tuesday that it is expanding its partnership with the Port of Long Beach, one unofficially established during an animal cruelty case that dominated Southern California headlines earlier this year.

The Port has committed a total of \$20,000 during 2014 to support International Bird Rescue's primary mission to care for injured wildlife affected by the urban environment, including birds found in Long Beach and surrounding communities.

"The Port of Long Beach is thrilled to continue our partnership with the International Bird Rescue. Through the Green Port Policy we are committed to improving the harbor environment both for people and wildlife," said Communications Director Michael Gold.

As part of this partnership, International Bird Rescue and the Port will work together to highlight the remarkable species that live in local marine environments through a regular "sponsored patient" campaign. Each sponsored bird will reflect the biodiversity of local ecosystems, and will be prominently featured on social media, often from intake to release.

Through its Green Port Policy, the Port has worked to maintain area marine habitat as well as to actively monitor local populations of bird species such as the endangered Least Tern and the Black-crowned Night Heron, which commonly nests in urban areas. The Green Port Policy also has supported habitat restoration at Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve and other local wetlands that serve as key stopover points for birds migrating along the Pacific Flyway, which stretches from Alaska to Argentina.

The partnership unofficially began this spring, when an adult California Brown Pelican was found on a Long Beach street with its throat pouch cut from ear to ear by an unknown perpetrator. The Port contributed \$5,000 to surgery for the pelican, nicknamed "Pink," who was released in early June.

The first official sponsored bird is an American Avocet, one whose nest had been recently abandoned due to human activity; the bird has been raised among other wading birds and shorebirds at International Bird



Rescue. Avocets are federally protected wading birds that can be seen “sweeping” their upturned bills through shallow water for food at critically important coastal wetlands. More information on this sponsored bird can be found [here](#).

“Many of the bird species that call the Long Beach area home also are some of our most common patients,” said Barbara Callahan, interim executive director of International Bird Rescue. “We see a natural connection between our mission to protect birds from human activity and the Port of Long Beach’s commitment to local wildlife and the habitats they depend on.”

International Bird Rescue has operated the Los Angeles Oiled Bird Care and Education Center in San Pedro since 2001. The center serves as a primary facility in the event of an oil spill affecting marine life in Southern California. On average, the facility cares for over 2,000 injured birds a year, including pelicans, herons, loons, terns and other aquatic birds. Oil contamination, fish hook injuries, plastic ingestion, orphaned birds found in the urban environment and animal cruelty all are common problems seen by International Bird Rescue’s wildlife team.

Birds sponsored by this program will comprise an array of species found in local habitat — most likely but not limited to pelicans, terns and diving birds such as loons and grebes. When possible, International Bird Rescue plans to release sponsored birds into local habitat, including areas that have been supported through Port of Long Beach restoration efforts, such as Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve.

International Bird Rescue urges bird lovers in Long Beach and the greater Los Angeles area to help support the care of injured wildlife through the organization’s symbolic [“Adopt a Bird” program](#).

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About International Bird Rescue: *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. Learn more at birdrescue.org.*

About the Port of Long Beach’s Green Port Policy: *Part of the Port of Long Beach’s Green Port Policy is to protect, maintain or restore aquatic ecosystems and marine habitats.*

As a steward of the natural resources in the harbor, the Port’s challenge is to ensure that wildlife continues to thrive and that the quality of wildlife habitats is not only maintained but improved wherever possible. The Green Port wildlife programs work in conjunction with federal and state wildlife programs to meet that challenge. In the past, the Port has conducted regular biological surveys of birds, fish and other wildlife in the harbor, tracking habitat quality. The Port has also provided \$50 million for the Bolsa Chica Wetlands restoration project, which has provided an important habitat for aquatic wildlife. For more information, visit polb.com.