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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Last Mystery Goo Seabird To Be Released by International Bird Rescue; Total Released: 165 Clean Birds Back To The Wild

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WHEN: Wednesday, April 15, 2015 11:30 AM

WHERE: Fort Baker - 435 Murray Circle, Sausalito, CA 94965

RELEASE: Boat launch

PARKING: Discovery Museum

WHO: IBR personnel will be available for questions/interviews

Nearly three months to the day that 323 seabirds coated in a mystery goo began arriving at its San Francisco Bay Center, International Bird Rescue (IBR) will release the last seabird back to the wild.

The bird, a Surf Scoter, will be released Wednesday April 15, 2015. This will bring the total to 165 birds released. Another 158 were dead on arrival or were humanely euthanized at IBR's center in Fairfield, CA.

At least 170 dead bird carcasses were picked up during January by California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) personnel.

"We are so happy to see the final clean, healthy seabird returned to the wild," said Barbara Callahan, Interim Executive Director of International Bird Rescue. "We are also extremely grateful for the public's support – including the generous donations that helped us fund this expensive response."

No responsible party has yet to be identified and the cost of all the bird care has fallen to International Bird Rescue who has relied on the help of the public and foundations for donations. Bird Rescue has spent nearly \$150,000 on this unusual contaminant response. The public can donate here: <http://birdrescue.org/donate>

The birds had their feathers coated by a sticky, non-petroleum substance in mid-January that grounded them along the East Bay shore of San Francisco Bay. The contaminant source is still unidentified.

The last birds in care were those that came in with serious but treatable medical problems. These included severe emaciation, anemia, or injuries.

Many of these rescued birds also came to the center with pressure sores on their hocks or toes from being stranded on hard land. These injuries can take months of care and healing. Other patients had surgeries for keel injuries but most of those healed quickly.

Background

In mid-January hundreds of birds were rescued from Alameda south to Hayward in San Francisco Bay. Each was coated with an unknown tacky substance dubbed "mystery goo".

The goo covered the feathers of seabirds, destroying their ability to stay warm, but no mystery goo was found to be on the beach or in the water, which deepened the mystery.

Each of the live birds was medically stabilized and then cleaned using a combination of baking soda and vinegar, followed by washing with Dawn detergent, and rinse to repair waterproofing.

The birds treated include: Surf Scoters, Horned Grebes, Buffleheads, Common Goldeneyes, and Scaups. About 70% were Surf Scoters.

On February 12, state and federal labs concluded that the substance that coated birds includes a mixture of non-petroleum-based fats or oils. See the press release from CAFW: <http://ow.ly/J4bZp>

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. IBR is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. See more online: birdrescue.org

Note: Photos available for media via Dropbox: <http://ow.ly/LBB4C>