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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

International Bird Rescue 4369 Cordelia Road, Fairfield, CA 94534

## **Exhausted, Starving Seabirds Continue To Flood International Bird Rescue's San Francisco Bay Center**

**Media contact:** Russ Curtis, Mobile: 415.533.1357

[Russ.Curtis@Bird-Rescue.org](mailto:Russ.Curtis@Bird-Rescue.org)

### **Common Murre numbers rising each day at Fairfield center; Public support & volunteers still needed**

An unprecedented number of exhausted, hungry seabirds continue to flood International Bird Rescue's San Francisco Bay Center. More than 250 rescued Common Murres – mostly young, malnourished chicks unable to maintain their weight and body temperature – have been delivered to the center in the last few weeks.

"The huge flow of stranded seabirds into our center has not slowed," says Michelle Bellizzi, Center Manager at Bird Rescue's San Francisco Bay Center. "Just today we received 37 new patients in need of care. Our staff and volunteers are working long hours to make sure these birds get a second chance."

The number of Murres this year is exceptional – especially since Bird Rescue rarely sees more than ten of this bird species in **one month** during the late summer and early fall.

The life-saving care these seabirds require is not cheap and continues to strain Bird Rescue's resources. Donations are needed more than ever. The public can symbolically adopt a Murre by donating online: <http://bird-rescue.org/adopt-murre>

"Thanks to some generous donations we have been able to bring one additional pool online and two more will be completed this week," adds JD Bergeron, Executive Director of Bird Rescue, "but the costs of care, feeding, medication, and additional staff time continue to add up. During these emergency events we rely heavily on the support of our donors and other bird lovers."



Murres in care can be viewed on Bird Rescue's **Live BirdCam**: <http://bird-rescue.org/birdcam/birdcam-1.aspx>

Along the coast, the public and trained citizen scientists have been spotting not just live birds, but an unusually high number of dead birds on Northern California beaches. On Rodeo Beach in Marin County earlier this month, beach walkers counted 80 dead seabirds – mostly Common Murres.

The sight of so many starving seabirds has raised red flags among seabird scientists. These scientists surmise that as waters warm along the California coast, diving birds starve as fish go deeper to reach cooler waters, putting themselves out of the birds' reach. This summer Northern California coastal waters have warmed 5 to 10 degrees above historical averages.

What's happening to these seabirds is important. Common Murres serve as a key indicator species for ocean conservation. Their numbers are trending downward with documented changes in fish stocks, chronic oil spills, and interactions with humans.

The Common Murre (*Uria aalge*) looks very much like a small penguin. The public often reports seeing "little penguins" stranded on Bay Area beaches, what they are really seeing are Murres. Unlike Penguins, Common Murres can fly.

Murres spend most their lives out to sea, except when nesting on rocky cliffs. They are superb divers—essentially “flying” through water by using their wings to propel themselves. They can dive in excess of 200 feet below the surface to forage.

**About International Bird Rescue:** International Bird Rescue (“Bird Rescue”) 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 as well as a temporary facility in Alaska. It relies on public support to care for more than 5,000 birds each year. Bird Rescue is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

Learn more at [birdrescue.org](http://birdrescue.org)

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