



MEDIA INVITE

February 26, 2019

Oily Seabirds Slimed By Natural Seep

More than 100 rescued birds being washed in San Pedro

Media contact:

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What: Tour of busy bird center where oiled seabirds are being washed. Experts to explain spike in oiled wildlife in care.

When: Wednesday, February 27, 2019 at 11 AM

Where: International Bird Rescue's Los Angeles Wildlife Center
3601 South Gaffey Street, San Pedro, CA 90731 ([Map](#))

San Pedro, CA – Oiled seabirds are flooding into International Bird Rescue's Los Angeles center after recent heavy storms and rough seas have stirred up natural oil seep that leaked up to the surface off the Central and Southern California coasts.

Since this January, Bird Rescue has taken in more than 110 oily, stranded seabirds rescued along local beaches. There are currently 65 birds in care.



The rescued birds are being washed and rehabilitated at its wildlife hospital located in San Pedro. They include mainly Western Grebes, Clark's Grebes, Red-throated Loons, and Surf Scoters.

This influx of contaminated patients is not unusual. Each year in the fall and winter months Bird Rescue experiences an “Oiled Bird Season” as migrating birds pass through naturally occurring oil seeps. Read the NOAA information: [Natural Oil Seeps in Southern California](#)

“One of the most important things that people should understand about caring for oiled wildlife is that the wash is just a small portion of the overall work that needs to be done in order to successfully rehabilitate and release these birds back into the wild,” said Julie Skoglund, Bird Rescue’s Operations Manager.

Once an oiled seabird is adequately hydrated and nourished, **each bird takes about 30-60 minutes to go through the four-step intensive wash and rinse process.**

Afterwards it is moved to a specialized enclosure to dry off. Then begins the multi-day process of waterproofing: a labor-intensive effort on the part of both patient and staff. It involves extensive feather preening, several days of moving back and forth between pools and drying pens, frequent checkups, and additional spot washes as needed.

Once the bird has completely re-established its waterproofing, it will remain in care until any additional injuries have been resolved and it has attained a healthy state.

While the numbers are high in Southern California, there’s also been an uptick of oiled seep seabirds in Northern California. In the past three weeks Bird Rescue has admitted sticky coated birds including Common Murres, Western Grebes and more to the San Francisco Bay-Delta Wildlife Center. The oil is very thick in the affected bird’s feathers.



Bird Rescue has increased staffing to crisis levels at both centers to support the spike in oiled bird numbers.

The [Oiled Wildlife Care Network](#) (OWCN) supports a portion of the cost for caring for these animals. To cover the additional costs of patient care, Bird Rescue relies on the public. [Donate online](#)

We are also thankful for our many partner organizations, especially the [Santa Barbara Wildlife Care Network](#), for stabilizing and transferring many of these oiled birds to us.

The public is urged to report any oiled or injured animal by calling the OWCN hotline at (877) 823-6926.

About International Bird Rescue: In 1971 after 800,000 gallons of crude oil spilled into the bay, concerned individuals led by a registered nurse named Alice Berkner jumped into action, bringing International Bird Rescue to life. We have always had to pave a road where there is none. Staff and volunteers work with tenacity alongside clients, partners, and the public to find solutions. Today, we research best practices at our crisis response hospitals in California and Alaska and share them worldwide. Our mission is to inspire people to act toward balance with the natural world by rescuing waterbirds in crisis. We dream of a world in which every person, every day, takes action to protect the natural home of wildlife and ourselves.

Learn more at <https://www.bird-rescue.org/>

International Bird Rescue

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