



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Media contact: Andrew Harmon  
[Andrew.harmon@bird-rescue.org](mailto:Andrew.harmon@bird-rescue.org); 510.289.1472

## \$10,000 Reward Now Offered in Mutilated Pelican Case as Cruelty Victim “Pink” Undergoes First Surgery

*Multiple surgeries, hundreds of stitches and months of rehabilitation likely needed before Pink, an adult California Brown Pelican, can be released into the wild*

LOS ANGELES (April 28, 2014) — International Bird Rescue (IBR) and the Animal Legal Defense Fund have now posted a \$10,000 reward to find those responsible for the recent mutilation of a protected California Brown Pelican in Long Beach, CA.

On Sunday, the pelican, nicknamed “Pink” for the colored leg band the adult bird was assigned upon arrival at IBR’s Los Angeles center, successfully underwent the first of what likely will be multiple surgeries to repair a severe pouch laceration caused by a sharp object.



*“Pink” undergoes surgery on Sunday, April 27; high-res photos available [here](#).*

IBR veterinarian Dr. Rebecca Duerr performed the three-hour procedure assisted by Los Angeles center rehabilitation staff. ([Photos of the pelican’s surgery available here](#); please credit International Bird Rescue/Bill Steinkamp.)

“In my 40-plus years as a wildlife rehabilitator, I’ve seen too many of these horrible attacks against innocent animals,” said International Bird Rescue executive director Jay Holcomb. “The public is sick of it too, and we hear their frustration. We as a society cannot and should not tolerate these crimes any longer.”



The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) currently is seeking information on this federal crime, which is punishable by a fine of up to \$15,000 and a jail sentence of up to six months. Anyone with information that might lead to the arrest and conviction of the person or persons responsible for the mutilation of this bird should contact USFWS at 310-328-1516. Tips may be given anonymously.

The \$10,000 reward is made possible in part by the California-based Animal Legal Defense Fund, which has posted \$5,000 of the total reward amount in addition to support offered from concerned citizens. “We call on anyone with information of this sadistic crime to come forward,” said Stephen Wells, executive director of the Animal Legal Defense Fund. “The relationship between animal cruelty and violence against humans is well-documented and abusers often go on to harm humans as well.”

On April 16, Pink was found and captured by Long Beach Animal Care Services at the 5400 block of Ocean Boulevard in Long Beach before transfer to IBR’s Los Angeles center in nearby San Pedro. The laceration ran all the way around this animal’s pouch, and as a result Pink was unable to self-feed. Our center team placed temporary staples in the pouch to allow the bird to eat sardines and stabilize pending surgery. [Read more on the bird via IBR’s blog.](#)

“We get far too many pelicans with holes in their pouches from either knives or fishing hooks, but we have never seen an injury of this magnitude where the bird survived,” Holcomb said. “This was very deliberate and took some doing as pelicans are large, strong birds.”

IBR depends on the support of the public to care for animals injured in cruelty incidents, as well as those harmed by fishing wound and other human-caused injuries. To make a donation, please visit [birdrescue.org](http://birdrescue.org).

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

**About the Animal Legal Defense Fund:** *The Animal Legal Defense Fund fights to protect the lives and advance the interests of animals through the legal system. Founded in 1979 by attorneys active in shaping the emerging field of animal law, ALDF has blazed the trail for stronger enforcement of anti-cruelty laws and more humane treatment of animals in every corner of American life.*