



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

After Two Months, Mystery Goo Seabird Care Is Winding Down: International Bird Rescue Has Released 154 Cleaned Birds Back To The Wild

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19 birds still in care at our San Francisco Bay Center

Nearly two months after 323 seabirds arrived coated in a mystery goo, International Bird Rescue is still treating the last of the bird patients affected by this unusual contaminant.

19 seabirds are still in care, including, Surf Scoters, Buffleheads and Horned Grebes. A total of 154 cleaned, healthy birds have now been returned to the wild. 150 died on arrival or were humanely euthanized.

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

"This is such an unprecedented response as it's been over two months since the birds were covered in goo and no responsible party has been identified," said Barbara Callahan, interim executive director of International Bird Rescue. "This has taxed Bird Rescue's resources to care for hundreds of seabirds, many of them for several weeks."

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 19 birds that still remain in care are those that entered our San Francisco Bay center in Fairfield, CA 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 to 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 these healed quickly.

With no responsible party identified, as yet, 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 the response and continues to rely on public support to help with on-going costs associated with this unusual contaminant response. Donate here: <http://birdrescue.org/donate>

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 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. More than 70% the bird affected 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. Read the full press release from California Department Fish and Wildlife: <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 use on Dropbox](#)

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