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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Someone is Slashing Brown Pelican Pouches; \$5,000 Reward Offered By International Bird Rescue

Who is harming Brown Pelicans in Southern California?

At least four California Brown Pelicans have come into care at International Bird Rescue in San Pedro, CA with identical, severe injuries to their pouches and necks. Clinic staff suspect the wounds are deliberate and malicious. Three of the four pelicans were from the Marina del Rey area, the fourth was rescued near Ventura Harbor. There was also a fifth bird with similar injuries that came into care in fall of 2019 – also from Ventura Harbor.

Video report: <https://youtu.be/8H8Se1gPLZY>

International Bird Rescue is offering a \$5,000 reward for information leading to the conviction of the person or persons responsible for inflicting these horrible wounds on these iconic seabirds.

In 11 years, International Bird Rescue's staff veterinarian, Rebecca Duerr, DVM

MPVM PhD, has seen hundreds of pelican pouch injuries. The majority of these injuries are caused by fish hooks, boat propeller strikes, and other mishaps.

These recent injuries are different. Duerr says the wounds are straight cuts through both sides of the bird's pouch, indicating foul play, extending back along one or both sides of the neck – peeling the skin off the bird's neck. Although all of the victims briefly remain capable of flying away, they likely



don't get far. These wounds leave the pelicans in shock and doomed to die in pain.

"These injuries make our 2014 case "Pink the Pelican's" wounds look like a cakewalk to repair in comparison," says Duerr. "These are a whole new level of horrible."

Back in the summer of 2014, [Pink the Pelican](#), became the poster pelican for animal cruelty. The bird's human-caused pouch slashing required more than 600 sutures to repair. With restorative surgery and care, the pelican was triumphantly released back to the wild to public and media fanfare.

The most recent victim not only had symmetrical cuts slicing through the entirety of the pouch, detaching it from the neck, but also had a straight cut into the muscle at the back of the neck consistent with a knife or machete cut. This poor bird came into Bird Rescue's Los Angeles Wildlife Center in extremely critical condition. Unfortunately, the pelican had to be humanely euthanized because of the severity of the wounds.

We rely on the public to find injured animals. Please keep an eye out over the holidays, we are asking our community of bird lovers to help protect vulnerable wildlife from human violence.

Brown Pelicans are protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and harming them is a crime. If you have information about these cases or witness someone harming other wildlife, **please call the CalTIP hotline 888-334-2258**, the "CalTIP" app available in the App Store, or by texting "CAL TIP", followed by a space and the message, to 847411 (tip411). Please include penal code 597 in the report.

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.birdrescue.org/>

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