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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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A Story of Hope: "Little Mike" Seabird Rescue

San Pedro, CA – One special Elegant Tern that was rescued this week at the ongoing Long Beach Harbor barge event – against all odds – has captured the hearts of his rescuers.

Affectionately nicknamed "Little Mike" after the goodhearted person who spotted him in trouble in the water, this small bird has quite a story. By the time Bird Rescue's boat team was able to reach him, the chick was drowning underwater for almost 20 seconds without breathing, and thought to be dead. After he was scooped from the water, Julie Skoglund of International Bird Rescue,



immediately and gently performed life-saving *coupage* to resuscitate the chick and clear the water from the bird's respiratory system.

Once breathing, the bird was warmed up to correct serious hypothermia. He quickly recovered and within 30 minutes was standing, running, preening, and even trying to eat Julie's fingers.

"He was the tiniest little guy and I was determined to save him," said Julie Skoglund, Director of Operations at Bird Rescue. "It was touch and go but we've been able to revive a handful of birds we thought were dead using this technique – so I didn't give up."

Little Mike stayed safely on the boat while rescue efforts continued. More than 20 additional Tern chicks were recovered that day and joined Little Mike, who by comparison, was by far the smallest and youngest chick. Once he was safely transported to Bird Rescue's wildlife center in San Pedro, Little Mike was warmed, hand-fed live fish, examined by our staff veterinarian, and given medication to prevent him from developing pneumonia after his near-drowning. Little Mike was deemed well enough to join some of the most vulnerable young terns in a specialized incubator environment where chicks needing special care are kept under close watch.

Tern chicks like Little Mike will likely require a minimum of a month of specialized care and feeding until they are ready to fledge. Only time will tell how long it will take for Little Mike.

Little Mike is now among 383 Elegant Terns admitted to Bird Rescue's Los Angeles center in San Pedro. The prognosis for Little Mike is very good, despite his near drowning experience, thanks to sharp eyes and expert emergency rescue and care.

Since July 7, 2021, baby seabirds have been falling from two anchored barges that have become the unexpected host to a large nesting colony of Elegant Terns. Bird Rescue leapt into action when the public noticed live and dead birds washing up on Long Beach shorelines.

"Waterbirds are struggling, and Elegant Terns specifically are a species of concern," said JD Bergeron, CEO. "For Bird Rescue, each and every bird that comes through our doors is a commitment: to the care and feeding it takes on a daily basis to get them back into the wild, as well as educating the public on the issues these birds face and how our individual and community actions can help."

"And we can't do it alone—we count on public support to help us pay for the extraordinary expense of raising several hundred 'Little Mike's'," added Bergeron.

The public can donate through Bird Rescue's website:
<https://www.birdrescue.org/help-terns/>

A day in the life of Little Mike.

Baby terns wake up early and chirp loudly to be fed. Each morning Little Mike is hand fed fish by Bird Rescue staff and volunteers as part of a labor-intensive effort which begins at 8:00 a.m. and goes on into the evening.

Little Mike and all the other hundreds of chicks in care are being fed four times a day. By the time a round of feedings is done, it is time to do it all again. Feeding time now requires more than six technicians working in unison for hours, utilizing more than 50 pounds of fish a day in order to feed all the young terns in care. Little Mike is weighed every day to monitor his progress and make sure he is growing up and getting bigger.

Media Resources

Little Mike images: <https://bird-rescue.app.box.com/s/w0d52n0cailpccx38pjl0g4dgbzgc6g3>



About International Bird Rescue

Over the last fifty years Bird Rescue has rescued over 125,000 wild birds, responded to over 225 oil spill events including saving wildlife at the 1989 Exxon Valdez Oil Spill, helping manage the rehabilitation of 20,000 oiled penguins in South Africa, and rescuing oiled wildlife in the Gulf of Mexico during the 2010 Deepwater Horizon well blowout.

For more information about International Bird Rescue, please visit: www.BirdRescue.org

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