The Aviary

MARCH 2022

Birds in a changing world

Photo by Bill Steinkamp

A Publication of International Bird Rescue

INTERNATIONAL OILED WILDLIFE RESPONSE

DISH SOAP AND DIPLOMACY

On January 15, 2022, several hundred thousand gallons of heavy crude oil were spilled in Ventanilla, Peru, when unusually large waves caused by the volcanic eruption in Tonga disrupted a ship that was unloading at a refinery. The resulting spill stained more than 31 miles of beaches, as well as the nearby guano islands. International Bird Rescue quickly sent Response Team members Julie Skoglund and Mark Russell to Peru, where they worked with trusted South American partner, Aiuká. They were joined later by team members Kelly Beffa and Devin Bergeles.

Our team did not need to be reminded -- effective international oiled wildlife response calls for both dish soap and diplomacy.

"In an international spill, we can't just swoop in as if we have all the answers," noted Julie, "It's important that we spend time listening, building trust, and building relationships." In order to effectively meet the needs of wildlife, it is also vitally important to meet the needs of the local community.

Julie Skoglund with Rudolfo Sylva of Aiuká

Birds transcend borders. When we respond to birds in need, we must continue to transcend borders as well.

As Bird Rescue seeks to share what we have learned through the decades, one of our primary goals is to build the capacity of local responders and leave them better equipped to deal with future challenges. To this end, Julie spent time training others and sharing our protocols, including caging recommendations, husbandry guidelines, and tube-feeding methods with animal caretakers. She noted, "Techniques that work with other species need adjustments when applied to seabirds. I was able to share a few adjustments that will dramatically improve outcomes for birds in care."

Reflecting on his experience Mark noted, "The language differences were challenging yet surmountable. Both Julie and I had just enough Spanish to get by and learned more very quickly. I think our contribution was more than just what we were doing in the field... It's an emotional boost for the people who have been struggling to find a path through the chaos to have us come in and listen to all the issues and lend our support to solve some of the problems."

Continued

Nestling and Eggs Ready to Hatch

Common Merganser Chick

Baby Bird Season

With the arrival of spring, our centers are inundated with baby chicks, and even eggs! While this season always brings uncertainty as to how many nestlings will need our help, we are ALWAYS committed to helping each and every one.

Here's a quick reminder of what to do when you find a baby bird: First, observe the bird from a safe distance. It is likely the parents are off gathering food and will be right back to care for the baby. You don't want to scare them away or accidentally kidnap a healthy baby bird.

If you come across a baby bird on the ground, look at the type of feathers it has. There are two types of baby birds — fledglings and nestlings. Fledglings have already grown feathers and in most cases it is perfectly natural for them to leave the nest shortly before they learn to fly. Nestlings, on the other hand, have few or no feathers and can't survive outside of the nest.

You can help by removing any potential threats. If you have pets that might bother the young bird, bring your pets inside. If the bird is visibly injured, or the parents do not return, call your local wildlife rehabilitator for advice on how to help. Removing a baby bird should be a last resort. Remember, sometimes the best thing to do is nothing!

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While in Peru, our team described an incredibly stark, dramatic landscape with giant beaches and inaccessible rocky shorelines. The work of recovering birds in this environment was challenging and stressful. In the midst of the challenges, a murmuration of Black Skimmers flying overhead provided a brilliant motivator for the work we do. Many of the birds impacted by this spill were migratory birds at the southern end of their migration, and by now will have begun their spring migration northward.

Birds transcend borders. When we respond to birds in need, we must continue to transcend borders as well.

Mark Russell with Aiuká Team Members

Both Bird Rescue and Aiuka are among the founding members of the Global Oiled Wildlife Response Service (GOWRS), bringing together 10 of the world's leading oiled wildlife preparedness and response organizations to develop key readiness guidance documents for ensuring professional, effective preparedness and response.

TAKING FLIGHT

Awards Ceremony and Benefit

Please join us on Tuesday, May 3, 2022, for an evening celebrating the mission of International Bird Rescue, and honoring those whose work has had an impact on the wildlife we love.

Our keynote speaker, Jane Kim, is known to those in the birding world as the artist who created the stunning "Wall of Birds" at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. She is a visual artist, science illustrator, and the founder of Ink Dwell, a Bay Area studio that explores the wonders of the natural world. Jane is the creator of the Migrating Mural campaign, a series of public installations that highlight wildlife along migration corridors it shares with people.

Jane Kim

At our event, in addition to speaking with us about art, wonder, and the natural world, she will create an original watercolor painting which will be available for auction that same night! Guests will also enjoy "flights" of wine and beer tastings, and an Art in Flight silent auction featuring gorgeous avian artwork and photography.

Finally, we will celebrate our inaugural Community Partner Awards, honoring our Volunteer of the Year, Wildlife Partner of the year, and our Civic Partner of the year. We will also recognize and honor all our volunteers for landmark years of service to the mission of Bird Rescue.

The in-person event will be held at Freight & Salvage music venue in Berkeley, CA. A virtual streaming option is available for those who would like to join the celebration from elsewhere.

Regardless of how you join the event, we hope you will mark your calendars for May 3, and plan to be a part of this warm celebration of the mission and impact of International Bird Rescue. Your ticket purchase and any donations will go to help fund the life saving work that goes on every day at International Bird Rescue.

Tickets and information at
www.BirdRescue.org/TakingFlight

Dear Friend and Supporter,

Throughout 2021, Bird Rescue celebrated its 50th Anniversary, reminiscing about the stories of tenacity and innovative spirit that built this community. As we look forward to the next 50 years, we know that birds in a changing world face new challenges that range far beyond our original mandate of helping wildlife in oil spills. Problems with climate and human development are happening quickly and creating habitat loss, damaged ecosystems, and invasive species. Experts around the world agree: aquatic birds are in crisis.

So what, then, is our commitment as we start our next half-century?

Conservation is key!

We have learned so much within our walls about how to care for a vast array of injured, contaminated, orphaned, and otherwise human-impacted waterbirds. We are specialists at REACTING to large-scale emergencies and now we aim to be PROACTIVE in mitigating them.

In the coming months and years, you will begin to hear more about an array of new programs to broaden our impact outside our walls for the betterment of birds around the world, as we seek to:

- Address environmental issues and conservation through innovative research and focus on species of special concern.
- Concentrate our regional programs to limit human-wildlife conflicts, strengthen search and rescue capabilities, and expand influence to new geographies outside the Pacific coast.
- Participate in broad partnerships that proactively solve emerging wildlife challenges, through public education, specialist training, and advocacy.
- Expand human capacity to restore balance with the natural world, increase wildlife literacy, and inspire young environmentalists who will carry the torch in the next 50 years.

It's a bold new path for Bird Rescue and I am so thankful that you are with us on this journey, because it is one we can only take together.

With gratitude,

JD Bergeron, CEO
International Bird Rescue

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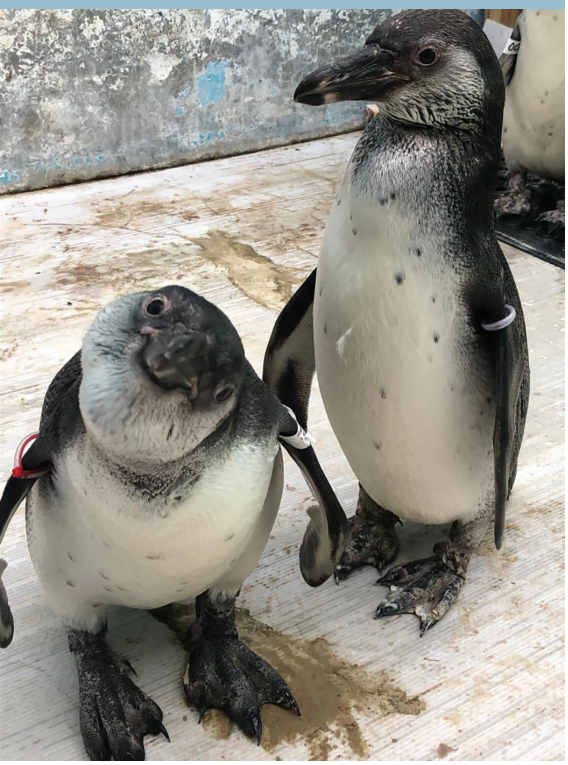

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Awards Ceremony and Benefit
MAY 3, 2022

Tickets and information at
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International Bird Rescue is a global conservation organization for birds in a changing world. Since 1971, Bird Rescue has responded to over 250 oil spills and other wildlife emergencies, caring for more than 160,000 birds on six continents. With crisis response centers in San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Anchorage, the organization specializes in emergency preparedness and response, day-to-day aquatic bird care, and scientific research. Innovations are shared worldwide to inspire the next generation of wildlife specialists. Bird Rescue aims to give a voice to waterbirds through conservation, advocacy, and wildlife literacy that builds empathy and encourages action. For more information, please visit www.birdrescue.org