

The Aviary

JUNE 2022

A Publication of International Bird Rescue

The first sign of a problem

came on May 16, when our Los Angeles Center Manager, Kylie Clatterbuck raised the alarm that 40 Brown Pelicans had been admitted into care, and more were arriving from our Southern California partner agencies later that day. In the following weeks, intakes increased steadily. It soon became clear that what we hoped was a localized problem, was in fact affecting pelicans up and down the coast. Soon, nearly 300 pelicans had arrived at our two California centers.

This crisis is not over. The numbers continue to climb. But your support helps ensure that we will continue to be there to care for the birds in need.

Vans Arrive at the Clinic

International Bird Rescue operates fully equipped veterinary centers with x-ray, surgery, and ICU capacity, making us a regional referral hospital. Vanloads of Brown Pelicans arrived from other rescue organizations, and regional animal control agencies.



2022 PELICAN CRISIS

An Insider's Look



Rising numbers of pelicans quickly overwhelmed local animal control agencies and their available transport cages. Kylie Clatterbuck, Center Manager gently captures a pelican brought to us in a moving box.

Indoor Housing

Until birds are stabilized and can self-feed, close observation and hand feeding is required. With pelican arrivals quickly exceeding our existing indoor enclosures, large kennels were temporarily repurposed as ICU housing for pelicans. Our clinic floor space quickly filled up with stacked animal carriers. We are grateful to the generous donors who responded to our call for help and arrived at the center with donated carriers.



Veterinary Care

Injured or ill birds received expert veterinary care from Dr. Rebecca Duerr, DVM MPVM PhD. Dr. Duerr performed needed surgeries, stitched wounds, set and cast broken



bones, and prescribed standing orders for day to day care by our avian care team. In this crisis, Dr. Duerr has performed more than 30 surgeries and life-saving procedures.

Daily Care and Feeding

A healthy pelican can eat several pounds of fish in a day. A starving pelican needs even more food in order to regain weight. With hundreds of pelicans in care, simply thawing, preparing, and carrying buckets totaling more than a half a ton



of fish every day became a monumental task in and of itself. In addition to many buckets of fish, the pelicans received dietary supplements and medicines to ensure proper bone growth and recovery.

Outdoor Aviary

Once a bird is healthier and can self-feed, it is transitioned to one of our outdoor aviaries. Volunteers assisted with regular pelican feedings, as well as daily cleaning of the pools and aviary. Cleaning up after hundreds of pelicans is a huge job, and we are so grateful for our dedicated volunteers.

In the flight aviary, pelicans were able to work their flight muscles and grow strong for release.



Pre-Release Exam

Prior to release, every bird receives a complete physical exam, including bloodwork, to ensure that they are healthy, disease free, and able to care for themselves in the wild. As the first set of pelicans became ready for release, they were banded with metal federal bands, as well as blue bands as part of our post-release monitoring program.



Release Day!

This is a day to celebrate! Our first set of healthy pelicans was returned to the wild in early June. We release birds in locations where a known population of that species is thriving. That way we know that conditions and food supply will support our newly released birds. Through our Blue Banded Pelican Program, we will continue to monitor their long term survival in the wild.



Found in Malibu with fishing hook injuries, Pelican Y96 increased his body weight by 25% during his time in care. Now healthy and strong, he takes his first steps back to the wild.

Taking Flight Together

Dear Friend and Supporter,

As you probably know, a new wildlife crisis emerged last month, as hundreds of pelicans up and down the coast of California arrived at our centers in need of care. We are so grateful for your support. I hope this newsletter gives you a sense for how we are putting your contributions to work on behalf of wild birds. I hope it also gives you a sense of the dedication and compassion of our team. Their expertise and your support make miracles happen for wildlife.

On May 3, friends and supporters of Bird Rescue gathered both virtually and in person for Taking Flight, our first annual partner awards celebration. We intend to make this an annual celebration of all those who make Bird Rescue succeed! Thank you to our sponsors and all who attended, donated, and purchased auction items. Together, we raised over \$70,000 to help fund the vital work of Bird Rescue!

We were proud to honor our inaugural class of Bird Conservation Partners of the Year. This year's awardees help tell the story of two major wildlife crises in 2021; the Nesting Seabird Rescue in Long Beach Harbor and the Huntington Beach Pipeline Incident. Our ability to respond effectively to these events depended on strong partnerships and our cadre of dedicated volunteers.

Because we are here every day, with a practiced, expert team of caregivers, we are ready to gear up for emergencies like these, and the current pelican crisis, at a moment's notice. Your ongoing and faithful support makes this possible.

As Bird Rescue "takes flight" into our next half-century, we look forward to becoming an ever stronger voice for wild birds - in advocacy, conservation, research, and education. We hope to inspire the next generation to take action on behalf of our wild world.

We are grateful to have you with us as we do so,



JD Bergeron, CEO
International Bird Rescue



Congratulations to our Taking Flight Honorees!

WILDLIFE PARTNERS OF THE YEAR



Lenny Arkinstall
Los Cerritos Wetlands Stewards
Melissa Borde
Reserve Manager at
Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve

CIVIC PARTNERS OF THE YEAR



**San Francisco Bay
Bird Observatory**



**Oiled Wildlife
Care Network**

VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR, THE ALICE BERKNER AWARD



Toni Arkoosh Pinsky

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Save the Date for
TAKING FLIGHT 2023
THURSDAY, MAY 4, 2023

Photo courtesy: Jim Howard, CIES



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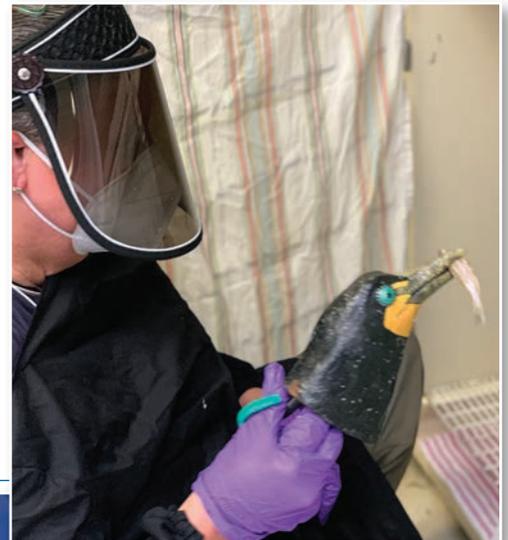
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11 years after release, Brown Pelican "A93" was sighted in March 2021 raising chicks in the Channel Islands.

Blue-Banded Pelican Study

What exactly is a blue-banded pelican? A new species? Not at all! California Brown Pelicans, with a highly-visible blue band on their legs, are part of a Bird Rescue longitudinal study. We initiated the Blue-Banded Pelican Program in 2009. In addition to a metal federal band, each Brown Pelican receives a blue plastic leg band with easily readable white numbers. These enable us to gather data on returning patients, live sightings, breeding success, travel patterns, and life span. Pelicans have been spotted up to 13 years after treatment, thriving in the wild, and even caring for chicks!

All the pelicans rehabilitated in this current emergency will receive a blue band upon release. If you see a banded bird, report it at www.birdrescue.org, click "Found a Bird."



Cormorant Rescue

While pelicans are at the forefront, rescued cormorants are a reminder that many birds rely on us! On a very busy Wednesday afternoon, 20 eggs and 18 chicks arrived, rescued from a dangerous nesting area. The chicks are fed by hand every half an hour! A puppet is used in feeding to prevent habituation. Nestled into our incubator, eggs are beginning to hatch, adding to the fun!

