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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Alarming Deaths in Mexico: Illegal Fish Oil Dumping Results in High Number of Contaminated Seabirds**

**Download photos & video assets:**

<https://birdrescue.box.com/s/zvc89g0ek9aa05fdgelta6la7floukms>

**Gulf of California, Mexico** – International Bird Rescue is seeking public and political support after learning that hundreds of seabirds are suffering and dying from contamination in Mexico waters due to fishing boats illegally dumping fish oil.

Local environmentalists have estimated at least 400 Heermann's Gulls were seen oiled and left to die in the Gulf of California near the seabirds' sensitive nesting areas at Isla Rasa in a single fishing day.

"These reports are so troubling and without intervention more birds will die," said JD Bergeron, CEO of International Bird Rescue.

"Contaminated birds cannot clean themselves. We are asking the public to help donate and support our efforts to resolve this seabird crisis."



The island of Isla Rasa is the primary nesting site for about 95% of the world's Heermann's Gulls. This gull species is classified as near-threatened conservation status and is on a trajectory to lose another 50% of their populations in the next 50 years. This is according to Cornell Lab of



Ornithology's 2022 State of the Birds On-Alert and Tipping Point Species, a list of species who have lost 50% of their populations from 1970 to 2019 and are considered "on-alert."

This area is home to abundant seabird life including the endangered Elegant Terns as well as Brown Pelicans, who are likely also affected from this incident.

When oil sticks to a bird's feathers, it causes them to mat and separate, impairing flight, floating, waterproofing and exposing the animal's sensitive skin to extremes in temperature. This can result in hypothermia, meaning the bird becomes cold, or hyperthermia, which results in overheating. Without intervention, they will not survive.

International Bird Rescue has more than 50 years of experience in the response and rehabilitation of oiled birds internationally, including fish oil incidents such as the Santa Cruz Fish Vegetable Oil Spill of 1997. Bird Rescue maintains two year-round aquatic bird rescue centers in California, which care for over 4,500 birds every year. Staff's skills are tested daily, and techniques are continuously refined. The team is actively seeking opportunities to aid this crisis but needs the public's help in supporting the cost of these critical rescue efforts.

One of the biggest problems in rehabilitating wildlife during an emergency is inadequate (or the complete lack of) facilities to properly care for animals where the oil spills take place. Bird Rescue brings some medical supplies and specialized equipment to the site of oil spills.

Donations can be made here: <https://www.birdrescue.org/donate/>

## **What The Public Can Do**

**Spread the word.** Fishing boats are ignoring local and international laws, endangering wildlife within and near its waters. It is important that we are a voice for wildlife and their habitats as they navigate a changing world.

**Donate.** Our work is only possible thanks to donations. With rising costs from inflation and extra expenses around bird flu, Bird Rescue is running on a slim margin which will prevent us from sending direct support should the opportunity arise. Donations can be made here:

<https://www.birdrescue.org/donate/>

## **About International Bird Rescue**

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, professional training, 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](http://www.birdrescue.org).

**International Bird Rescue**, 4369 Cordelia Road, Fairfield, CA 94534

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