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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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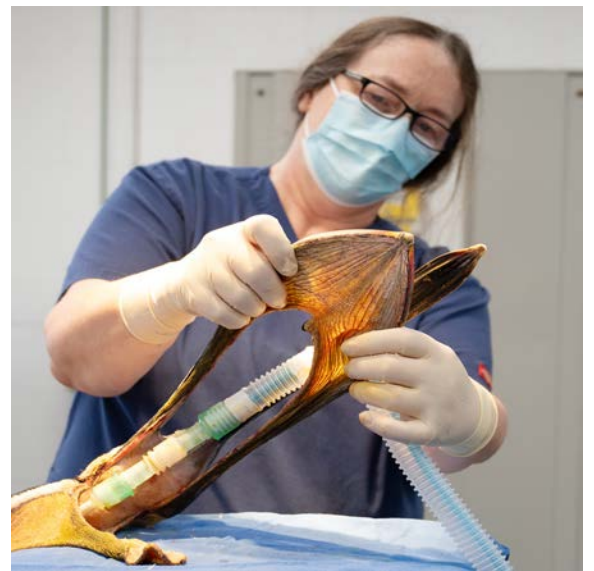
# New Animal Cruelty Case: Brown Pelican Found In San Pedro With Slashed Pouch

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**San Pedro, CA** – A Brown Pelican found this week with a slashed pouch is resting comfortably after surgery at International Bird Rescue. More than 400 stitches were required to repair the pelican’s pouch which was severed from the base to the tip on both sides. There is strong evidence this was caused by a human.

“I wish we weren’t handling another terrible case like this, but the pelican is in the best possible spot with an experienced veterinary team who will make all the difference in her recovery,” said JD Bergeron, CEO of Bird Rescue. “We are grateful to members of the public for noticing her struggle and acting quickly to get her into care.”

This animal cruelty case is reminiscent of another pelican slashing in April 2014. [“Pink the Pelican”, nicknamed by the public, required over 600 stitches to repair.](#) The bird received an outpouring of support from the public after hearing the bird’s plight through news and social media channels.



Dr Rebecca Duerr examines “Blue” the Brown Pelican patient with a slashed pouch. More than 400 stitches were required to repair this bird’s injury. Photo by Ariana Gastelum –International Bird Rescue

Nicknamed "Blue" for the color of her temporary ID band the pelican was found in San Pedro on Sunday, March 10 by the [sports-fishing boat Native Sun](#) who contacted rescuers at [Marine Mammal Care Center](#). The patient was delivered to Bird Rescue's Los Angeles Wildlife Center in San Pedro. Blue is an adult female and is expected to fully recover after a month in expert care. An additional surgery is required to fully repair the bird's pouch.

A pelican's pouch is integral to this bird's effort to eat and stay hydrated.

According to Dr Rebecca Duerr, Bird Rescue's Director of Research & Veterinary Science, this bird's injuries were comprised of straight cuts parallel to the jaw, running all the way back to the neck, and cutting into the feathered skin of the neck itself on both sides. The wounds were scabbed and about 4-7 days old. At the scabbed feathered skin wound margins, both sides showed linear cuts reminiscent of a knife, machete, or other sharp object.

"The back of the Blue's oral cavity required careful reconstruction but came together well, said Duerr. "She will need another short surgery to finish the repair after she's had a chance to become stronger."

The injury to this Brown Pelican has clear signs it was human caused: "We see many pelicans with pouch trauma due to fishing gear and eating dangerous sharp items like fish skeletons, but the wounds do not look like this," Duerr said.

In addition to Pink's notable case back in 2014, Bird Rescue had a cluster of seven similar slashing cases in 2019-2021 and another dead pelican was spotted by rangers at Leo Carrillo State Park in Malibu in 2021.

**Watch:** [Understanding the difference between human vs not human caused pouch slashing](#) (video from 2020).

Bird Rescue is a non-profit wildlife organization that relies on public support to help fund the care of injured, sick and orphaned waterbirds. Donations are welcome at: [www.birdrescue.org/donate/](http://www.birdrescue.org/donate/)

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**Surgery to repair slashed pouch:** “Blue” the Brown Pelican receives expert care during surgery by clinic staff at International Bird Rescue in San Pedro, CA. [Download video](#)

Video by Ariana Gastelum – International Bird Rescue (please credit)

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## **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.

Bird Rescue's Los Angeles Wildlife Center is located at [3601 S Gaffey St. San Pedro, CA 90731](#).

For more information, please visit [www.birdrescue.org](http://www.birdrescue.org).