Dawn: Migration Animated Adventure of a Lifetime

Bird Rescue has partnered with Dawn for over 45 years to clean the delicate feathers of birds. We’re proud to continue our work together and inspire the next generation to care for wildlife.

Last December, staff and guests were invited to see a screening of the feature film Migration, thanks to our partnership with Dawn Dish Soap, NBC Universal, and Illumination Studios. The film focuses on a family of Mallards who take off on an adventure of a lifetime and bond closer as a family.

In addition to the screening, a Public Service Announcement (PSA) was released with the TODAY Show’s Al Roker to educate the public about the work we do with wildlife. The PSA is available on YouTube.

A Deep Bench of Trained Responders Key to Bird Rescue’s Rapid Response

The first quarter of 2024 has been a busy time for our team. Bird Rescue collaborates with trusted partners to ensure readiness and regularly conducts training and drills to prepare to respond in the event of an oil spill. Preparation means faster response times and better outcomes for wildlife when an unavoidable crisis occurs.

Bird Rescue is proud and grateful to be able to train the next generation of responders. In January, Michelle Bellizzi, Response & Training Manager, and Barbara Callahan, Senior Director of Response Services, led a two-day intensive Oiled Wildlife First Responder Training funded by Matson Shipping. The training fostered constructive collaboration and community amongst local groups like the Bird Treatment and Learning Center (Bird TLC), Alaska Wild Bird Rehabilitation Center, Alaska Wildlife Conservation Center, and Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

In mid-February, Michelle and Barbara taught a 24-hour HAZWOPER (Hazardous Waste Operations Emergency Response)
Expertise in Action: Rare Yellow-billed Loon Rehabilitated

A rare Yellow-billed Loon entangled in fishing line attracted birder and media attention after being rescued in San Pedro, CA, in January, and was released at the end of that same month for a second chance at life in the wild.

The bird attracted numerous sighting reports on eBird and from others in the community. During crisis response, Bird Rescue often must coordinate with locals in the community to safely rescue and recover wildlife, as was the case with this loon. On January 19th, the loon was first observed by birders off Cabrillo Beach in San Pedro with fishing gear wrapped around its body and wings with more wire trailing behind it, limiting the bird’s mobility. In addition to being a rare visitor to Southern California, this bird is listed as a near-threatened species.

Bird Rescue clinic staff discovered wounds on both of its wings as well as the sides of its mouth. It recovered in a pelagic deep-water pool alongside another waterbird, a Common Loon, who was also a victim of fishing line entanglement, the leading cause of injury in Bird Rescue centers.

The loon was successfully rehabilitated by International Bird Rescue at its Los Angeles Wildlife Center. With the help of Marine Mammal Care Center (MMCC), it was transported and released by boat just outside the breakwater at Los Angeles Harbor. Treatment of threatened or endangered species requires careful clinical care. This work serves as a testament to our commitment to preserve the natural world for future generations.

A Deep Bench of Trained Responders Key Rapid Response

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class to a large group in Sequim, WA. Adding 29 OSHA HAZWOPER certified wildlife responders means a deeper bench to respond to the next wildlife crisis. They combined this training with a full day of specialized oiled wildlife response skills. This training was funded by the Clallam County Marine Resources Committee and the local Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe.

Also in February, Bird Rescue conducted training for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Alaska – their Oil Spill Team, along with the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. The training was successful, as were a tour and lab held at the Bird Rescue’s Alaska Wildlife Response Center in Anchorage (AWRC, virtual tour). These preparation efforts increase the number of trained wildlife responders who are ready to be deployed at a moment’s notice when wildlife is affected.
Year-round Dedication to Rehabilitating Oiled Wildlife

Since March 2024, over 80 oiled birds have come into care at Bird Rescue’s California wildlife centers. Following recent West Coast storms, staff and volunteers have been working tirelessly, washing waterbirds contaminated with oil from natural seep.

Watch this YouTube video to witness their heartwarming journey as affected birds undergo a meticulous wash and waterproofing checks before transitioning to the outdoor pool, preparing them for their eventual release to the wild.

Year-round clinical experience means Bird Rescue is continuously trained with sharpened skills to provide quality professional care when wildlife is contaminated.

Wildlife Responsibility Tip: How Oil Affects Birds

When oil sticks to a bird’s feathers, it causes them to mat and separate, impairing 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.

✦ Instinctively, the bird tries to get the oil off its feathers by preening, which results in the animal ingesting the oil which can cause severe damage to its internal organs.

✦ Safe oil removal requires medical attention. If you find an oiled bird, seek professional help from a wildlife rehabilitator. To learn more about our process for helping oiled birds, click here.
A Look Back: Preparation and Trusted Experience at 1999 New Carissa Oil Spill

This past February marked the 25th anniversary of a small but significant wildlife oil spill response in Coos Bay, Oregon. On February 4, 1999, the 640-foot wood chip freighter M/V New Carissa ran aground just north of the Coos River where 140,000 gallons of fuel oil spilled into the ocean.

In the path of the oil were tiny shorebirds, known as Western Snowy Plovers. This stretch of the Oregon coastline was an important wintering and breeding site, and Snowy Plovers found in this region are listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act.

From February through March of that year, Bird Rescue received 175 intakes of live oiled birds. When it comes to birds of conservation concern like the Western Snowy Plover, each individual is critically important to the survival of the species.

Bird Rescue captured 31 (of a total Snowy Plover population in Coos Bay of 30-45 birds) and rehabilitated all of them. They were – and continue to be – an intensely studied shorebird.

After treatment and washing, 132 birds were released back to nature, preserving species diversity for future generations.

In the 25 years since this spill, Bird Rescue continues to hone its expertise working with threatened and endangered species. Plover patient care knowledge gained in 1999 came in handy when Bird Rescue was called to respond to another spill in Huntington Beach in 2021. Bird Rescue’s efforts in Oregon are a reminder that the heart of an organization’s response to any wildlife emergency is preparation and expert care.

Bird Rescue’s Julie Skoglund Honored With NWRA Marlys J. Bulander Award

Julie Skoglund, Director of Operations for Bird Rescue, was awarded the Marlys J. Bulander Working Together for Wildlife Award at the recent National Wildlife Rehabilitators Association (NWRA) Symposium. Skoglund played an integral leadership role in the 2021 Long Beach Harbor Tern Crisis, with her hands-on rescue of stranded Elegant Tern chicks.

Award winner Julie Skoglund, left, and Dr Rebecca Duerr of Bird Rescue.