



Springtime Crisis:

Bird Rescue's Heroic Efforts During Brown Pelican Starvation Event by Russ Curtis

This spring, International Bird Rescue leapt into action during a major Brown Pelican starvation event that resulted in more than 420 pelicans coming into care at our two California wildlife clinics.

In late April 2024, we began to receive reports through our Bird Helpline of Brown Pelicans that appeared unwell and were behaving strangely. Pelicans soon began flooding our Northern California wildlife clinic, most coming from the Monterey and Santa Cruz areas, thanks to the rescue efforts of Monterey SPCA and Native Animal Rescue (NAR) in Santa Cruz. Down in Southern California, pelicans started showing up in odd locations. Several birds were rescued inland from a lake at SoFi Stadium in Inglewood. Another starving pelican showed up at a fire station in Malibu. Another was found on the tarmac at Los Angeles International Airport (LAX).

One wayward Brown Pelican, affectionately dubbed the #RallyPelican by fans, even landed in left field during a San Francisco Giants game on May 11. While it wowed onlookers, Bird Rescue quickly recognized the underlying cause: the disoriented bird was in desperate search for food.

The pelicans coming in were extremely emaciated due to difficulty finding fish, and many of them also presented with secondary injuries. The birds were so desperate for food that they were taking drastic measures

Continued





Photo by Ariana Gastelum

From Hazard to Haven: Snowy Plover Chicks Hatch Safely in Care by Ariana Gastelum

Within the past two months, 22 Western Snowy Plover chicks have been in care at Bird Rescue. Three of these chicks have been released back to the wild.

Scan this QR to watch a video of plovers in care!

On May 29, Bird Rescue was contacted by a biologist monitoring plover nests in Northern California who rescued eight plover eggs situated in a hazardous area where drying mud created deep fissures. The chicks were at risk of falling into these crevices as soon as they hatched and started moving.



Since then, more than 20 eggs have been admitted to Bird Rescue's San Francisco Bay-Delta Wildlife Center. Staff and volunteers are carefully monitoring these growing chicks, ensuring they receive the care they need to return to the wild.

Western Snowy Plovers are federally threatened and protected under the Endangered Species Act. With fewer than 2,000 remaining on the Pacific Coast, every individual is crucial. Bird Rescue is dedicated to saving species of special concern in an ever-changing world.

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that would result in further injury, predominantly due to fishing gear entanglement. Diagnostic testing also revealed no evidence of diseases such as bird flu.

With continuous care, support, and a LOT of fish, these pelicans began to make their remarkable recoveries, gradually regaining strength, and practicing flight in our aviaries. On May 30, the first pelicans taken in by this crisis were released back into the wild.

Scan this QR to watch these first pelicans exit their crates and return to the wild!



Since May, more than 240 pelicans have returned to the wild. Releasing these pelicans is a testament to the rescuers who identified their plight, the volunteers who devoted their time to their recovery, and the generous donors nationwide who are providing essential supplies for their treatment.

"With these releases, we're sending them home to the ocean healthy and in great condition to fly wherever they need to go," said Dr. Rebecca Duerr, Director of Research & Veterinary Science at Bird Rescue. "Our special banding program will show how they will do in the wild."

No conclusive proof on what caused this crisis has been revealed, though an investigation is ongoing with colleagues at California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW).



Photo by Cheryl Reynolds



Photo by Cheryl Reynolds

From Stowaway to Freedom: Laysan Albatross's Second Chance in Open Ocean

by Ariana Gastelum

On June 7, a surprising stowaway was found aboard a container ship en route to the Port of Long Beach – a Laysan Albatross. This majestic seabird was discovered when crew member Nick Padouan noticed it had landed on the weather deck and eventually ended up on the mooring lines. With 40 years of experience working on container ships, Nick is well-versed in such rescues, and once he recognized that the bird could not fly away, he successfully captured it and brought it to Bird Rescue's Los Angeles Wildlife Center.

"It can be difficult to recognize when a bird is in distress or in need of assistance, but Nick's vigilance and general interest in wildlife provided him with the awareness of how to help," said Kylie Clatterbuck, Los Angeles Wildlife Center Manager. "Oftentimes these stowaways are emaciated, injured, or contaminated from being stuck on a ship for periods of time. They need assistance to help heal and gain back their strength before being released."

The albatross was found to have a dime-sized granuloma mass on its foot, which typically develops in response to an infection. The mass was removed, and on July 2, the bird was released back into the wild by boat several miles offshore, thanks to the Los Angeles City Lifeguard Association.

**Scan this QR to watch a
captivating video of the albatross
taking flight and vanishing within
moments!**



Laysan Albatrosses have a history of being discovered as stowaways on ships navigating the ocean highways. They require a long runway for successful takeoff, allowing sufficient airflow beneath their wings to generate lift. Bird Rescue previously cared for an albatross in 2020, which was also successfully released.

While Laysan Albatrosses are not commonly seen from shore, they are frequent visitors to our California coastal waters. With their impressive 6.5-foot wingspan, Laysan Albatrosses can glide long distances using prevailing winds, covering 300-400+ miles in a single day. They breed on small islands in the North Pacific Ocean, particularly Midway Atoll, located about 3,000 miles from California.



Photo by Ariana Gastelum

Fun Albatross Facts

- You might spot this bird from a boat out on the open waters of the Pacific Ocean from Japan to California. They nest on islands in the Pacific, including the Hawaiian islands.
- Laysan Albatross are extremely long-lived. The oldest known individual is named Wisdom and is likely over 70 years old.
- An albatross can fly millions of miles in its lifetime.
- Sometimes if sick or injured, these birds will stow away on cargo ships and come into our care once they reach port.
- Albatrosses can sleep while flying! They are able to lock their wings into place while extended, and let the ocean breeze carry them as they snooze for brief periods of time.



Photo by Katrina Plummer

Save The Date

**Calling all night
birds for an upbeat
celebration on
Friday, October 4th
from 5:30pm to 8pm!**

International Bird Rescue's Pelican Masquerade is back by popular demand and will take place on the 61st Ohana Floor of Salesforce Tower in San Francisco.

The Masquerade will feature delicious vegetarian flavors, an open bar with wine and beer, live music, amazing auction items, and fun opportunities to celebrate International Bird Rescue's conservation of waterbirds. Don your favorite cocktail attire and come celebrate in a unique environment with fellow nature enthusiasts.

The Ohana Floor in Salesforce Tower, located on the 61st floor, is the highest floor west of the Mississippi and offers dazzling 360-degree views of San Francisco and beyond.

The venue is easily accessible by BART and MUNI.

**Scan this QR to purchase
your Pelican Masquerade
tickets TODAY!**



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