



# Wildlife Responsibility Bulletin

## International Bird Rescue to Present at EOW Conference in Cape Town



This October, the 15th Effects of Oil on Wildlife (EOW) Conference will make history in Cape Town, South Africa, the first time the global gathering has been held on the African continent.

The conference coincides with the 25th anniversary of the Merchant Vessel Treasure disaster, when more than 20,000 African Penguins were oiled after the ship sank off South Africa's coast. Working with SANCCOB and supported by IFAW, International Bird Rescue helped lead the largest and most successful wildlife response in history, setting a global standard for oiled wildlife care.

Co-hosted by SANCCOB and Tri-State Bird Rescue & Research, EOW 2025 will spotlight the plight of the now Critically Endangered African Penguin and reflect on lessons from the Treasure spill. We are hon-



*Clean from oil, African Penguins affected by the 2000 Treasure Spill are released along Cape Town beaches. Their bodies are marked with temporary pink body paint to help researchers track their progress.*

ored to contribute to this global exchange of knowledge and collaboration.

To honor the anniversary in June, Bird Rescue released a [three-part video series](#) with a behind-the-scenes look at this historic response.

| Sharing Insights at EOW                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                   |
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|  <b>Barbara Callahan</b><br>Senior Director of Response Services                                                                                     | <b>Dr. Rebecca Duerr</b><br>Director of Research & Veterinary Science                                                                                                                                                      | <b>Michelle Bellizzi</b><br>Response & Training Manager                                                                                       | <b>Kylie Clatterbuck</b><br>Wildlife Center Manager                                                               |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Co-authored three papers on resilience, scale, and veterinary management of penguins during the Treasure response</li> <li>Leading half-day, pre-conference workshop "Oil Spills 101"</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leading sessions on surgical keel lesion repair and evolving wildlife care</li> <li>Co-leading a workshop on modern best practices in veterinary care for oiled wildlife</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Presenting a session on how year-round rehabilitation supports collaborative spill response</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Presenting a session on maintaining operations during lockdowns</li> </ul> |



Barbara Callahan, Senior Director of Response Services, leads an Oiled Wildlife Response training for Le Nichoir in Hudson, Quebec.

In July, Response & Training Manager, **Michelle Bellizzi**, led a two-day training and exercise for Clean Rivers Cooperative in Portland, OR. Later that month, Bellizzi and Senior Director of Response Services, **Barbara Callahan**, presented our annual Oiled Wildlife First Response training to Alaska Clean Seas in Prudhoe Bay, AK. With response times in the Arctic often exceeding 24 hours, local staff must be ready to capture and stabilize wildlife before our arrival.

Five Multi-Day Trainings

In August, Bellizzi and Callahan traveled to Red

Dog Mine on the Chukchi Sea for a two-day training and site visit reviewing fuel storage and spill readiness. Immediately afterward, the team delivered practical labs and theoretical training for Le Nichoir, a bird rehabilitation center in Hudson, Quebec, funded through Environment and Climate Change Canada. Next, the team will head to Vancouver, BC, for a P&G-funded training with Wildlife Rescue Association of British Columbia.

Building Capacity Across the Region

Callahan also supported the Northwest Oil Spill



Stacey Staley and Michelle Bellizzi, Response & Training Manager, at the Red Dog Mine training.

Control School in Port Angeles, WA, training 100 participants in shoreline

response, boom setting, and wildlife stabilization.

Since late July, International Bird Rescue has treated more than 35 Western Gulls suffering from a mysterious paralytic syndrome along the Southern California coast. Sick birds arrive unable to stand, blink, or move normally. Some have been found dead on beaches, while others are brought in just in time for lifesaving care.

Bird Rescue is often called to save seabirds before the cause of a crisis is known. Clinical knowledge and innovation allow us to adapt and provide essential care 365 days a year. Initial tests for bird flu and botulism were negative. One gull showed traces of legacy synthetic pesticide dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane (DDT),

and further testing is underway to investigate possible algal toxins. While the cause remains uncertain, Bird Rescue continues urgent treatment as state and county partners investigate.



A Western Snowy Plover hatchling falls into a crack at Montezuma Wetlands Restoration site.



Western Gulls affected by the paralytic syndrome are treated with fluid therapy, heat support, and supervised pool time.

Patients receive fluid therapy to flush toxins,

heat support, and supervised pool time. Many are recovering in the aviary, regaining strength and preparing for release. One gull, unable to move at admittance, recovered fully after 30 days and was released on September 2.

Our experience responding to crises in a changing world keeps us ready for whatever comes next. With support from donors, volunteers, and partners, Bird Rescue gives overlooked seabirds a second chance at life in the wild.

Collaborative Conservation: Protecting Vulnerable Species Through Partnerships

Western Snowy Plovers, a Federally Threatened species with fewer than 2,000 individuals in California, continue to face challenges in the San Francisco Bay Area. This season, 11 young plovers were raised at International Bird Rescue and safely released at Point Reyes National Seashore and Novato Baylands, while 17 fledglings hatched from rescued eggs were released at No-

vato later in the year.

At Bird Rescue, plover chicks are raised in enclosures that mimic their natural habitat, then moved outdoors to grow flight feathers and socialize with other shorebirds before release. These rescues happen when nests are found in unsafe areas or when restoration activities expose chicks to risks like deep sediment cracks.

Long-term recovery

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requires more than rehabilitation. Partners including Point Blue, Avocet Research Association, National Park Service, Point Reyes National Seashore Association (PRNSA), and Students and Teachers Restoring a Watershed (STRAW) are monitoring breeding sites and improving habitat through restoration at Novato and Montezuma Wetlands. Early-stage wetlands now support dozens of breeding plovers and provide safer nesting areas through creative solutions such as nest camouflage with oyster shells and exclusion fencing.

By combining rehabilitation expertise with collaborative conservation, we give plovers and other vulnerable species like American Avocets and Black-necked Stilts a second chance while building a future where they can thrive without needing rescue.

## Wildlife Responsibility Tip



## Bird Flu Safety

Safe management of bird flu is an essential part of responsible wildlife management, preparedness and emergency response. As flu season approaches, follow these tips to help prevent the spread of bird flu.



### BIRD FLU SAFETY: 6 Essential Tips for Rescuers



Wear N95 mask and gloves, when possible



Avoid touching your mouth, nose, and eyes



Wash your hands thoroughly



Change and wash your clothes immediately



Remove and disinfect your shoes and anything that might have come in contact with your rescued bird (car, towels, or pet carriers)

Monitor your health for any flu or cold-like symptoms

#### FOR MORE INFORMATION:

[www.birdrescue.org](http://www.birdrescue.org)

Bird Helpline: (866)SOS-BIRD (866-767-2473)



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