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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Press Conference Thursday, November 6: Dozens of Oiled Seabirds Arrive as Slick Hits Santa Barbara and Ventura Coasts

International Bird Rescue Urges Public Support to Meet Growing Response Needs

What: Media briefing on the ongoing care and status of recent oiled seabirds with JD Bergeron, CEO of International Bird Rescue, along with photo and video opportunities of bird treatment
When: Thursday, November 6, 2025 at 10 AM
Where: International Bird Rescue, 3601 S. Gaffey Street, San Pedro, CA 90731

Download photos and videos here

San Pedro, CA - International Bird Rescue is currently responding to an influx of oiled seabirds after the discovery of an approximately one-square-mile oil slick off the Santa Barbara coast. Since November 3, 2025, 62 oiled Western Grebes, long-necked diving birds that spend most of their lives on the water, have been receiving critical care. After initial stabilization at the Santa Barbara Wildlife Care Network, they were transferred to Bird Rescue's Southern California Wildlife Center in San Pedro, CA. Additional reports from field teams indicate that more affected birds are on the way.

Bird Rescue is issuing an urgent call for public support as it responds to this incident and covers all costs required to treat impacted wildlife. Donations can be made here: https://www.birdrescue.org/donate-oiled-birds-2025/

The U.S. Coast Guard (USCG), Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement (BSEE), and California Department of Fish and Wildlife's Office of Spill Prevention and Response (CDFW-OSPR) are investigating the source of the oil. Current information suggests the slick may be related to natural seep activity, a natural leak of crude oil and gas that migrates up through the seafloor and ocean depths during storms. Laboratory confirmation is pending. Bird Rescue will continue to help rescue and rehabilitate impacted wildlife regardless of the cause – natural seep or human-caused.

For nearly 55 years, Bird Rescue has responded to wildlife in need, from oil contamination to everyday emergencies. Oiled birds that come into care are stabilized with heat, nutrition, and fluids in preparation for wash. Birds are then washed by trained staff and volunteers with warm water and Dawn dish soap, a proven cleaning agent gentle and safe enough on birds, but strong enough to remove harmful debris. Birds recover in care, regaining their strength and waterproofing, and any secondary injuries until they can be released back to the wild.

"An oil seep of this magnitude can harm thousands of birds. This is exactly the kind of situation where immediate, skilled care makes the difference between life and death for these birds. But we cannot do it alone–we urgently need the public's support." says CEO, JD Bergeron.

For residents along the Santa Barbara and Ventura County coasts, you can help with information below:

- Western Grebes do not typically come ashore - if seen on a beach, they likely need immediate assistance. These birds can be recognized by their long-necks, with black on top and white underneath. They have bright red eyes and olive-yellow, pointed bills. If the bird's feathers are patchy, clumped, or "dirty-looking" the bird may be oiled.
- If you find a bird in distress, you can call our Bird HelpLine at 866-SOS-BIRD (866-767-2473) for more assistance or contact local animal control or a nearby wildlife rehabilitation organization.
- As a nonprofit organization, International Bird Rescue relies on donors, volunteers, and community partners to carry out its life-saving mission. To support the care of these oiled birds, donations can be made at: https://www.birdrescue.org/donate-oiled-birds-2025/

Bird Rescue has responded to similar incidents in 2013 where 77 oiled Common Murres affected by natural seep came into the Los Angeles center and again in 2019 bringing in more than 150 oiled seabirds. In 2015, a "Mystery Goo" in the San Francisco Bay that affected more than 300 birds, cost the organization over $230,000.

Bird Rescue is often called upon to respond to seabirds in crisis before the cause of the incident has been determined. In a rapidly changing environment, birds face numerous challenges, and the organization remains committed to providing essential care regardless of the source of the impact.

Data collected during rehabilitation contributes to broader research efforts, while the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Los Angeles County Department of Veterinary Public Health continue to investigate the factors contributing to these admissions.

As a nonprofit organization, Bird Rescue is able to carry out this life-saving work only through the support of donors, volunteers, and community partners.

A press conference will be held on Thursday, November 6 at 10am at the Los Angeles Wildlife Center located at 3601 S Gaffey St #3, San Pedro, CA 90731. Staff to provide updates on the response and answer media questions.

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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.