



Because the fire in the eyes of wild things should never die; when we save a wild life, we also save our own humanity.

NEWS For Immediate Release

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Fish Oiled Brown Pelicans Rescued and Treated by Humboldt Wildlife Care Center with help from Bird Ally X

Donations needed to help care for these magnificent birds

On August 24 Arcata-based Bird Ally X, a non-profit advocate for wildlife and wildlife rehabilitation, received word of Brown Pelicans in trouble in Crescent City Harbor. Young pelicans were contaminated with "fish oil." coming from the cleaning stations at the public dock.

The next morning, Bird Ally staff, in partnership with Humboldt Wildlife Care Center went to Crescent City and discovered at least 2 dozen juvenile Brown Pelicans heavily contaminated. Large bins of fish-waste at a local cleaning station were open to the young, inexperienced birds, eager for an easily gotten meal.

It takes experience and maturity to get your living from the cold waters of the North Pacific and these birds, fresh from the nest, rely on bays and sheltered coves as training ground for a life at sea. Use to being fed by their parents, it is an easy switch to scavenging and begging.

Securing the fish-waste bins was the first step toward solving the problem. An easy fix, HWCC, working with the Crescent City Harbor District, added hinged lids to the bins.

Less easy is the rescue and rehabilitation of the impacted wildlife.

Starvation follows. Unable to clean the fish oil themselves, they are helpless without intervention.

Fish oil interferes with the structure of the feathers of waterproof birds, allowing cold sea water to get beneath their down. Unable to stay dry and warm, birds may stop entering the water.

"Fish-oiled" birds require treatment almost exactly as if they had been caught in an oil spill. They need first and foremost to be washed, but they also require medical attention, food and medicine. Housing before being washed is needed, as well as housing that provides room to recover and regain strength so that they may be released back into the wild.

Humboldt Wildlife Care Center is committed to providing that care.

Had this been a petroleum oil spill, the State of California has in place a response network to care for impacted wildlife. Fish oil however is beyond the legal mandate of this network. While HWCC has the support of the Oiled Wildlife Care Network and California Department of Fish and Game in tackling this problem, the financial cost of the level of care these birds need is high. We are relying on the North Coast community, and beyond, to help us give these birds another chance.

As of now 8 Brown Pelicans and 2 Western Gulls have been rescued and brought to HWCC's facility in Bayside. The Brown Pelican was recently delisted from the endangered species list in 2009 and is still monitored. There are more birds who need help and a team is on scene each day. Hopefully, these birds will soon be captured and, with the help of volunteers, experienced rehabilitators and the generosity of those who share this beautiful part of the world with these magnificent birds, given the care they require.

You Can Help

- Monetary donations to Humboldt Wildlife Care Center
- Gift cards to local hardware stores
- Tools for cage building
- Sheets/towels
- Volunteer at the HWCC (visit our website www.humwild.org)

For more information:

- www.humwild.org
- <http://birdallyx.blogspot.com>

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