Seabirds and Recreational Fishing Gear in the Monterey Bay and Gulf of the Farallons Marine Sanctuaries

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International Bird Rescue

Founded in 1971:

- Oregon and Arizona Standard tankers collision, Golden Gate
- >20,000 birds estimated killed
- >7,000 collected alive
- 40,000+ people trying to help birds
- Only ~300 birds released
- Since then, rehabilitation and oil spill response fields have blossomed
220+ OIL SPILL RESPONSES SINCE 1971
BUT 48 YEARS LATER, IBR IS NOT JUST ALL ABOUT OIL SPILLS...
...OUR WORK LARGELY INVOLVES A NEARLY CONTINUOUS STRING OF MASS STRANDING EVENTS
Everyday Work

- Two year-round wildlife centers
  - Manage 2 OWCN primary care centers
  - Referral hospitals for aquatic birds, ~4000 non-oiled birds/yr
  - 15 FT + 6 PT staff + VOLUNTEERS
- Turnkey oil spill facility in Anchorage AK
- Research
  - Treatment improvements
  - Causes of strandings
  - Pathology, disease
  - Post release monitoring
Post-Release Monitoring

- IBR federally bands all released birds
  - Began banding in 1979
- Banding data allows for follow-up
  - Metal federal band
    - Hard to read unless in-hand
    - Mostly dead reports
  - Plastic easy-read bands
    - Blue: Brown Pelicans
    - Red: Snowy Egrets
    - Black/white: Black-crowned Night Herons
Sonoma County Wildlife Rescue or Santa Rosa Bird Rescue

WildCare

Peninsula Humane Society

Native Animal Rescue

SPCA for Monterey County

Transferring centers of the NMSs

IBR = Specialty Hospital for Aquatic Birds
MUCH OF WHAT THEY SEND US ARE FISHING HOOK/LINE INJURED BIRDS

**Major species affected**
- Western Gull
- Brown Pelican
- Common Murre
- Brandt's Cormorant
- California Gull
- Surf Scoter
- Western Grebe

**Minor species affected**
- American White Pelican
- Ashy Storm-Petrel
- Black-crowned Night-heron
- Canada Goose
- Common Loon
- Common Merganser
- Double-crested Cormorant
- Elegant Tern
- Glaucous-winged Gull
- Heermann's Gull
- Horned Grebe
- Mew Gull
- Northern Fulmar
- Pacific Loon
- Pelagic Cormorant
- Pigeon Guillemot
- Red-throated Loon
- Snowy Egret
- Willet

Example: Mont SPCA FHL cases
- 33% transferred
- 45% die/euth
- 22% released (mostly WEGUs)

Only live birds are transferred
WE TREAT A LOT OF PELICANS...
2002-2018 = 5028 CA Brown Pelicans

35% = FHL Injuries
WHERE ARE FHL PELICANS FROM?

San Francisco Peninsula
(59)

Monterey Bay
(356)
WHERE ARE FHL PELICANS FROM?

MONTEREY BAY

Santa Cruz (248)

Monterey (108)
WHERE ARE FHL PELICANS FROM?

Associated with public fishing piers?

Probably yes
COMMON CULPRITS
RECREATIONAL GEAR
Damage Done

Faux fish with multiple treble hooks cause the worst damage.
Damage Done by Recreational Gear

Hooks stabbing bone → Infections
Damage Done by Recreational Gear

Fish hooks

Stabbing tendons

↓

Tissue

Death

↓

Dysfunctional

Limbs

↓

Euthanasia

Pelican from Moss Landing
Damage Done by Recreational Gear

Entanglement immobility causes pressure sores

↓

Damaged bones and tendons

Fish hooks ruin joints
Damage Done by Recreational Gear

Fish hooks rip tissue
Damage Done by Recreational Gear

Monofilament cuts like a knife
Damage Done by Recreational Gear

Multiple injuries
Monofilament ➔

Limb strangulation
Damage Done by Recreational Gear

Ingestion is sometimes the lesser of evils (assuming no lead)
Damage Done by Recreational Gear

New pelican Aug 14
• Rescued at Pescadero
• Hooks through leg and foot….I’ll meet him Friday
PELICANS ARE EXPENSIVE PATIENTS

Expenses:
Fish + vit supplements
Medications
Staff time
Veterinarian time
X-rays, anesthesia etc.
Bandaging materials
Caging, utilities etc.
Transport costs
BUT OFTEN HAVE A GOOD PROGNOSIS WITH TREATMENT: X91

Stranded Moss Landing Feb 4, 2019: Mont SPCA → IBR. Constriction injuries both wings, both legs, hook wound at right wrist. Released Apr 25, 2019. **71 days in care, est cost to IBR = $2556**

Resighted Aug 10, 2019, Pillar Point Harbor
Stranded Monterey Dec 12, 2014: Monterey SPCA → IBR. Wrist, hock wounds, chest abscess. Released Feb 26, 2015. 72 days in care, est cost to IBR = $2592

Resighted Aug 13, 2019, Pillar Point Harbor

Bart Selby
Pier fishing may be ‘free’ to fishers….
but NOT TO US
Or to the birds: pain, suffering, disability, death

Costs of treating fishing gear injured birds

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<th>Birds days in care</th>
<th>low est</th>
<th>high est</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>1345</td>
<td>$21,520.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>2215</td>
<td>$35,440.00</td>
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Plus 19,709 volunteer hours/year
(SF Bay center only)
Thank You for Listening!

How do we solve this problem?

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