

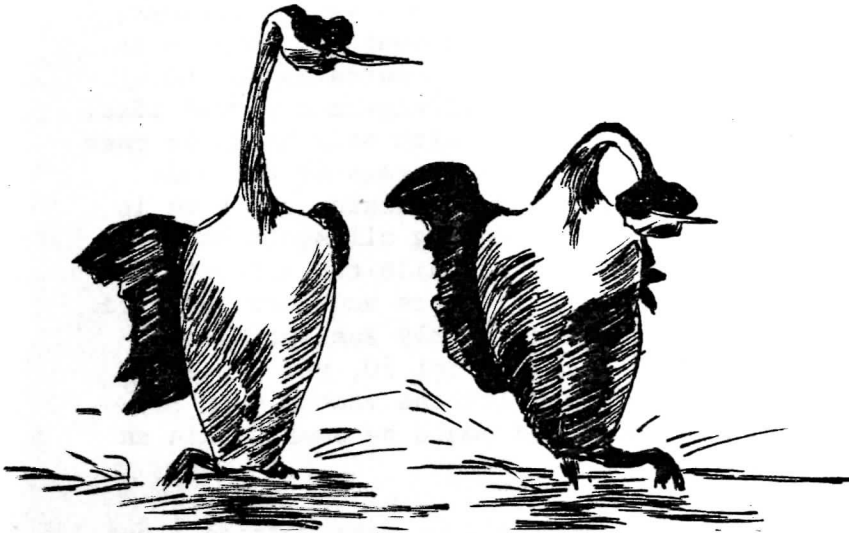
International Bird Rescue

NEWSLETTER

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Aquatic Park, Berkeley, Calif. 94710

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THE GREBES DANCE

The last bird to be released from the February Spill was a large Western Grebe. She arrived at the Center completely oiled, head and all. Initially the oil was removed from her body and lower neck and she was swum in the pool for some days. Later when the vacuum pump was developed, it was used to clean her head. The oil, however, had been on for some weeks, and even after removal left a brown stain on her cheeks which led to her nickname "Little-bit Soiled". In spite of the stain she appeared to be completely water-proof and was duly released in the garbage dump lagoon at the end of University Avenue. A large male grebe swam over to check out the newcomer. Then side by side, shoulder to shoulder, with outstretched necks and rapidly beating wings, they rose up and ran along the water surface for fifty yards in the well-documented grebe courtship dance. The long weeks spent in captivity at Bird Rescue appeared to be forgotten. It is moments such as this which makes us feel that our hard work is worth the effort.

EA

OIL SPILL RESPONSE

An oil spill response workshop, co-sponsored by the Office of Migratory Bird Management and the Office of Biological Service was held in New Orleans in February 1977. This meeting was attended, on behalf of Bird Rescue, by A.S. Williams who presented a paper entitled "Current Methods of Oiled Bird Rehabilitation". (Proceedings, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Oil Spill Workshop, New Orleans, 1977).



ANNOUNCEMENT -

Bird Rescue needs the services of a Certified Public Accountant. We have the books in order and will need an audited financial statement and the year ending reports completed for the state and federal requirements.

OIL SPILL IN SAN FRANCISCO BAY

In February this year the Center treated 330 birds oiled in a spill from the Bethlehem Shipyards in San Francisco. The impact of the spill was minimal considering the thousands of migratory water birds in the Bay at that time.

The affected birds, consisting chiefly of Western, Horned and Piebill Grebes, Murres, Loons and Ducks, were brought to the Center by the Department of Fish and Game and numerous volunteers, where they were cleaned with Sol 70 and detergent. Unfortunately our facilities were severely strained by the large numbers of birds and initial mortalities were high. Intensive care, however, resulted in our best release record of Loons to date.

Experiments were also conducted for speedier methods of solvent removal, and a new technique, the use of a vacuum pump for spot-cleaning, was instituted. (see below).

JA.

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THE VACUUM PUMP

Perhaps the most important development from the spring 1977 oil spill was the "vacuum pump", designed by one of our original members. It consists essentially of two parallel, interconnected plastic tubes. One squirts a fine jet of solvent onto the oiled feathers; the other, attached to a vacuum cleaner, sucks up the oily solvent and removes it to a sump before it penetrates to the bird's skin. The arrangement proved ideal for cleaning birds with oily heads or ones which only had small areas of the body oiled, as it saved immersing the bird in the solvent. Sponging oil spots tends to spread the oil, while the solvent penetrates the feathers and wets the bird. Grebes are particularly susceptible to the toxic fumes of Sol 70, yet grebes "spot-cleaned" with the vacuum pump remained sober and could be swum within an hour.

Unfortunately we were worried about the danger of the vacuum cleaner sparking an explosion. When the spill was over members looked for a spark-free vacuum. However a shortage of funds has prevented the idea from being further developed to date.

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DID YOU KNOW THAT:

- Estimates indicate that a sparrow hawk may eat 290 mice a year?

- Special terms describe birds in groups, such as a bazaar of murres, a covert of coots and a murmuration of starlings.

- There are about 9,000 species of birds in the world, with land species far outnumbering aquatic species.

- Birds hatched blind, naked and helpless are called altricial. Birds like ducks, chickens and quail that can fend for themselves almost immediately are called precocial.

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SARAH

Who is Sarah? She is a beautiful young pelican with a broken wing, who, unfortunately for her, has been a resident at the Bird Center for some months now. From our point of view she is a charming addition, and the sight of her in the morning cheers up our day. She is rather coy at times, especially when she is addressed individually, but she loses all of this at feed time. In fact, she is almost as aggressive as the cormorant with whom she shares the pool, and she takes great pleasure in annoying him by standing on his tail feathers while he is trying to sun himself on the pallette beside her. He answers her with that nasty noise only a cormorant can make and pecks at her until she finally removes her foot.

Unfortunately Sarah will never be able to be released into the wild, but we hope that she will continue to prosper as long as she remains with us.

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JD.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:

Please use the enclosed check wherever you think it will do the most good. You are doing a fine job under difficult circumstances and you have many admirers, including me.

....Lucille McCormick

I am so very impressed by the effort and dedication you put into your efforts to save the wild birds.

You bring a ray of hope in an age when the powers of destruction seem to be winning around the world.

Gratefully,
Gladys Schubert.



ALYESKA CONTRACT

The Alyeska Pipeline Service Company of Anchorage, Alaska has contracted with Bird Rescue to train Alyeska personnel in oiled bird rehabilitation and to provide emergency supervisory response in the event of an oil spill at the pipeline terminal in Port Valdez.

An initial visit to Anchorage was made in September by Alice Berkner, Carol Patterson, Bob McMorris and John Smail. A day long seminar was presented to representatives of the petroleum industry, the U.S. Coast Guard, the Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Alaska Department of Game. A visit to Port Valdez had to be aborted a mile from the airport due to bad weather conditions.

Bird Rescue will return to Anchorage and Valdez in the spring for practical training sessions to Alyeska personnel.

Initial cleaning experiments with North Slope crude oil from the pipeline indicate that the oil will be removed easily from birds by the use of detergent. Further work is needed to determine how 40° F water will affect both oil and oiled birds.

AB



MEDICAL REPORT

The past year has brought us the usual range of traumatic injuries. Fishing gear, power lines, and flotsam and jetsam have taken their toll. Fractures, lacerations, tendon and nerve damage, skin tears, and necrotic limbs result from striking or tangling with these objects. Many of these patients following treatment, care, and rehabilitation, have been released. If permanently crippled, birds have been placed.

The most unusual medical patients the past two years were groups of unoiled, generally young, California murrets arriving at the center in late summer and early fall. Numbers of these birds each year developed lesions on the eye lids, the face and in the mouth. All affected birds died.

Tissues sent for pathological examination in 1976 were suggestive of viral warts. Samples examined in 1977, and a re-checking of the samples from 1976 suggested a type of pox disease. Fowl pox is a viral disease of domestic fowl and is also common in canaries. The virus is host specific, a different virus affecting each species of bird.

Additional investigation in cooperation with the School of Veterinary Medicine, University of California, Davis, has confirmed this as a fowl pox disease, but further study will be necessary to determine the mode of transmission, incubation period, and the cause of death of affected individuals. The susceptibility of other species is unknown. Hopefully more can be learned about this newly described disease from future cases.

J.M.H. DVM
Medical Director

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WORLD WILDLIFE FUND GRANT

The biennial meeting of the World Wildlife Fund, held in San Francisco in November 1976, was attended by representatives from Bird Rescue. The World Wildlife Fund sponsored a benefit concert for the Center featuring Country Joe Macdonald and the Paul Winter Consort.

During the performance our Executive Director Alice Berkner gave a slide presentation showing the work of Bird Rescue, and she was presented with a check for \$10,000 from World Wildlife Fund. This money has been set aside for permanent pools for bird treatment.

Sir Peter Scott, President of World Wildlife Fund and Director of the Wildfowl Trust in Great Britain, and Lady Scott, spent a morning at Bird Rescue discussing our work.

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GEORGE

George is an unreleasable half-bred Mallard drake who lives in the meadow at Bird Rescue with three wives. He has been oiled and cleaned three times for demonstration or to check new detergents. He looks fat and sleek and happy.

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BIRDS AND THE ALASKA PIPELINE

It appears that through the combined efforts of local, state, and federal agencies, and companies, a concerted drive is being made to minimize damage to Alaska's environment, including the habitat of the local bird populations.

Having spent one and a half years in Valdez, Alaska during the construction of the pipeline terminal, I had a chance to observe first hand all sides of the situation from not only the public's point of view but also from an environmental side. Several of my misconceptions were rectified; I was also able to utilize my IBRRC experience favorably in investigating the situation in the field.

Surprisingly, several species of birds occupy the Prince William Sound region (the southern terminus of the pipeline), where tankers unload Alaska crude oil for transport to the "Lower 48." Besides the ever present gulls, there are concentrations of eagles and ptarmigan even within the environs of the terminal itself. Migratory birds such as ducks and Canadian geese seasonally inhabit the tidal flats and pools on the northeast shore of the sound, and Seal Rocks, in the southern part of the sound, is one of the northernmost cormorant hatcheries in North America. Add to this the everpresent crows, magpies, and ravens (which, by the way, are protected by state law) and it becomes evident that the bird species form an important link in the animal life.

The oil companies are aware of this, and are making efforts to include bird care in their contingency plans in case of oil spills. Bird Rescue is a consultant in this matter, as is US Fish and Wildlife Service, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, and Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation.



Several problems exist, among them inaccessibility of many areas by road, high grass and reeds in the tidal pools which could trap oil, and remoteness of the area itself; however these problems are recognized and measures are being taken, if not to solve them, at least to reduce them to a workable level. Equipment is being transported in ahead of time and stockpiled to minimize delay caused by remoteness, and to contain any spill within relatively small areas. Personnel, also, are being instructed in spill prevention, and in cleanup should it occur.

With all the public interest, good and bad, in the Alaska Pipeline itself, it is good to know that via these efforts the bird population of Alaska is being given its chance to survive.

MMJ

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1977 CONFERENCE ON PREVENTION AND CONTROL
OF OIL POLLUTION

This conference was attended, on behalf of Bird Rescue, by David Smith, who read a paper entitled "Cleaning Agents for Oiled Wildlife".

One of the more critical areas of rehabilitation is the selection and correct use of a suitable cleaning agent. The advantages and limitations of detergents and solvents were discussed with respect to the types of wildlife affected, the types of oil involved and the available equipment and facilities. Seven commercial detergents were ranked in order of their effectiveness in removing different types of oil, together with optimal concentrations and available toxicity data. Solvents that have been successfully used were also listed.

WANTED:

- Old sheets, towels and blankets.
- A microscope for lab tests on birds.
- A simple chemical balance.
- Test tubes, measuring cylinders.
- Flasks and beakers.
- A hand saw.
- A hand drill.
- 2 hammers
- 2 crescent wrenches (large; small).
- A pool filter
- An extension ladder.
- 2 refrigerators (any type).
- A set of screwdrivers.
- A slide projector - Kodak (not as old as ours).
- 2 desk lamps.
- Warehouse shelving and bins.
- Bookshelves.
- A coffee table.
- Heavy plastic for rain cover.
- 3 prs. pliers.
- A set of dissecting instruments.

IMPROVEMENTS AT BIRD RESCUE

It was lovely on returning to the Center after a year abroad to find so many wonderful improvements - tangible signs of the continued generosity of our supporters. For a start, we now have our own heavy duty washer and drier. This is an absolute essential, since we have by now been banned from practically every laundrette north of Oakland! And rightly so. We would arrive to do our weekly wash, to the horror of the other unfortunate users of these facilities, with masses of absolutely revolting fish-smelling sheets and towels. I wonder if they have noticed our absence! In our kitchen we now have a refrigerator that works, and an electric stove - also essentials when volunteers must work around the clock in times of oil spills. It is so nice to be able at last to have a cup of coffee away from the smell of fishy bird dishes.

In our South building, where we have indoor pens for our sicker birds, we now have a large water heater which is ample for all our needs, the chief of which is cleaning oiled birds with detergents. Previously we have had to walk up and down our yard (which seems a very long journey in an emergency), to fetch hot water for our operations at the South building. Two large sinks also make such a difference when we have endless dishes to wash.

A large deep freeze for the storage of fish stands outside - another marvellous addition, except when defrosting time comes along!

Our office now looks quite smart, due to the rearrangement of furniture and the addition of some climbing plants, so we are now able to entertain visiting celebrities in relative comfort.

Last but not least I must mention Shatz, our second Doberman guard-dog, who keeps Mike, our original one, company.

JD.



AQUATIC PARK

In 1935 sand was dredged from the Bay to build the East Shore Highway along the Berkeley waterfront. This cut off part of the Bay between University and Ashby Avenues, an area which was then developed into the Berkeley Aquatic Park.

This Park has had a somewhat chequered existence. It was saved from being filled in and sold for industrial property largely by the efforts of the Friends of Aquatic Park Association, the Audubon Society, the Regional Parks Association and the Rod and Gun Club. It now consists of 100 acres, 70 of which are water. The northern and largest pool is used for water skiing and sailing. At the south end is the old model yacht racing pool and beyond it a shallow area of water much used by wading birds such as Egrets, Avocets and Black-crowned Night Herons. The Park has always been a bird sanctuary and 100 different species were noted in one year. During winter months there is a big population of migratory seabirds.

The City of Berkeley has now leased to Bird Rescue, at a nominal rental, the land at the southeast end of the Park on the edge of the two smaller pools. This includes the old Model Yacht Club Boathouse which makes us a splendid office, and another building where we can treat birds.

Surrounding the new quarters of Bird Rescue at Aquatic Park we have erected a six foot cyclone fence. It was very expensive, very necessary and very ugly. Now we are planning to hide it, and at the same time give ourselves more privacy, by planting shrubs. We have chosen Californian natives, with particular emphasis on those which will produce flowers or berries that attract the native birds. So far, due to drought and slow growth, the appearance is little changed. Particular thanks are due to Mrs. Steinback of MacDonald's Nursery, Mr. Jim Roof and Mr. Wayne Roderick of the Tilden and U.C. Botanical Gardens

for helpful advice and for giving us numerous plants and cuttings. (Also to the Hayward Park District for twelve packets of Native flower seeds). If any of our members would like to donate a native shrub please contact Es Anderson, Phone: 841-5335 or 841-9086.

EA

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STATISTICS : BIRDS 1977

From January to October of this year we have handled 712 birds, 363 of which were oiled. Whereas we specialize in seabirds, and are particularly interested in the problems of cleaning birds affected with oil, any sick or injured wild bird is accepted. In one day we may find ourselves in the morning feeding a baby hummingbird, weighing only a few grams, and in the afternoon force-feeding an albatross with a wing-span of eight feet and a beak like a bolt cutter!

EA

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BIRD RESCUE MANUAL

A manual entitled Saving Oiled Seabirds written by Associate Director A.S. Williams with assistance from the Bird Rescue staff has been prepared under a grant from the American Petroleum Industry. It describes the methods of oiled bird cleaning and rehabilitation that we have developed over the past seven years. It gives full details of husbandry including bird handling and feeding. Sections include collection and initial treatment, care of birds in captivity, cleaning, drying, swimming and preparation for release.

Detailed appendices deal with tubing techniques, strained food recipes, hydrating solutions, common medical problems, record keeping, and suggested supplies needed for a rehabilitation effort.

This manual is being published by American Petroleum Industries and will be available at no cost in early November. Anybody wishing a copy should write to Bird Rescue.

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FUNDING

Funding has always been one of our chief problems. Our staff still consists almost entirely of volunteers. When oiled birds are brought to us, we clean them first and look for recompense from those responsible for the spill at a later date. However, owing to legal technicalities, we still have not been reimbursed for expenses incurred during the Bay Spill in February this year, which in bird food and cleaning agents alone used up several thousand dollars of our working capital.

We are very grateful for certain grants which have helped us to improve our facility. However, over the years, our one reliable source of revenue, which has enabled us to keep Bird Rescue functioning, has been the income from our members' subscriptions. We wish to convey our warmest thanks to all our supporters, and we hope that you will continue to help us in the coming year.

EA

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Please tell your friends about us. Our membership rates are:-

Student	\$2/year
Regular	5/year
Family	10/year
Contributing	25/year
Supporting	100/year
Sustaining	250/year
Corporate	500/year

Checks may be mailed to Bird Rescue, Aquatic Park, Berkeley.

Members will receive the Newsletter and are welcome to come and visit us after phoning for an appointment.

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