

International Bird Rescue

NEWSLETTER

A Quarterly Publication of the International Bird Rescue Research Center
2701 Eighth Street, Berkeley, California 94710 Tel: (415) 841-9086

Volume 3 Number 2



TO OUR NEW SUBSCRIBERS

Bird Rescue was incorporated in April of 1971 following the San Francisco Bay Oil Spill of January that year. Four years and thousands of birds later the staff of Bird Rescue is still completely volunteer.

Operating on budget derived from small donations (about \$6,000/year) we have managed to build a far-reaching reputation as experts in the field of cleaning and rehabilitating oiled aquatic birds. It seems that we are the only group in the country devoting considerable energies to this problem. The survival rate of affected birds in 1971 was 6%. It took nine months before the last birds were released. In 1973 our overall oiled bird survival rate was 40.1%. The average length of stay was about one and a half weeks.

Although oiled seabirds are our special interest we will treat any injured water bird brought to us regardless of the problem. Land birds are sent to the Lindsay Junior Museum in Walnut Creek or to the Boyd Museum in San Rafael.

SEARCH FOR A HOME

Bird Rescue is still without a new home but things are looking good. At the south end of the Berkeley Aquatic Park are two small buildings. One was used as a Nature Training Center and the other was used by the Model Yacht Association. Both buildings are now unoccupied.

The City of Berkeley Recreation and Parks Department and Waterfront Advisory Board have unanimously approved, in concept, our request to occupy those buildings. All that is needed now is the approval of the Berkeley City Council which next meets January 7, 1975. Keep your fingers crossed!

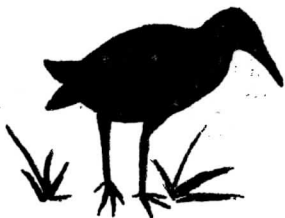
1974 AT BIRD RESCUE

The past year at Bird Rescue has been one of growth. Attendance at the American Petroleum Institute workshop in Maryland, the Cooper Society Annual Meeting in Arizona, the Pacific Seabird Group meeting in Seattle, and the publication of articles on our work in various journals have resulted in exposure that brings requests for information from all over the world. Some of our work at the Center has suffered because of our "success."

The Newsletter is late, and correspondence behind. These problems could be solved by hiring staff and buying sophisticated office equipment. This we cannot do. It would mean short-changing the animals in our care. They come first. We hope you understand.

Thank
you....!

- Amy Peterson Matthies for her generous donations and tape recorder.
- Automation Sales for their donation of a telephone answering machine.
- Westbrae Natural Foods for food 'seconds' fit for the birds.
- Claire Behm for supplying old newspapers.
- Clean Bay, Inc. for solvent, a pump and tubing.
- Leslie Salt Co. for tons of salt.
- Forrest Smith of Standard Oil and Reese Norton of Clean Bay, Inc. for their continuing efforts on our behalf.



A POSTSCRIPT...

Mementos from the Western Regional Audubon Conference included a manila envelope's worth of pamphlets and whatnot acquired over the weekend. Of special interest: two brochures and a flyer offering various instructional aids--teaching packages, charts, booklets, films(!) and lots of other goodies. Also, an article on the U.S. Forest Service's Environmental Education Workshops for "teachers and resource people". The workshops sound both instructive and enjoyable, a pleasant combination! If you are interested in any of these materials, please drop by and we'll share our loot with you.

Letters to the Editor

Many thanks for your continuing circulation of the news bulletins and reports of IBRRC. We always read them with interest and hope that your recent financial difficulties have been substantially alleviated.

We shall, of course, continue to send publications of this Research Unit to you.

Yours sincerely,
J.P. Croxall, Director
Oiled Seabird Research
Unit
England

Ms. Gwendolyn Grebe
2701 Eighth St., Berkeley, CA
Dear Gwen:

Just read that you are going to reside with IBRRC permanently and that you are handicapped.

Here's \$5 to help with your board for the coming year.

Sincerely,
Russ Hiatt



Please tell others about us.
Our subscription rates are:

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

Bird Rescue conducted a training session at Monterey California on April 27 and 28. The session was sponsored by the Pacific Gas & Electric Company (PG&E) and held at the California Department of Fish & Game Regional Headquarters located near the Monterey Airport. It was attended by several employees of PG&E, several members of the Monterey Peninsula Audubon Society, representatives of the Department of Fish & Game, and personnel from the Monterey Humane Society.

The IBRRC personnel conducting the session were Alice Berkner, Dr. James Harris, John Hudak, and David Smith. Alan Baldrige of the Hopkins Marine Station presented a class on identification and natural history of local marine birds.

The participants studied administrative flow charts, cleaned oiled domestic ducks, handled museum specimens of representative bird species, used stomach tubes, watched a slide program on oiled birds, and much more.

IBRRC has committed itself to additional training sessions for PG&E in the Monterey area but our work load in Berkeley (as well as in Arizona, Seattle, Arcata, and Washington, D.C.) has kept us from meeting that commitment as yet. We will, however, and hopefully in advance of an oil spill in that area.



COOPER SOCIETY MEETING

The Annual Meeting of the Cooper Ornithological Society was held in Flagstaff, Arizona, May 11-14. Alice Berkner and David Smith attended the meeting and both presented papers. David's paper was entitled "Rehabilitating Oiled Aquatic Birds: A Progress Report." Alice presented "The Problems of Seabirds in Captivity." Both papers were well-received and many questions were asked.

On May 21 and 22, Alice Berkner and I attended the Wildlife/Oil-spill Workshop held at the Patuxent Wildlife Research Laboratory, in a lush forest area located just outside of Washington, D.C. The Workshop was sponsored by the American Petroleum Institute who generously paid our expenses.

Participants included representatives of state Game departments from the east coast, oil companies, the E.P.A., Department of the Interior, Coast Guard, the S.P.C.A., and several citizens groups. Inspector W.H. Putnam of the California Department of Fish & Game provided valuable input for the workshop. It became apparent that California has perhaps the best oil spill contingency plan of any state.

On the second day of the workshop, we described ourselves and our progress in the rehabilitation of oiled seabirds. The participants were shown our copyrighted teaching package entitled, "The Cleaning of Oiled Birds." The teaching package is an audio-visual show designed to introduce the inexperienced volunteer to the task of cleaning oiled birds. Our presentation was well-received.

At the end of the Workshop, we demonstrated our cleaning process on a very lively and thoroughly oiled Mallard. I'm not sure whether anyone learned from us, but we certainly learned from that duck. Any bird that size, with so much oil in it's plumage should be dunk-cleaned before using our spray equipment. At any rate, Alice and I managed to maintain our dignity.

We are now making every effort to assist those industries and governmental agencies who have requested our help, with the hope that they will be better prepared to deal with oiled Wildlife disasters in the future.

David C. Smith

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that night he returned to the Center and stood on a window sill. He made chattering noises until we opened the window and picked him up! He was placed on a perch in the kitchen area and released again the next morning. Wouldn't you know it; this ridiculous routine was repeated daily for over a month! Dubbed the Kitchen Kestrel (for obvious reasons), the bird was also called "Baby" as before, and his antics conjured up the image of a "Beamish Boy" as well.

The company seemed to be as strong an attraction for the Kitchen Kestrel as the food we offered, for he would often take turns sitting on the heads and fingers of the fascinated volunteers before settling down to sleep or preen. Although we continued to feed him it wasn't necessary because we had seen him catch mice in a nearby field. We also learned that he visited an office window sill (4th floor) of the nearby Colgate-Palmolive factory every day at noon where his charm was regularly rewarded with a little hamburger meat.

Obviously we weren't doing our best to return the Kitchen Kestrel to the wild but he was so enchanting. A window was left open for his comings and goings so we at least knew that he preferred staying with us at night. By 6 a.m. every morning he would hop down from his perch to the window's edge. One moment would be spent checking his plumage (perhaps preening a last feather into place) and then he'd launch himself into faultless flight. Once he was seen (through binoculars) dive vertically from hundreds of feet and level out at an incredible velocity, just barely missing rooftops and powerlines. Child's play?

He failed to return one day. Perhaps he was driven off by a larger male Kestrel. Perhaps the call of instincts told him to seek new territory. Perhaps someone took advantage of his trust and captured him for a pet. Perhaps ...

We hope he is well and happy.

KITCHEN KESTREL

Birds are often brought into the Center because people notice odd, atypical behavior. One such example was a small male kestrel (Sparrow Hawk) brought in last September because his flight seemed erratic and he was unusually tame, letting people get quite close as he sat munching juniper and fuschia berries!

We decided his problem was simply youth.

We kept "baby" inside for about 2 weeks, then transferred him to a large cage on the roof. After a few days outside he was banded with a federal band and released. But the young bird refused to leave the area. He was seen perched nearby several times during the day and