

Together We Make a Difference

The Bird Rescue Flyer

Volume XXV, No. 1

Winter 2008

Upcoming Events for January Through April 2008:

*Unless otherwise noted
events are to be held
at the Center.*

*Please call the Center in
early spring for information
on the following trainings:*

**Community Education
Basics**

•

Field Rescue

•

A-Team

**Volunteer Orientations
start in early April**

*Call the Center at 523-BIRD
with any questions.*



*Hospital hours for injured or orphaned
wild native birds are 365 days a year.
You are welcome to come see local
hawks, falcons and owls used in
education. Visiting hours are 1:00pm
to 4:00pm on the first Saturday and
the third Sunday of each month.*

President's Message

Wow, what a year!! We continue to move forward in all areas. Although we are proud of our techniques and training procedures, we are constantly striving to learn more and to improve. Due to this approach and attitude, our success and release rates have reached new levels. None of these achievements, however, would be possible without the continued dedication of a growing number of devoted and highly competent staff and volunteers. As important as the efforts of our volunteers is the financial support of our members and other donors. We need and greatly appreciate your generosity. As for generosity, once again, many thanks to the Teddy Foundation for your continued belief in our work. Your support is truly appreciated by all of our volunteers and, more importantly, by all of the birds you helped to save!

In the year to come, we will be featuring some of the Coordinators in upcoming issues. These are the people who take on that extra load of work to lead and direct volunteers in the different areas of the Center. Without these dedicated staff, my job would be much more difficult and the Center would not function as smoothly. *Stay tuned* for more.

I could say much more in terms of our accomplishments and goals, but I will let three incredible stories and their accompanying photos do the job for me. Nothing I could write would better illustrate our continued success and growing professionalism. Please read on and, please remember, we will be calling on you sooner than you think to start gearing up for the 2008 baby bird season!!

– Happy New Year! Your Board President, Alida Morzenti

Bay Area Oil Spill

Immediately upon learning of the November 7th oil spill in San Francisco Bay, the staff and volunteers of the International Bird Research and Rescue Center (IBRRC) shifted into preparation for emergency operations involving oiled birds. These preparations included mobilizing trained staff and setting up bird reception and volunteer management procedures. IBRRC is a member of the California Oiled Wildlife Care Network and operates

from the San Francisco Bay Oiled Wildlife Care and Education Center located in Cordelia, California.

The Bird Rescue Center of Sonoma County has a long-standing agreement
...continued on page 4.



Coast Guard personnel assisting with releases.

Magnificent Visitor From The Storm

Late Friday, January 4, The Bird Rescue Center responded to a call from Healdsburg Animal Control reporting a large bird in trouble near Memorial Bridge. BRC field rescuer Mela Brasset checked the reported location, but darkness forced suspension of search until the next morning.

On Saturday, in heavy rain and with the river nearing flood stage, Brasset was joined by Healdsburg Animal Control Officers Belinda Uribe and Ryan Telleriti. The bird was located high in a large pine tree. Uribe called in her father-in-law, Richard Martinez, an experienced high level window cleaner. With Martinez's equipment and experience assisting, the bird was soon in Brasset's arms, transferred to a secure transport box, and on its way to The Bird Rescue Center for evaluation.

The Rescue Center's staff made a probable identification of the bird as a magnificent frigatebird. With seven and a half foot long wings (the longest wings relative to weight of any bird) the magnificent frigatebird is a distinctive species that normally soars high over the water in the open ocean, never landing on the surface. It is highly unusual to find one this far north, let alone miles inland. The presumption is that the bird was caught in the teeth of the storm and swept up river to Healdsburg.

However, identification was only a secondary priority for



Top: Close-up of head and bill

Right: A very cold and weak storm survivor.



Amazing wings, over a 7-foot wingspan.

Rescue Center staff. The bird was very cold and weak. While admission staff were searching the manuals and bird species directories for identification, the rehabilitation team initiated emergency care procedures to warm the bird and to prepare it for immediate transport to The International Bird Rescue Research Center (IBRRC) located in Cordelia. Within minutes after arrival the wet, cold and off-course frigatebird was in a warming container and within the

hour it was on its way to the specialized waterbird care facilities at IBRRC.

The Bird Rescue Center shift supervisor called ahead to IBRRC to alert them that a priority patient was on the road to them. Immediately on arrival in Cordelia, IBRRC staff was able to take the magnificent frigatebird into the highly specialized care that

would give it its best chance of survival.

The Bird Rescue Center has been serving the native bird population of Sonoma County for 28 years. This was the first frigatebird that has been brought to it for care. IBRRC staff also commented that it is the first magnificent frigatebird that they have seen at their bay area facility, though they have had one at their center in southern California.

—Tom Whiteman

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Worse Than a Stick in the Eye

What could be worse? Art Jahansan called us from Petaluma to report a bird in trouble that he found while on his daily walk in a somewhat remote area. It hadn't been there the day before but today there was a light brown bird, larger than a crow, with its eye stuck on a barbed wire fence! He first thought it was dead but it stirred when he approached. Art called Bird Rescue and explained what he had found. We both knew that this bird needed help right away! Field Rescuers Rob and Mag were available and went out immediately to meet Art. With great difficulty and care a great horned owl was removed from the fence and brought to The Bird Rescue Center in Santa Rosa.

The injury was serious but, as past experience has shown us, if any bird can survive this kind of ordeal it is a great horned owl. To illustrate this belief, we have a photo in our files of a truck windshield smashed in by an impact with a great horned owl. That owl survived, was rehabilitated by us and released. Certainly Art's great horned owl had a chance.

Examination by the BRC Rehab staff revealed a severely torn upper eyelid on the bird's right eye. Our avian veterinarian, Dr Dave Rupiper, was contacted immediately and he volunteered to stop at the Center on his way home from work that evening. Together, Dr. Rupiper and the Rehab Coordinator stabilized the wound for the night in order to save as much tissue as possible. The next day, in his hospital, Dr. Rupiper confirmed that the eye itself was sound, and he performed the first of what turned out to be five surgeries over eight weeks to restore the eyelid.



Repaired right eyelid just prior to release.

In mid-October a release team of BRC volunteers carried the owl back to the woods. They located a safe spot a few miles from where the bird had been found and as far as possible from human activity. The instant they opened the transport box the owl shot up into the air and headed for the trees with a strong, powerful wing beat and agile maneuverability.

What a success story, thanks to many people! Art's alertness and concern started this lucky bird on the

pathway of rescue by BRC volunteers, expert treatment by Dr. Rupiper and excellent follow-up care by Rehab volunteers. Thanks to all these people, the owl has been healthy returned to his old stomping grounds, hopefully with a healthy respect for barbed wire fences!

– Roberta Chan and Tom Whiteman

“Learning The Laguna” Docent Training



The Laguna de Santa Rosa Foundation is seeking people with interest in learning more about the Laguna, Sonoma County's richest wildlife area, and sharing what they know with elementary school children.

The Foundation's "Learning The Laguna" program serves 2nd-5th grade students throughout the Laguna Watershed. Docents for the program lead dynamic, engaging environmental education activities in the classroom and during field trips to various Laguna Preserves. The available Docent enrichment activities provide camaraderie, on-going education

and opportunities for docents to expand and share personal interests.

Orientation events will be held in February and the 10-week training course begins Monday, March 10. Applications are available by mail or from the Laguna Foundation website www.lagunafoundation.org

For more information, visit the Laguna Foundation website: www.lagunafoundation.org or contact the Education Programs Director; Christine Fontaine 527-9277 x102 or christine@lagunafoundation.org

- Monday, February 4 from 6:30-8:00 PM at Sebastopol Library
- Tuesday, February 12 from 6:30-8:00 PM at Rohnert Park/Cotati Library
- Wednesday, February 27 from 6:30-8:00 PM at Santa Rosa Central Library.

Special thanks from BRC to...

Dr. David Rupiper and Dr. Ray Visco,
for their donations of supplies, as well as their time and their continuing veterinary care of our resident and rehab birds.

Windsor Raley's Market

Thomas Kitchen, produce manager and John Moore, store director for their continuing supply of fruits and vegetables each week.

The Teddy Foundation

for continuing significant donor support of the BRC's programs.

...continued from page 1.
established with IBRRC to rescue, stabilize and then transport water birds directly to their specialized facilities as soon as possible. Volunteers, coordinators and staff at Bird Rescue immediately started preparations in the rehabilitation unit to receive contaminated birds, and the Field Rescue and Transport Teams were put on alert for immediate dispatch if needed.

A member of the Field Rescue Team picked up the first oiled bird at the Coast Guard Station in Bodega Bay on November 10th. With Alida's specific instructions, this bird was transported directly to IBRRC. The following is from the volunteer's subsequent report to the Center:

The crew at the Bodega Bay Coast Guard Station was wonderful. They had the bird in a box, covered with a towel, in a warm, dry space right in their meeting room. They all gathered round as I took in the box I retrieved from the Center and opened it to transfer the bird, and they all thanked me when I departed. This bird was not heavily oiled like those seen on TV. It had quite a bit on its breast and some on the wings. If more birds arrive on the Sonoma Coast and someone else goes out to rescue and transport, I highly recommend they have a pair of gloves they don't care about or, at least, a box of latex gloves. I got a good look at the stuff and it is not pleasant—very, very gooey! Thankfully, one of the crew gave me a pair of latex gloves to make the transfer so I didn't have to go back to the car to get my leather gloves.

I was totally amazed at the activity at IBRRC. Cars of the volunteers filled both parking lots, the empty field near the facility and lined the street before and after the entrance. Inside was a beehive of activity, obviously well organized.

As directed, I took the bird to the central receiving room for oiled birds. It was filled with volunteers all dressed in white coveralls with rubber boots, purple gloves and some wearing hard hats. Bags of donated towels and sheets lined



Rehab Coordinator Tom Whiteman and IBRRC volunteer loading birds for trip to release site.

tanks and divert as many staff as possible to volunteer team management for the influx of oiled birds.

On November 11th, Tom Whiteman and Janet Bosshard drove to Cordelia and assisted the IBRRC staff in gathering 13 birds that originally came from the San Francisco Bay prior to the spill. For obvious reasons, they could not be released in their original habitat. After discussions, it was decided that the Bodega Harbor was a suitable environment, and Tom and Janet loaded up the boxes for the return trip. When they arrived back at



Tom releases grebe at the Coast Guard dock.

as three oiled birds being held in their office. The following notes are from her report:

When I arrived I found two lightly oiled murre, one cormorant (I could not tell if it was oiled or not, but it was very passive) and one already dead murre (more heavily oiled than ...continued on page 6.

the hallway.

Dozens of soiled boxes waited to be thrown away. Many tables were set up to handle the birds and several people, all equipped to help in some way, surrounded each one. I arrived with one bird and saw others arriving with several boxes.

Coincidentally, on November 10, IBRRC contacted BRC with a request for assistance in gathering up non-oiled birds from their pre-release conditioning tanks and releasing them in a safe location. They needed to clear all holding

Bodega Harbor, it was evident that there was a very low tide making it impossible to wade out to deeper water through the normal tidal 'muck'. Then they remembered the deep-water dock at the Coast Guard station. Off they went to find an interested crew willing to assist with these releases. All went well, thanks to the assistance of the Coast Guard personnel.

The next activity took place on Saturday, November 17th when the A-Team dispatched a field rescue volunteer to Salmon Creek North Ranger Station in response to what was reported

Our Residents...

This is one article in a series of articles that feature one of our many resident birds.

Meet Our Resident Osprey, The Amazing Fisherman

(Pandion haliaetus)

Our resident osprey was found standing in the road in Bodega Bay in July 2005. He had suffered a dislocated shoulder which we believe was the result of having been hit by a car. After being examined by our veterinarian, his wing was wrapped and he was kept for observation in our rehab hospital. Unfortunately, the injury was too severe for him to ever fly well enough to hunt and to survive. As a result, he then joined our resident raptor population.

Ospreys have amazing toes. They have spiked scales on their toes like barbed pads. This enables them to hold onto those slippery fish! Their voice is a short, shrill whistle – either single or in a series. Their powerful feet have outer toes that can rotate so they can point two forward and two back. They share this anatomical arrangement with great horned owls. Another unusual fact about these birds is that they have a bluish pigment on their feet, legs and cere (fleshy area just above the beak).

Ospreys hunt from perches or on the wing. They



take prey in spectacular dives, head and feet first. Watch one with a fish in its talons and you will see that it can manage, while in flight, to point the head of the fish forward thus providing a more streamlined profile for flight.

They are very adaptable in their nesting locations using trees, rocky outcrops and man-made platforms.

The bulky nest is made of sticks, and some have been found to be lined with seaweed.

There is good news for the osprey. Their population appears to be increasing continent-wide after sharply declining (like the bald eagle) due to the overuse of pesticides. These spectacular raptors are easily seen all around us. Just drive to the coast, the bay, the river or a lake and look for a big beautiful bird that appears very white

when viewed from below with wings bent at the wrist (like a gull).

Please come visit our resident osprey and get a close look at this extraordinary bird.

– Karen Dann

The Bird Rescue Center has two primary missions:

First: To rescue, rehabilitate and release orphaned, injured or ill native wild birds, and,...

Second: To educate the public regarding the ecological importance and natural history of these birds.

Bird Rescue Wish List

- Interior “walk-off” door mats, 3’x4’ or larger
- Anatomically correct, plastic bird skeleton
- Plastic pet carriers (two piece, clamshell type), medium size (14 or 18 in. tall.)
- Ziplock freezer bags, gallon size
- Vet wrap (1” to 2” wide)
- Rolls of 1” x 1/2” welded wire, 18” and 24” widths
- Movers (heavy duty cardboard) boxes, 2’x2’ or 3’x3’ (new or slightly used)
- 2-ply toilet paper
- Kleenex (w/o lotion)
- Manila folders w/attached fasteners
- Dust-free pine shavings, by the bale
- Viva brand paper towels
- Sunflower seeds, in the shell or chips
- Dawn dish soap
- Suet cake (insect and/or nut varieties)
- Bleach (no Clorox Ultra, it contains lye)
- Telfa pads & gauze pads 4”x4” and 2”x 2” size



Cormorants leaving bird carrier.

...continued from page 4. I had seen previously). Trish, the Ranger who called BRC, said that many visitors had expressed concern about the birds being harmed by the spill. She and I had pulled over to a quiet area where we could transfer the birds when one couple came over and asked if I was with The Bird Rescue Center. I said 'yes' and explained our assigned mission in working with the CA



Newly released grebe leaving Coast Guard dock.

Park Rangers, the Coast Guard Station and IBRRC to help these birds by rescuing, stabilizing and transporting them as soon as possible. End result, as I was driving out, they handed me a \$20 bill for gas! I put it in the donation box at the Center. Needless to say, I felt good. Mission accomplished.

These three birds were taken to the Rehab Supervisor at the Center for evaluation and stabilization before being moved by our transportation team to IBRRC for further recovery.

On Sunday, November 18, our volunteer responded to a call from the Ranger Station at Doran Beach. She met Ranger Rich Crumley at the headquarters to discover that they had carefully followed our instructions to place the bird, another common murre, in a box layered with crumpled newspaper, covered it and kept it inside for warmth. This bird was then taken to the Center, stabilized by the Supervisor and transported to IBRRC.

Sonoma County was very fortunate that the spill itself did not move further up the coast.

Ultimately, the BRC field rescue team responded to many oiled bird reports and transported nine birds that were still alive to IBRRC. Most of the birds rescued passed through BRC rehabilitation for stabilization and then were quickly transported to IBRRC. While the birds that were able to make it this far north were lightly oiled, they were very ill because, during their trip from the bay, they probably ingested oil from preening and attempts to clean themselves.

While IBRRC was committing total resources to caring

Special Benefactors

Bird Rescue gratefully acknowledgess the following generous contributions which enable us to carry on our work:

Donations of \$50 or more

Patti Adams
John Alexander
Helen Amato
Norma Barratt
Maureen Caplinger
Aurelie Christiansen
Sandy Ericson
Roxanna Fiamma
Sue Hoey
Janet Olsen
Betty Page
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Beverly Penn
Sue Smile

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In Memory Of...

Ruby Nelligan

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Thomas Brumfield
Kerry Burke
William Fuller

Dawn Hollerith
Linda Jackson
Fred Jorgensen
Gregory Korelich

John Lavell
Alida Morzenti
Ilene Tanner
Elaine Weihman

for oiled birds, they asked BRC to retain and care for non-oiled birds recovered from the coast and from other waterways. During the six weeks after the spill, BRC rescued and cared for gulls, ducks and native geese that ordinarily would have been directly routed to IBRRC.

Clearly the training and willingness of our supervisors, coordinators and volunteers provided a proud moment in our response to this environmental emergency. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the following staff and volunteer teams:

The members of the A-Team who coordinated incoming calls, obtained clear information on the location and condition of the birds and dispatched a member of the field rescue team.

The field rescue and transport volunteers, who often drove many miles at all hours to respond to reports, coordinate with the particular agencies on the coast and deliver the birds to BRC or IBRRC as directed.

The rehabilitation coordinator and supervisors for the immediate triage and preparation of the birds for the final leg of transport to IBRRC.

We learned much from this 2007 incident in the San

Francisco Bay. Our goal is to continue to improve the already skilled responses in place in order to respond with increasing excellence in the future.

—Mary Ellen Rayner & Tom Whiteman

March With The A-Team

In March, the A-Team (phone/admission desk team) will have a new training session. Interested volunteers who like to talk to people, answer questions from the public, want to help native birds or who want to help but cannot lift or stand for long periods of time are welcome.

The duties of the A-Team include answering phone calls from the public line, dispatching fields rescuers, fielding calls to appropriate coordinators, and admitting sick or injured birds into rehab. ALL training is provided. We just want your willing spirit and enthusiasm. The shifts are four hours long and are scheduled from 8am to 8pm. We ask you to take two shifts a week if at all possible. These are fun and exciting positions. Everything begins with the A-Team. If you are interesting in joining the Team, please, call Janet B. on the main public line, 523-2473.