

PRESS RELEASE

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ENDANGERED PELICANS DIEING ALONG ORANGE COUNTY COAST

Young pelicans migrating from Mexican breeding grounds are dieing as they arrive on Orange County beaches. Large numbers of the ailing birds are being rescued from San Onofre to Dana Point. Reports of the ill birds have also surfaced in San Diego. Some are being found as far away as Southern Arizona. "Most of the pelicans that we are presently rescuing are young of the year birds, they are suffering from starvation and most have bacterial infections which will worsen their medical condition should they become anorexic" explains Linda McLeod, director of "Pacific Wildlife Project," located in Southern Orange County.

The causes given range from global warming and over fishing to over population and the polluting of our oceans. Thus far, agencies have no solid information on the cause. Kurt Lieber, president of "Ocean Defenders Alliance" attributes the cause, in part, to overuse of the ocean's resources.

Sick pelicans are being recovered daily by Rescue Teams from the "Pacific Wildlife Project." Their Rescue Teams patrol harbors and beaches searching for pelicans and other seabirds in distress on a year round basis. The volunteer non-profit organization is one of just a few overtaxed rescue effort groups in Southern California. The Award Winning Project, famous for its unprecedented response to the Salton Sea Botulism crisis, specializes in the care of pelicans and other seabirds. They also treat small mammals and all species of land birds.

Rescue Team Volunteers have been working overtime to save the endangered pelicans. According to the groups rescue leader, Julie Tobin, "We are exhausted, our people are working all day and into the evening trying to rescue as many as we can of these beautiful creatures." The sick pelicans are stabilized and treated at the project's wildlife rescue center.

The already financially strained organization recently lost their lease space at the City of Irvine's animal shelter and is presently looking for a suitable facility. They are requesting assistance with rescues, transport and donations to help pay for medical treatment and food costs. For more information, go to the Project's website at www.pacificwildlife.org or call (949) 440-6247.