



California Wildlife Center

Patient of the Week

April 4, 2025

A Loon's Second Chance

Since 2013, we have cared for 43 Red-throated Loons. While they aren't as common as some of the other species we treat, they do occasionally come through our doors. Recently, our Marine Mammal team rescued a stranded loon found beached in Malibu and brought them in for care.

The patient came to CWC emaciated and with mild abrasions on their feet. The patients' feet were cleaned and flushed with a disinfectant and the wounds were dressed. The loon, like most water birds we intake, was given a net bottom in their enclosures and stockinette booties to protect their feet. Pelagic birds spend most of their lives on the water, rarely resting on hard surfaces for extended periods. These two supportive measures help create an environment that better suits their unique physiological needs.

Red-throated Loons are migrating seabirds and the smallest of the loon species. They can be found along coastlines and large estuaries. Their diet primarily consists of fish and other aquatic insects. Red-throated Loons are excellent hunters and can dive up to 30 feet when catching their prey.

Staff have been providing the patient with hydration multiple times a day and have been tube feeding them a nutritional supplement specifically for piscivore species every 90 minutes. After four days in care, the patient was stable, and transported to International Bird Rescue (IBR), where they will receive ongoing treatment until their release. IBR specializes in caring for aquatic birds who need to reside in specialized pools.

The Red-throated Loon is a remarkable seabird, thriving in coastal habitats with their exceptional fishing skills and unique migratory behavior. We are hopeful the patient will soon complete their rehabilitative journey and join the migration once more!



Red-throated Loon in care at CWC.