



California Wildlife Center

Patient of the Week

May 29, 2026

Patient of the Week - A Tough Season for Seabirds

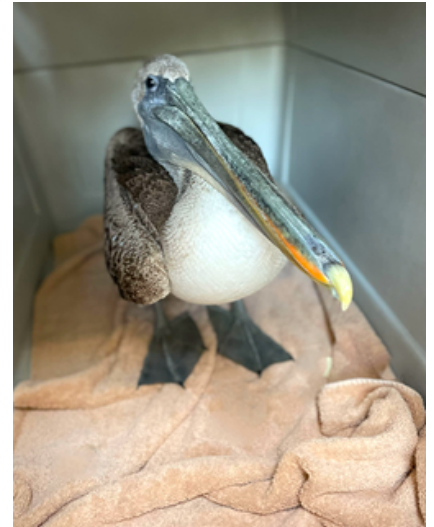
This spring, California has seen a significant increase in reports of emaciated, sick, and deceased seabirds. Along the 25-mile stretch of Malibu coastline alone, California Wildlife Center has rescued nearly 300 live seabirds, while many more have been reported and brought in by members of the public and local animal control agencies. The species most commonly admitted include Brown Pelicans, Brandt's Cormorants, Common Murres and Common Loons.

Although the California Department of Fish and Wildlife is still investigating the event, affected birds have tested negative for avian influenza, prompting investigators to conclude that starvation is a major factor in the crisis.

Warmer ocean surface temperatures are causing many fish species to move deeper underwater, making them more difficult for seabirds to catch. Juvenile birds, with less hunting experience, are particularly impacted as they compete for increasingly limited food sources.

Wildlife hospitals are also seeing more secondary health concerns in weakened birds, including parasites and respiratory infections caused by fungal or bacterial organisms. Healthy birds are typically able to fight off these infections, but birds weakened by malnutrition or stress can become more susceptible to illness.

Every day, California Wildlife Center and other wildlife rehabilitation centers across the state provide lifesaving care to affected seabirds through medical treatment, nutritional support, and rehabilitation. From rescue calls on the beach to intensive care in wildlife hospitals, each bird represents an opportunity to heal, learn, and help protect the future of California's coastal wildlife.



Brown Pelican



Common Loon