



International Bird Rescue
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Rare Albatross Set For Release by International Bird Rescue

LOS ANGELES, Calif. (Jan. 30, 2012) –On Tuesday, January 31, International Bird Rescue’s Wildlife Center in Los Angeles will release a majestic Laysan Albatross back to its ocean home. The question remains: How did an exotic bird that thrives in North Pacific waters from Hawaii to Alaska arrive in California? Even more perplexing: How did this giant seabird, with a 6 foot 9 inch wingspan, make it into the bed of a local pickup truck?

Concerned citizens saw the Albatross being driven around in the back of the truck and flagged down the driver. Made aware of his stowaway, the driver brought the bird to the Los Angeles County Lifeguards at Cabrillo Beach for assistance. The lifeguards in turn brought the Albatross to International Bird Rescue.

International Bird Rescue, which specializes in the rescue and rehabilitation of seabirds and other aquatic birds, has provided care to many other seabird stowaways in its 40-year history. The stowaway phenomenon is generally considered to be a simple case of mistaken identity. Laysan Albatrosses, which can remain at sea for 3-5 years at a time, can see the flat surface of a cargo ship as the perfect new nesting island during breeding season. They sit quietly among the cargo containers and are not discovered until their moving island, the ship, is unloaded. These birds are often brought to one of International Bird Rescue’s Wildlife Centers in California, where they are evaluated and, usually within a few days, released off of the coast to fly back to Hawaii, or wherever they choose.

This Laysan Albatross may indeed have been a double stowaway - once on a ship crossing the Pacific and then again in the truck. While the bird may have seen the local’s truck bed as another cozy island, the dry, compact space that initially attracted the Albatross became more of a trap, since this species of bird requires a long water runway to get airborne.

Upon arrival at International Bird Rescue, the Laysan Albatross was evaluated and found to be in good condition, but a simple shoreline release will not suffice for this special bird. When Albatrosses are released from the beach, they are sometimes tempted to return to shore, where even a pet dog can pose a threat. To avoid such dangers, the Albatross will be given a ride in a Los Angeles City Lifeguard Service boat about a half-mile out into the Pacific Ocean to take flight.

“International Bird Rescue knows that Laysan Albatrosses are capable of soaring great distances, and once released we hope that it will head back to the Hawaiian Islands to nest with other Laysan Albatrosses,” says Jay Holcomb, International Bird Rescue’s Director Emeritus. “Its journey should only take a few days.”

International Bird Rescue believes that every bird matters, and does everything it can to give each of the seabirds and aquatic birds that pass through its doors all that they need to survive and thrive. International Bird Rescue welcomes donations at www.Bird-Rescue.org to help offset its expenses for each of the 5,000 birds that arrive at its Centers every year.

About International Bird Rescue

International Bird Rescue (Bird Rescue) has been saving seabirds and other aquatic birds around the world since 1971. Bird Rescue’s team of specialists operates two year-round aquatic bird rescue centers in California, which care for over 5,000 birds every year, and has led oiled bird rescue efforts in over 200 oil spills in more than a dozen countries. www.Bird-Rescue.org