



THE RESOURCES AGENCY ♦ DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME
OFFICE OF SPILL PREVENTION AND RESPONSE



OSPR News Release

DATE: THURSDAY, JANUARY 13, 2005

TIME: 4:00 P.M.

MEDIA CONTACTS:

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Oil spills affect seabirds off Ventura coast

The California Office of Spill Prevention and Response — the pollution division of the Department of Fish and Game — is responding to an oil spill or spills of unknown origin along the coast between Santa Barbara and Venice. The source is unknown, but presumed to be related to the recent floods, road wash-outs, submerged motor vehicles, and mudslides.

Over 500 oiled seabirds, mostly western grebes, have been observed in this area. About 100 have been seen on the shoreline of Ventura Harbor, and another 100 were observed at Port Hueneme. Smaller numbers were counted at Channel Island Harbor and Point Mugu.

OSPR has established an incident command post at Ventura Harbor. A mobile oiled bird care and recovery trailer has been dispatched to Ventura for wildlife rescue and collection.

California's Oiled Wildlife Care Network (OWCN) has been activated, and their wildlife veterinarians are on-scene. The OWCN's Los Angeles Oiled Bird Care and Education Center in San Pedro already has approximately 100 oiled seabirds in-house. Members of the International Bird Rescue Research Center's wildlife rescue team – under direction of the OWCN – are en route to the site, to work with OSPR's wildlife operations staff.

The public is advised to not touch or even approach oiled or otherwise injured wildlife. Injured animals are even more dangerous to humans than healthy ones. Grebes have particularly sharp beaks and can easily poke a person's eye out. Anyone seeing an animal in distress is asked to please report it by phone to 562-342-7222, and provide the animal's exact location and condition, as quickly as possible. Trained wildlife handlers will be dispatched with the appropriate equipment to capture and transport the animal to the nearest care center.

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Additional information will be provided to the News media as it becomes available.

Website: www.dfg.ca.gov/ospr