



A Pelican Attacked by Dogs

Released September 25, 2007
by Meg Crockett, rehabilitation center volunteer

On August 9, a pelican was reported in Morro Bay on the beach being attacked by dogs. We had several reports, including from the Morro Bay Police, but no one was willing to stay with the bird long enough for someone from Pacific Wildlife Care to come capture it. This is occasionally a problem, since we get reports of an animal in distress but it wanders away from the original site, or the reports we get of the location are vague enough, that our transporters spend a lot of time trying to track down the poor animal, and sometimes even have to give up when they just cannot find it.



We did all our usual procedures for stabilizing the bird, then once he was ready, we put him out in our Seabird Flight Cage.

The pelican was happy there, and always eager for the fresh water smelt we gave it and the company of a few other pelicans we had during his time with us.

Bill Nicholson built two perches at either end of the flight cage to encourage flight. At first the pelicans didn't seem that interested in the perches, so Bill made the perches wider in places so the pelicans could settle down and roost on these platforms.

After a few scary first flights when we were afraid the pelicans were going to crash into these perches, they started using them a lot to practice their flying, then they began using them for roosting, preening, and watching their surroundings.

Finally on September 25, this particular pelican appeared ready to go back into the wild. Two volunteers, Janis Barrows and Jeanette Stone took him over to Coleman Beach in Morro Bay.

The pelican stepped out of the cage, took two steps and began to flap its wings. It became airborne with very little effort and flew gracefully across the bay to the sand spit which was several hundred yards away. There it joined numerous birds including several pelicans. It was a beautiful sight to behold!