

An 'unusually high number' of emaciated California brown pelicans are turning up on shore

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Large numbers of California brown pelicans are turning up on shore with signs of malnutrition, prompting a California Department of Fish and

Wildlife investigation.

California [brown pelicans](#) are a federally protected species, and Central and Southern California wildlife rehabilitation facilities have begun admitting "an unusually high number of debilitated pelicans," according to the CDFW.

The pelicans have turned up stranded along the coastline from Santa Cruz County to San Diego County since late April.

"The pelicans exhibit characteristics of emaciation, and some have secondary injuries," according to CDFW.

State and [federal officials](#) are coordinating to assess the situation, CDFW said in a statement.

"CDFW is conducting postmortem examinations and testing pelicans admitted to wildlife rehabilitation facilities. Preliminary results indicate that pelicans are succumbing to [starvation](#) related problems," according to the statement.

"Stranding events," as CDFW referred to it, happen periodically along the California coast, and pelicans aren't the only species of seabird affected. A similar event, also involving pelicans, occurred in spring 2022, with nearly 800 pelicans admitted into rehab facilities, and 394 successfully returned to the wild.

"Officials ask the public not to touch, harass, attempt to feed or take photographs with pelicans. Do not attempt to remove any fishing lines or embedded fishing hooks from entangled birds," the CDFW said.

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