

More dead birds found at beaches

By STEVE PEREZ
Sentinel staff writer

9-16-91

SANTA CRUZ — Dead pelicans and cormorants continued to wash up on local beaches Sunday, but authorities had yet to pinpoint the cause of their demise.

Patricia Wilson of Native Animal Rescue said members of a state Fish and Game wildlife investigation lab spent the day collecting more bodies and sickly birds from beaches.

By Sunday afternoon, a total of about 65 dead and dying birds had been collected, and the toll could go higher. Sick and dying birds have been sighted from Natural Bridges to Schwann Lake for the last week.

"We're seeing more of them out there, still alive, but sick even in the water," Wilson said.

It is too early to tell what the

problem is, she said.

According to Wilson, a rash of sick birds began hitting local beaches last year as well for about two weeks beginning in mid-October, but no cause of illness was ever found.

Oil can be ruled out as a cause, she said, because the birds' feathers are not fouled with crude.

"We're still getting them in," Wilson said. "They are beginning to do tests on the bodies and are also taking blood samples from birds to see if they can tell anything from that."

Native Animal Rescue is looking for volunteers to patrol the beaches for sick and dead birds and bring them to the organization's headquarters at 2200 Seventh Avenue. Their small staff is being overrun with reports, Wilson said.

Donations are also being accepted, she said.