

Native Animal Rescue Closes Its Doors

Animal Shelters 8-17-95

Insufficient funding forces the move

IRONIC AS IT SEEMS, THE recent flood of sick and dying seabirds that fell prey to a mysterious, unidentified disease in the Monterey Bay has virtually drowned Native Animal Rescue, the facility dedicated to saving such animals.

Santa Cruz County's only state and federally licensed wildlife rehabilitation center officially closed its doors on Sunday, Aug. 13. A statement issued by the center said it had been "overwhelmed by the sheer numbers of sick animals."

In spite of a deluge of publicity requesting donations (including national coverage on CNN and NBC, and a front-page story in the *San Jose Mercury News*), Native Animal Rescue only raised a few thousand dollars, insufficient funds to offset an unprecedented demand for services.

After eight years of working in a tiny office adjacent to the SPCA, with little public support, executive director Lori Moak-Kean submitted her resignation as of Aug. 31. Lori and other staff are currently relocating the existing animals to rehabilitation facilities in neighboring counties.

Board president Gayle Ortiz was disappointed by Native Animal Rescue's inability to garner public support, which would have allowed the center to move away from its 7th Avenue home. The current location is stressful to wild creatures that are not used to barking dogs and heavy traffic. Native Animal Rescue's board of directors is hopeful that a new facility may be created at some time in the future, but in the meantime there's a backwash of debt that needs to be paid off. If you want to help, send contributions to NAR, P.O. Box 1001, Santa Cruz, 95061-1001. The phone (462-0726) will be connected through the end of August.

— Virginia Lee