



**WELCOME TO THE NEW YEAR!**

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Alaskans, I always feel, have a unique outlook for the New Year. It comes about just as we are looking forward to a return of light after the darkest days of winter. Here at Alaska WildBird Rehabilitation Center, we join our wonderful community in looking forward to a hopeful New Year. The New Year certainly does not take away all of our challenges, but it does give us an opportunity to look ahead, and to resolve to reach our highest potential. We take that step, in part, by recognizing our most valuable resources.

For us, foremost is the outstanding Matanuska/Susitna Valley where unsung individuals continue to take heroic efforts to care for our wild birds.

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Photograph by Bill Roth.

## **An immense thank you goes out to the public who assisted with the Common Murre rescues.**

### **Common Murres Inland**

Murres have recently been appearing in places outside their normal habitat. At Alaska Wildbird Rehabilitation Center, we have received over 300 stranded birds from over 200 rescuers.

The plight of these birds, largely helpless inland, is caused by a combination of conditions, some identified, some still being analyzed. The best explanation we have received is that warm water at the surface of the entire northeast Pacific has deprived the Murres of food sources, as their usual prey moves to colder, deeper waters than the Murres can reach. The bird response to poor food conditions is to move to new areas. But for Murres, this has just brought about additional stress. The final month of 2015 brought a huge wind storm from the south. Poor fliers, the wandering Common Murres were caught in the winds and carried inland until eventually they landed, often in the Valley. Murres are unable to take off from land, so now they were far from food sources, and helpless against predator attack.

### **The Valley Community of Rescuers**

At the Center, our volunteers mobilized. We received, stabilized, and transported birds to Bird TLC in Anchorage, where, once healthy enough, the birds were released back to the ocean. It is a second chance for these birds in perilous times. This second chance would not have been possible without the amazing efforts of over 200 rescuers, who freely dedicated time and care to these Murres. We want to share with you just a few of the heartfelt circumstances that surrounded the rescue of these birds.

### **Murre Quips - from the Halls of AWBRC**

1. "I have a penguin (or a little loon) in my yard. What should I do?" was the most frequent question heard over the phone.
2. Carrying a little cockatiel cage with a lively Murre encapsulated inside, a seven-year old boy said, "His name is Billie".
3. "I found open water near Big Lake so I turned it loose in the water. It dove and came up with a fish!"
4. "Here's Murre-phy."
5. One large cage was brought in filled with straw, and a pyrex casserole dish full of water AND the flapping, splashing Murre!
6. A girl came in with her dad and little sister. She was sad about leaving the Murre she had named "Black Wings". We explained that Black Wings had a family too - a bird family. She was delighted to see Black Wings settle in with another Murre.

## Our Wonderful Valley Helpers

One helper said she'd be at the Talkeetna/Tesoro intersection between noon and 1:30 pm. Thirty-six birds later she headed into town. Then went back again for a second day.

One couple drove to Trapper Creek/Petersville/Montana Creek to pick up birds called in to AWBRC. Twelve birds and many miles later they returned to the Center.

Several persons made 2 to 4 trips picking up birds called in to AWBRC, then brought the birds to the Center. These helpers drove to Palmer, Willow, Hatcher Pass, and Chickaloon and more!

Calls were received from all over the Susitna Valley: Skwentna ("the plane doesn't come until Monday"), Healy (drove in), Glennallen (brought in), and snowmobilers (picked up and brought in).

### Gardeners!

For all the gardeners who use cardboard to line the bottom of a new plant bed (keeps down weeds and biodegrades), we have an ample supply of enriched cardboard FREE.

## DOUBLE YOUR DIVIDEND IS BACK!

**DOUBLE  
YOUR  
DIVIDEND**

**Pick.Click.Give.**

We certainly appreciate everyone's efforts in supporting our wild birds. Please consider selecting Alaska Wildbird Rehabilitation for a Pick.Click. Give donation.



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