

Laysan Albatross Ends LA Vacation

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A Laysan Albatross flying in air. (Michael Lusk, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service)

Whether he was searching for fame or just wanted to catch a glimpse of the Hollywood sign, a Laysan Albatross ^[1] somehow made his way to sunny Los Angeles, CA. After his weekend trip (catching some rays, hopefully) with members of International Bird Rescue, the Albatross was brought a half mile by boat from the California shoreline and released back into its Pacific Ocean home.

Because of the bird's size – its wingspan can reach 5 feet – and normal range from Hawaii to Alaska in the Pacific, the Albatross is a rare sight in Tinseltown. He was first spotted on the back of a pickup truck on Friday by concerned citizens, according to the Associated Press ^[2]. Once the driver was shown the stowaway, he brought the him to county lifeguards who then brought the Albatross to International Bird Rescue, according to a statement ^[3]. International Bird Rescue decided a simple shoreline release wouldn't do for this special bird: The Albatross might be tempted to return to the beach, where dogs, people, and LA smog can harm it.

“International Bird Rescue knows that Laysan Albatrosses are capable of soaring great distances,” said Jay Holcomb, director of International Bird Rescue, in the statement. “We hope that it will head back to the Hawaiian Islands to nest with other Laysan Albatrosses. Its journey should only take a few days.”

The wildlife rescue center says that the Albatross is not the first stowaway they've helped.

Laysan Albatrosses might mistake a cargo ship as a new nesting island. International Bird Rescue speculates that the Albatross was a double stowaway – once on a ship from Hawaii crossing the Pacific and again in the cozy truck bed.

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- [1] <http://birds.audubon.org/species/layalb>
- [2] <http://www.newsday.com/news/albatross-found-in-la-freed-to-fly-home-to-hawaii-1.3494555>
- [3] <http://www.bird-rescue.org/media/15087/bird-rescue-news-release-albatross-01-30-12.pdf>