



News Release

Pinellas County Communications Department
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Local Wildlife Rescue Organizations Need Help *Suncoast Seabird Sanctuary and Clearwater Marine Aquarium*

The Suncoast Seabird Sanctuary and Clearwater Marine Aquarium are requesting volunteers and donations to assist with the Deepwater Horizon oil incursion along the Gulf coast. Currently, there are no predictions of oil coming ashore in Pinellas County. However, both organizations are on standby to assist oiled wildlife in other areas as needed.

Volunteers will not be used for cleaning oiled wildlife or any activities involving direct contact with oil. Instead, volunteers are needed for day-to-day tasks to care for birds and marine animals, thereby freeing up the organizations' trained staff to assist the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service with cleanup and rehabilitation.

The Suncoast Seabird Sanctuary, located at 18328 Gulf Blvd., Indian Shores, seeks volunteers to help with tasks such as feeding birds. Due to nesting season, their staff is swamped with rehabilitating baby birds. Additional volunteer help will be needed if staff must respond elsewhere. Donations are also requested. According to Michelle Simoneau, public relations manager, "Public response to our request for linens and Dawn detergent was phenomenal." The sanctuary is still in need of items such as bleach, powdered detergent, and heavy duty trash bags. Visit www.seabirdsanctuary.com or call (727) 391-6211.

The Clearwater Marine Aquarium, located at 249 Windward Passage, Clearwater, seeks volunteers to assist with daily work related to marine mammals, sea turtles, education, or guest services. No experience is necessary but training is required, and volunteers are asked to commit to long-term weekly shifts. This work would fill in the gaps if aquarium staff is requested to assist animals injured by the oil spill. Also, donations are needed for their Oil Spill Emergency Fund to care for oiled animals. Visit www.seewinter.com or call (727) 441-1790, ext. 230.

For additional volunteer opportunities (such as coastline watch or litter cleanup), visit www.pinellascounty.org/oilspill2010.htm, and select Volunteer Opportunities. For information on the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, call the toll-free Florida Oil Spill Information Line at (888) 337-3569 or visit www.deepwaterhorizonresponse.com.

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*** Media contacts:**

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