

First Sea Lion Rescue Marks World Oceans Day for International Animal Rescue, Costa Rica

Thursday 5 June, 2025

As World Oceans Day approaches (8th June), International Animal Rescue (IAR) this week shares their rescue story of a 'Pickle' the sea lion which highlights the importance of ocean conservation and animal protection.

It is the first recorded rescue and successful release of a sea lion for IAR Costa Rica. Although sea lions are not native to Costa Rica's Pacific coast, occasionally, Galapagos or Californian sea lions appear due to shifting ocean currents.

Talking about the rescue, Francisco Sánchez Murillo, Veterinary Director of IAR Costa Rica said: *"A few days ago we were alerted to a sea lion found in distress, prompting an immediate response from our team at IAR Costa Rica. Our team treated the animal for minor wounds and removed external parasites from its tail. Then, following a health assessment, including a full blood work, the help and recommendations of a marine mammal expert veterinarian from Costa Rica were that the sea lion was fit to return to the wild, so it was released."*

"This rescue is not only a milestone for our team in Costa Rica but also provides a moment to think about the state of our changing ocean," said Gavin Bruce, CEO of International Animal Rescue. *"It's a powerful reminder of the importance of protecting marine ecosystems and all the creatures that depend on them. It's a great result that we were able to help this sea lion back to health and return it to the ocean so quickly."*

Francisco Sánchez Murillo, Veterinary Director of IAR Costa Rica, added. *"Sea lions are considered sentinel species because of their high position in the food chain and long lifespans. They are highly sensitive to environmental changes and pollutants, helping us to understand the health of our oceans. Sea lions play a crucial role in marine ecosystems."*

The sea lion has now been successfully released back into the wild, thanks to expert care and collaboration with marine specialists. This World Oceans Day, IAR celebrates not just a successful rescue and release but a renewed commitment to protect the ocean and its incredible biodiversity.

To learn more about our marine conservation work or to support International Animal Rescue, please visit www.internationalanimalrescue.org

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