

Saving Our Environment



Children's Zoo Tour Helps Save Ducks

(NAPSA)—The creators of a children's zoo tour are sharing a little known fact about saving water fowl from the effects of oil spills—these endangered birds are washed in dishwashing liquid.

Chris and Martin Kratt—hosts of the National Geographic Channel's *Be the Creature*—have joined forces with Dawn dishwashing liquid to help launch their nationwide Save-A-Duck zoo exhibition. This year, the exhibition will land in 13 cities across the United States and teach children about the dangers of mixing oil and wildlife.

The collaboration marks Dawn's 25-year commitment to rescuing wildlife. It is the preferred choice of wildlife rescue groups for cleaning birds caught in oil spills because it's effective at removing oil while gentle on the bird's delicate skin and feathers. The dishwashing liquid has been donated for both daily rehabilitation efforts and major environmental catastrophes like Alaska's Exxon Valdez disaster, and the 2002 Prestige oil spill off the coast of Spain.

"Every day, animals face waterways polluted with harmful, oily substances. Chris and I are helping teach children how to protect the environment from the harmful effects of oil," said Martin Kratt.

Oil Is Deadly For Ducks

Even a few drops of oil can be deadly for birds. Depending on the amount of oil and the bird's natural behavior—whether it wades, swims or dives—oil can contaminate just the feathers or all of the bird's internal organs.

A bird's feathers overlap like shingles on a roof, creating an insulating shell around the ani-



Ducks are getting a lifesaving bubble bath with dishwashing liquid.

mal that keeps out water and air. Oil causes the feathers to stick together, mat and separate, breaking the protective shell and exposing the bird's skin. This can cause either hypothermia or overheating.

Oiled birds are washed in a solution of clean water and Dawn dishwashing liquid. The cleaning process often calls for three to five tubs of sudsy water before the bird's feathers are clean.

"Dawn cuts grease, is non-toxic and is sensitive to skin and eyes, and it rinses out easily," said Jay Holcomb, director of the International Bird Rescue Research Center (IBRRC) based in Fairfield, California. "Our East Coast sister organization Tri-State is continually testing products for cleaning the birds. Dawn continues to be the best, hands down."

One of the largest sources of oil pollution comes from the international shipping industry dumping oil in harbors and at sea. Oil runoff from lawn mowers, boats and oily streets during rainstorms also causes contamination.

For more information, visit www.saveaduck.com.

Editor's Note: A version of this article originally appeared on the National Geographic Channel Web site.