



Pelican Harbor

SEABIRD STATION

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Imprinted Pelican Gives New Meaning to “Snowbird”

Miami, FL – Penny the American White Pelican has found a new home for the holidays thanks to the combined efforts of dozens of good samaritans between four cities and two countries.

Her story begins in late August in Shuniah, Ontario, where the Bissonnette Family was surprised to find a large pelican standing on their back porch.

“We’re finishing dinner, and I look up to one of our doorways, and she is right there, looking in at us. We couldn’t quite believe it, we all went to the door, and she didn’t shy away from us. She did not look well, and of course, our instinct was to give her food,” said Deb Bissonnette

The young pelican was injured, weak, and filled with parasites. Deb Bissonnette immediately contacted a local bird rescue who came by to examine the bird and administer an antiparasitic. For five weeks, the young pelican, whom the family named Penny, stuck around while she regained her strength thanks to fresh fish fillets and daily swims in the lake.

But as winter approached, it appeared that Penny was too habituated to humans to have the proper instincts to migrate. Unable to survive the harsh Canadian winter alone, the Bissonnettes contacted Turtle Pond Wildlife Centre in Sudbury, Ontario, who agreed to house Penny for the winter. But there was one caveat, Sudbury is a 13-hour drive from Shuniah!

With help from local Don Smith, Bear Skin Airlines generously agreed to cover Penny's flight, and she arrived at Turtle Pond on October 12th, where it was confirmed that she was unreleasable. Unfortunately, Turtle Pond did not have the proper facility to house a pelican long-term. This meant that unless Penny found a forever home, she would have to be humanely euthanized. Penny remained at Turtle Pond for two months while an appropriate center was found.

That is when the team at Turtle Pond reached out to wildlife rehabilitation center Pelican Harbor Seabird Station (PHSS) in Miami, Florida. After speaking with Turtle Pond, the team at PHSS decided that Penny would be a perfect addition to their ambassador pelican flock! Once Penny received a clean bill of health, a plan was formulated to get Penny from Ontario to Miami.

After much deliberation, the staff at Turtle Pond graciously offered to drive Penny the nine hours from Sudbury to the US border, where she would then pass through customs to board a Delta flight from Detroit to Miami. Penny arrived at Miami International Airport at 9:15pm on December 15th, where PHSS Clinic Manager Yaritza Acosta and volunteer Neil Krasner were waiting to bring her to her forever home

"We are honored to have played a part in Penny's journey to Miami and her new home at Pelican Harbor. The Delta Cargo team takes great pride in the trust placed in us to help animals of all sorts, just like Penny, enjoy safe and comfortable journeys on their way to new forever homes. This heartwarming story showcases what the power of teamwork and dedication can do – and how meaningful that can be." - Michael I. Chehab – Delta's Detroit (DTW) Station Cargo Manager

This miraculous story is the result of dozens of selfless human beings who worked toward the common goal of saving this single pelican. PHSS is thrilled to welcome Penny to their flock, where she is quickly fitting in with their other ambassadors.

For more information, please visit pelicanharbor.org



Penny at the lake
(photo credit: Deb Bissonnette)



Penny on the porch
(photo credit: Deb Bissonnette)



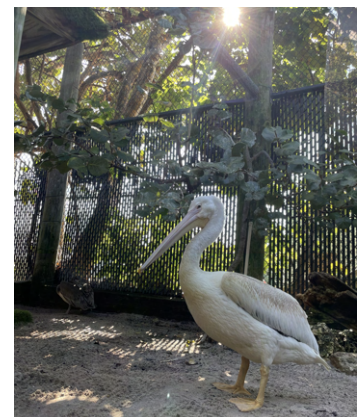
Penny, Deb, and Don Smith
(photo credit: Deb Bissonnette)



Penny at Turtle Pond
(photo credit: Turtle Pond Wildlife Center)



Penny arrives at MIA Airport
(Photo credit: Pelican Harbor Seabird Station)



Penny at PHSS
(Photo credit: Pelican Harbor Seabird Station)