



Bird Spotlight

Brown Pelican: *Pelecanus occidentalis*



Photo: Peggy Wilkinson

Size & Shape

Large stocky body, short neck, very long thick bill with a throat pouch that can expand to hold scooped-up fish. While it looks clumsy on land, it soars gracefully over the ocean on long wings.

Field Marks

Brown body, pale yellow head with dark brown down the back of the neck, very long yellow bill and stretchy throat pouch, short legs with webbed feet

Sounds

Typically, Brown Pelicans are silent, but may make hissing or grunting sounds

Habitat

Lives in saltwater habitats (beaches, rock jetties, fishing piers, coastal islands) along the Gulf, Atlantic, and Pacific coasts

Food

Diet is almost entirely fish, including menhaden and anchovies

Behavior

Brown Pelicans are best known for their spectacular plunge-diving form of capturing fish, soaring in formation in groups above the water and folding their wings to dive to capture fish in their throat pouches

Conservation Status

This species is a conservation success story! Due to the use of DDT, a pesticide that caused their eggshells to be too thin, Brown Pelicans were placed on the Endangered Species List in 1970. Thanks to the banning of DDT and organized conservation efforts, they have recovered enough that they were officially delisted in 2009



Audubon TEXAS

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Photo: Steve Buckel

Birds at the Beach

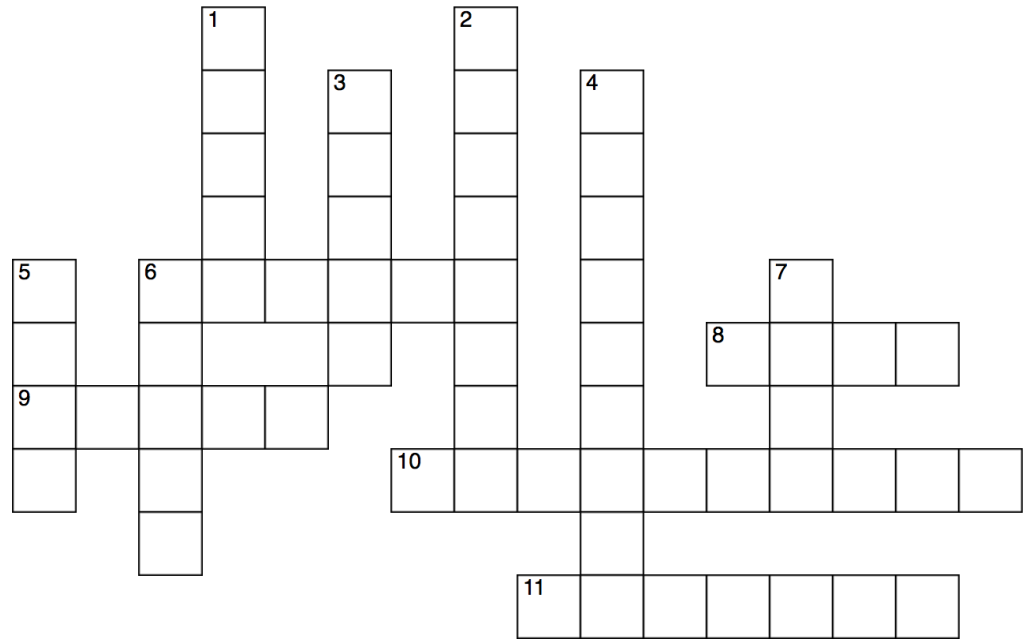
Did you know that our Texas beaches and barrier islands are important nesting habitat for many species of waterbirds and shorebirds? You can help nesting birds along the Texas Gulf Coast by giving these birds the space they need to safely raise their young. Human activity too close to where these birds are nesting, sometimes right on the ground, can disturb nests and make it harder for adult birds to feed and protect nestlings. When you're on the coast this summer, remember to Swim, Fish, and Play 50 Yards Away!

Learn about how Audubon Texas helps coastal birds: tx.audubon.org/conservation/coastal-conservation0



Brown Pelican Puzzle

Complete the puzzle using the clues below.



ACROSS

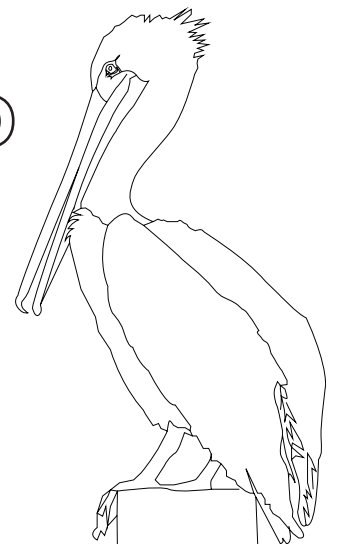
- 6 Male and female Brown Pelicans cooperate to care for their young _____.
- 8 Favorite food for Brown Pelicans
- 9 This grows in the ground and is used in the nest
- 10 Declared _____ twice due to over-hunting and later, pesticide use.
- 11 Brown Pelicans still face threats to their _____.

DOWN

- 1 The Brown Pelican throat _____ can hold three times more food than its stomach.
- 2 Brown Pelicans have a seven- to eight-foot _____.
- 3 a group of birds
- 4 Brown Pelican is this state's bird
- 5 Brown Pelicans stand on their _____ to keep them warm.
- 6 Place where land meets sea
- 7 Plunge head first into water

A WONDERFUL BIRD
IS THE PELICAN,
HIS BILL CAN HOLD
MORE THAN HIS
BELLY CAN.

Dixon Lanier Merritt



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