

# Birds good life

Santa Cruz Sentinel -17 Wed., Aug. 9, 1972

## Brown Pelicans Making Comeback

By CLIFF SMITH  
Copley News Service

The "nearly extinct" California brown pelican is making an apparent comeback producing many viable eggs and healthy chicks.

Sizable colonies of the birds have appeared on at least two islands along the California coast and are reproducing with a high rate of success.

This is the first significant sign of recovery of the species since it plunged disastrously toward extinction suddenly in the spring of 1969.

One of the newly observed populations is on North Coronado Island, 17 miles southwest of San Diego. The other is on Santa Cruz Island off Santa Barbara.

Dr. Joseph Jehl of the Natural History Museum in San Diego, one of the foremost authorities on pelicans, said "about 150" newly hatched pelicans were found in a check of North Coronado a few weeks ago.

"This represents a significant increase in reproductive rate," Jehl said.

"There has been essentially no production of young in the Coronados since 1969. This is good cause for optimism that a comeback may be in the making."

A colony of 300 nesting pelicans on Santa Cruz Island was reported by Dr. J. Gordon Edwards, a professor of entomology at the California State University at San Jose. Edwards said the colony was discovered in April by U.S. Wildlife Service authorities.

Jehl disputed a report by Edwards that pelicans had also increased dramatically on the Anacapa Islands, south of Santa Cruz Island, but confirmed the new colony at Santa Cruz.

Jehl said the origin of the mature nesting birds both at Santa Cruz Island and on North Coronado still is a mystery. He said they may be migrants from a colony of 800 pairs that fled the Anacapas in 1969.

First word on the apparent recovery of the species came from Edwards, who on June 10 called a press conference in San Jose.

Edwards, an active defender of DDT, offered the pelican reports as evidence that the pesticide had not harmed the birds. He cited what he said were bird counts made this spring by government authorities.

Edwards said the authorities had been remiss in not making a public announcement of the bird increase and he was doing so in the hope of influencing a forthcoming judgment on DDT by the Environmental Protection Agency.

Five days later, the EPA announced an almost total nationwide ban on the use of DDT.

Jehl is the first ornithologist with special knowledge of pelicans to confirm that the birds are doing better. State and federal consultants on the birds have remained silent.

Jehl, however, rejected Edwards' suggestion that something other than DDT had caused the pelican demise.

"The evidence is overwhelming that DDT is the cause," Jehl said. "And this evidence is accepted by every respected scientist in the field."



## Back In Business

California brown pelicans are reappearing along the California Coast. Thought to be on the road to extinction as recently as 1969, they are making a strong comeback. (See story at left).

## Refuge Neighbors Missile-Ro

By FRANK MACOMBER  
Military-Aerospace Writer  
Copley News Service

Spaceport, U.S.A. is considerably more than a huge launch pad for the nation's missiles, rockets and astronauts. Yet few of the thousands of visitors who cross the Cocoa Beach, Fla., causeway for a peek at the Kennedy Space Center ever find out that there is more there than a gateway to the infinite frontier of space.

Stretching far beyond the center is the 140,000-acre Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge, the second largest such sanctuary in Florida and one of the largest in the country.

Most of the Space Center except for launch operations areas has been incorporated into the

birds each year.

Year round residents include several species of the heron, the egret and ibis.

Elsewhere the alligator is labeled an endangered species, but it thrives in the Merritt Island Refuge. More than 2,500 gators roam the shallow waters surrounding the center.

There also are whitetail deer, bobcats, raccoons, opossums and armadillos. And families of otters occasionally scamper across the center's roadways.

The refuge encompasses parts of the Indian and Banana rivers and most of Mosquito Lagoon. The latter is a tidal estuary teeming with marine life. Its vast, grassy flats serve as a rich aquatic nursery.

Estuary fishing is permitted, so local anglers seek out the big

Naturalists figure the Merritt Island Refuge was a thriving wildlife community 1,000 years ago. The bureau wants to make sure it is still there after the nation's space program either runs out of ideas or money.

## Ecological For Sonoma

More than half a mile of ecologically valuable shoreline in northern Sonoma County is being dedicated to the California Department of Fish and Game for preservation as an ecological reserve.

## Calendar

FISH & GAME COMMISSION &  
WILDLIFE CONSERVATION BOARD  
(FGC) DEPARTMENT OF FISH &  
GAME (DFG) (WCH)

Aug. 5, Sat. (DFG) Open early deer season. Open tree squirrel season in Lake, Marin, Napa, Solano and Sonoma counties.

Aug. 7, Mon. (DFG) Deadline for applications for early special deer hunts.

Aug. 8, Tues. (DFG) Drawing for permits for early special deer hunts.

Aug. 15, Tues. (DFG) Deadline for applications for late special deer hunts.

Aug. 17, Thurs. (DFG) Drawing for permits for late special deer hunts.

Aug. 18, Fri. (FGC) Fish and Game Commission meeting in San Francisco (Adoption of waterfowl regulations)

Aug. 19, Sat. (DFG) Open late archery deer season. Open archery bear season. Open archery and falconry tree squirrel season. Open archery and falconry season for Sierra and ruffed grouse.

Sept. 2, Sat. (DFG) Open sage grouse season (See regulations.)

Sept. 4, Mon. (DFG) Close sage grouse season.