

CALIFORNIA BROWN PELICAN
REPRODUCTION ENCOURAGING

California's only nesting colony of brown pelicans produced 57 young this year, a substantial increase from the seven young produced last year and one the year before.

The Department of Fish and Game released this report after completing surveillance of potential nesting areas on the Channel Islands off the southern California coast August 15. The cooperative study includes members from the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Park Service and San Jose State College.

The colony nested this year on West Anacapa Island and on a small island off Santa Cruz Island, six miles west of Anacapa.

Observers counted 150 nests and 26 young on West Anacapa. One hundred^{twelve}/_{nests} and 31 nestlings were found on the island off Santa Cruz Island.

Brown pelican field investigations began this year with a survey of Anacapa March 28. The survey team from a boat offshore counted 40 pelicans where at a comparable time last year 300 birds were actively nesting.

On April 26 the team found 101 pelicans and none appeared to be nesting. The following day an aerial count of pelicans on the Channel Islands accounted for 415 birds of which 300 were nesting on Santa Cruz Island.

Observers, returning to the islands by boat May 25, found that five young had been hatched on Santa Cruz Island and 200 pelicans were occupying the nesting site on Anacapa. The party did not land.

In a flight of the entire coastline between San Diego and Fort Bragg June 13-14, observers counted 2,500 pelicans, 700 of them on Anacapa. These 2,500 birds were comprised of local breeders, subadults from Mexico and early migrants from Mexico.

A check by boat of Anacapa Island and Santa Cruz Island June 29 revealed 1,800 pelicans of which 500 were immature birds. Included

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were two that were banded last year in Mexico.

The nesting colony on West Anacapa Island numbered 300 birds of which 85 were occupying nests. From offshore, 10 young were seen on Santa Cruz Island where five had been reported the month before.

On July 13, after incubation of eggs had ended, the team landed on Santa Cruz Island. There were 31 nestlings among the 112 nests counted.

The team landed for the first time this year on West Anacapa Island August 15 to make its final determination of nesting success there. Found, in addition to the 150 nests, 26 young and seven nests with addled eggs, were broken and thin egg shells, indicating substantial nesting failure.

Nestlings on both Anacapa and Santa Cruz were banded, and a blue streamer was attached to a leg of each bird.

Sightings of these birds, together with those of some of the 2,500 young pelicans banded in Mexico this year, will provide much needed information on pelican movements and future reproductive success, the DFG said.

Pesticide analyses of addled eggs collected from Santa Cruz and West Anacapa islands will be correlated with previously established residue levels to provide further information on the relationship of pesticides to reproductive distress in the birds nesting in the colony.

The DFG said that the action of the National Park Service to close West Anacapa Island to the public between March 15 and September 15 provides protection for the 26 young birds produced there this year.