

The Pelican

The pelican is known for a huge pouch under its bill. This pouch can hold almost three quarts of water. It is used as a sort of scoop to catch small fish. The fish are then swallowed and slide into the bird's stomach.

The pelican is the largest bird in the world that has webbed feet. It weighs about sixteen pounds. These birds are about five feet long. Their wing spread can be ten feet wide. They are white with black-tipped wings. The pelican has almost no voice.

Pelicans live together in large groups. When it is time to build a nest, they look for a quiet, sheltered place. They tend to choose shores on lonely islands. Their nests are strong and well built. They use

soil, small pebbles, and sand for the foundation. Last, twigs are placed loosely on top of the nest. Each nest will hold one to four eggs.

The pelican looks clumsy as it waddles on land. It is a strong swimmer and a graceful sight in the air. The brown pelican looks for fish from high in the air. Then it dives for its prey. Sometimes the bird dives far below the surface of the water.

In 1903, Pelican Island in Florida was set aside as a refuge for pelicans. Louisiana has been nicknamed the Pelican State.

-
1. The pelican is known for its—
 - A. Big feet
 - B. Huge pouch
 - C. Loud squawk
 - D. Red breast
 2. A pelican's wingspread can be—
 - A. 4 feet wide
 - B. 6 feet wide
 - C. 8 feet wide
 - D. 10 feet wide
 3. The pelican has almost—
 - A. No voice
 - B. Little vision
 - C. Little hearing
 - D. No pouch
 4. A pelican builds its nest—
 - A. In a busy city
 - B. On a well-traveled road
 - C. In a quiet, sheltered place
 - D. On top of a mountain
 5. A pelican refuge can be found in—
 - A. Long Island
 - B. Hawaii
 - C. Alaska
 - D. Florida

Writer's Corner

In 2003, Pelican Island celebrated its 100th birthday. Write the dedication for a monument honoring the pelican refuge on the island.