

General Information	Please Use this Column to Provide the Requested Information
Organization & web address	The Gulf Restoration Network
Contact name (for species info)	Cynthia Sarthou, Executive Director
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Communications contact name	Raliegh Hoke
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Report Questions	
Do you have photos that can be used in the report?	A few
Will you want printed reports?	Yes
If your species is selected, will you use the opportunity to organize around the species and/or publicize its plight?	yes
The Species & Its Status Questions	
Common name, genus & species	Brown pelican, <i>Pelicanus occidentalis</i>
Conservation Status	Delisted due to recovery in the Western US and Eastern US
Current population size	620,000 +
Has the species been delisted? If yes, when? Was the recovery on time? (Skip questions 17+18.)	Yes, removed from the endangered species list in Florida and along the Atlantic Coast in 1985, and the remainder of its range (including Louisiana and Texas) on 11/17/2009
If no, does the species have a recovery plan?	
If it does have a recovery plan, what is the projected downlisting and/or delisting date?	The recovery plan for the Eastern Gulf of Mexico includes only those birds nesting in Texas and Louisiana because they were more recently delisted. This recovery plan provides strategies to protect important nesting grounds in Louisiana and Texas.
Background Questions (for the report profile)	
Geographic range	Gulf of Mexico (MS to TX and Mexico coast), Caribbean Coast (Mexico to Venezuela), Pacific Coast (B.C. thru MX and into Central and South America), West Indies
Habitat	coastal marine and estuarine environments
Primary diet (if applicable)	small or medium-sized fish, invertebrates
Public Engagement Questions (Please explain why the species is interesting, why it matters, why decision-makers + the public should care.)	
Interesting facts about the species	The first National Wildlife Refuge, Pelican Island, was created by Teddy Roosevelt in 1903 to protect Brown Pelicans. At that time their numbers were decreasing from being hunted for their feathers.

Additional background information to complete the species profile in the report.	In the 1960s the entire Louisiana population disappeared because pesticide runoff thinned their egg shells. Brown Pelicans were reintroduced back into Louisiana using breeding pairs from Florida
What are the most important messages that should be communicated about this success story?	The Eastern subspecies has been recovered, but the BP oil spill contributed to the deaths of thousands of Brown pelicans. The Endangered Species Act worked to recover the population from near extinction, but the efforts must continue in the Southern US to protect the waterbodies and nesting islands that are vital to the success and survival of the birds. The USFWS has created a Post-Delisting Monitoring Plan to ensure the species is not overlooked as it is no longer protected by the ESA.
Outline and describe the existing threats that might impede its recovery, e.g., new threats to its habitat, etc. Include any potential political threats, e.g., a Congressional delisting before its time. Cite any substantiating scientific studies.	Along with the threat of oil pollution, the Southeast is vulnerable to dramatic weather events such as hurricanes. Hurricanes can greatly alter and even wipe out entire nesting areas. Another threat to Brown pelicans is decreasing food availability due to overfishing from unmanaged pelagic fisheries, as well as possible entanglement in fishing gear.
<b>Criteria-Specific Questions</b>	
Detail the ecological and scientific importance of the species. Note if it is a keystone species. Describe its role in the biodiversity of its environment. Cite any substantiating scientific studies.	Brown pelicans eat mostly medium sized fish and invertebrates. The eggs and chicks of the pelicans are a food source for mesopredators such as birds of prey and small mammals. Pelicans also act as indicators of the health of fish populations and water quality.
Provide information on any additional benefits the species provides, such as economic, medicinal, or ecosystem services.	The Brown pelican are an iconic species that are a tourist attraction in Louisiana and other Gulf states.
<b>Judge's score for importance of species.</b>	
What recovery actions have been taken for the species?	DDT was banned in the U.S. and take of pelicans for feathers or otherwise was prohibited
Why were those recovery actions successful?	DDT thinned their eggs, reducing survival rates to a level that could not sustain the species. Banning that pesticide resulted in a rebound in pelican numbers.
If there are or have been multi-agency and/or public/private collaboration to protect the species, please describe.	Recovery of the species resulted from EPA's banning of DDT and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services conservation efforts.
Please detail the species' recovery. What increases have there been in the size of the population and in the number of populations?	At the peak of the DDT crisis, Brown Pelicans were completely extirpated from Louisiana. After the reintroduction, the population grew quickly and in 2004 there were around 16,500 nesting pairs, but the population has been slowly decreasing due to hurricane events and effects from the oil spill.
If there is political support for the conservation of the species, please explain.	The residents of coastal states were, and continue to be supporting of the conservation of this iconic species.
Are there actions that need to be taken by government officials and/or NGOs to continue the recovery?	As discussed above, federal and state governments must ensure conservation of sufficient barrier island and estuarine habitat to allow for nesting and growth to maturity

Are there additional actions that individuals can take to continue the species' recovery?	
<b>Judge's score for recovery.</b>	
<i>Final Judge's Score</i>	0
Please submit to Nancy Welch at <a href="mailto:nwelch@endangered.org">nwelch@endangered.org</a> . Thank you for participating in the 2013 Top Ten Report.	