

Brown Pelican in Utah.—CLAUDE T. BARNES, 359 Tenth Avenue, Salt Lake City, Utah.

**Roseate Spoonbill nesting on the Sabine Refuge, Louisiana.**—The Sabine National Wildlife Refuge, lying between Calcasieu and Sabine lakes in Cameron Parish, Louisiana, was acquired primarily as a water-fowl refuge to protect the huge flocks of Blue and Snow Geese wintering in that locality. In addition to fulfilling its original purpose, this 142,000-acre refuge shelters many other forms of wild life, among them the rare Roseate Spoonbill (*Ajaia ajaja*).

The earliest records of the Roseate Spoonbill on the Refuge date from 1938, the year the area was placed under management. Field reports indicate that small numbers occurred during the summer, with a few being seen in the spring and fall months. For many years the spoonbill had maintained a relatively permanent rookery on Bird Island in the Black Bayou area, Cameron Parish, a few miles north of the Sabine Refuge boundary (R. P. Allen, Nat. Aud. Soc. Research Report, No. 2, 1942). E. L. Atwood, a former manager of the Sabine Refuge, made an inspection of Bird Island in 1942, but found no evidence of nesting. The serious implication of this finding is obvious when it is remembered that the Bird Island rookery then was the only known nesting colony of this species in Louisiana and one of a very few remaining in the United States.

In the spring of 1943, Refuge Manager V. L. Childs found spoonbills congregating on Bird Island and it appeared that they were preparing to nest; later a marsh fire burned over the island and caused the birds to leave; in early May they made their appearance on the Refuge at Shell Island, a small man-made mound of less than an acre in extent, covered by small trees and shrubs, lying approximately 15 miles southeast of the old rookery on Bird Island. On May 25, John Lynch and Roland C. Clement visited Shell Island and counted 73 adult birds. By the end of May nesting was in full swing and it was estimated that 35 pairs were using the new location. A severe thunderstorm on May 24 damaged many nests and not more than 18 young birds matured.

Some 400 adult egrets, herons, spoonbills, and cormorants used this small nesting site in 1943. The limited tree and shrub growth was completely utilized, but the variations in nesting periods and heights tended to relieve the competition for nest sites. When incubation by the American and Snowy Egrets was well advanced, and the cormorant and Ward's Heron rookeries were breaking up, the spoonbills were just beginning to build nests. The Ward's Heron placed its nests at a higher level than the other species, using the tops of the trees and even the 20-foot lookout tower; the tallest trees present are estimated to be not more than 40 feet high. The cormorants nested from eight feet above the ground to the tops of the smaller trees, while the American Egret's nests were found at levels between four and ten feet. The spoonbill nests were rather uniformly placed at approximately seven feet above the ground, and the Snowy Egret did not appear to have any height preference, building its nests from almost level ground to 35 feet.

No spoonbills were observed from the last of August, 1943, until April 25, 1944, when Mr. Childs saw 14 adults. By the end of May, 20 pairs were present on Shell Island and the population continued to increase until July 11 when this same observer counted 200 adults; in addition, 75 were seen along the boat channel en route to the island. A complete census was not attempted because it would have caused undesirable disturbance, but it was ascertained by a cursory examination that no fewer than 60 spoonbill nests were located in the rookery, which again was shared with cormorants, egrets, and herons. A late visit on August 19, 1944, disclosed that 11 adults

and 50 young spoonbills in almost complete coats of dull pink yet remained. On the basis of several trips by refuge personnel to Shell Island during 1944, it was determined that approximately 350 adults used the rookery and 150 young spoonbills were produced. Roseate Spoonbills were observed much later than in previous years; Mr. Childs recorded four birds on November 20 and three were reported by a fur trapper December 19, 1944. Spoonbills were also seen on Bird Island in the Black Bayou area that fall, although no nesting had occurred here in 1944.

In 1945, Roseate Spoonbills returned earlier than usual, with nesting under way the last of April. On March 13, Arthur Miller, Regional Refuge Supervisor, and Manager Childs observed some 20 spoonbills and also estimated that 225 nests of the Snowy Egret, Ward's Heron, American Egret, cormorant, and Louisiana Heron were in the Shell Island rookery. By the end of April, approximately 100 spoonbills were present and five nests were seen, but again the inspection was brief to avoid undue disturbance. Several young Roseate Spoonbills were seen in the nests on May 8, 1945, and by June 16 they were strong enough to move about in the trees. Two hundred adults were seen in the vicinity of Shell Island on June 20 when James Silver (Regional Director), William Davis (Regional Game Management Supervisor), and the refuge manager visited the area. On July 19, Refuge Patrolman, George Harrison, counted 42 nests; of these, 12 contained four young; 16, three young; 10 contained two young birds, and 4 had only one each—an average of 2.85 per nest. It was estimated that 80 pairs of spoonbills nested on Shell Island in 1945, and it was evident that they were incubating more eggs this season than last year.

Patrolman Harrison made a trip on July 19, 1945, to the old nesting area on Bird Island, but no Roseate Spoonbills were found. Probably marsh burning and increased human activity have been responsible for the abandonment of the rookery.

The tree growth about Shell Island has been heavily taxed by the high concentration of nesting and some permanent damage has resulted. During the winter of 1944-1945, two nesting platforms were constructed to provide additional sites for the birds. These are about 20 feet long and consist of two decks, both within the range of elevations apparently favored by the spoonbills. The planking is so spaced as to provide a measure of sanitation. While the spoonbills showed no interest in the new structures, other species did find them acceptable. At least 25 nests were built on the platforms by Ward's Herons and American and Snowy Egrets in 1945, and to that extent relieved the pressure on the island's vegetation. Tree plantings have been made in suitable locations on the Refuge with the hope of establishing additional rookery sites.—R. E. GRIFFITH, V. L. CHILDS, and FAXON W. COOK, *Division of Wildlife Refuges, Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, Chicago 54, Illinois.*

**Predation on living prey by the Black Vulture.**—In practically every reference to the food of the Black Vulture (*Catharista urubu*), mention is made that it occasionally attacks such domestic stock as lambs, kids or pigs. However, one cannot but note that specific instances of it are highly infrequent and the comments thereon deal largely in generalities. Aside from the fact that they take young herons from nests in rookeries and tear the eyes from newly born calves and the like, one is hard put to it to find a record of actually witnessed predation of this sort. Therefore, it seems that the following is worthy of record, as it comes from an impeccable source; the observer is a highly trustworthy and completely competent authority. The observation comes to the writer through the kindness of a friend who knows her well.

Miss Serena K. Dandridge maintains a large flock of sheep on a farm near Shepherdstown, West Virginia. One day in July, 1945, she noted that one of the lambs