



**WESTMINSTER
COLLEGE**
Great Salt Lake Institute



**TRACY
AVIARY**



We Need Your Help Finding & Reporting Wing Tagged Pelicans

Great Salt Lake PELI Project aims to understand Utah's American White Pelican's migration patterns, breeding behavior, and survival rates. We work in partnership with the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources on pelican research that involves marking pelicans with leg bands and wing tags.

What to Look For



Photos: UDWR

Where to Report

Email: johnneill@utah.gov or Enter at: reportband.gov

We encourage all observations of tagged pelicans!

Please try to include:

Date, Location, Tag Code, Tag Color, Code Color, Photo

About American White Pelicans & the PELI Project

In Utah, American White Pelicans (AWPE) are found in the spring, summer, and fall and can be observed in reservoirs, lakes, and rivers throughout the state. They spend the winter in California and Mexico. AWPE mostly eat “rough” fish, meaning fish that are of low economic value. They will hunt during the day and night. AWPE will cooperate to hunt by driving fish to shallows and concentrating prey, then scoop fish into their gular pouches.

AWPE have a wingspan over 8 feet and weight around 15 pounds.

AWPE are some of the most gregarious of avian species; they sleep, roost, and sun bathe in groups. AWPE are highly social, form monogamous pairs, and nest in colonies. For the colony as a whole, it takes over 3 months to nest and fledge chicks. AWPE typically lay two eggs and incubate them for 30 days. Adults attend the nestlings until they are 3 weeks old, then the young congregate into pods while the adults are away foraging.

Gunnison Island (in the north arm of Great Salt Lake) is one of two colonial nesting sites for AWPE in Utah and currently ranks as one of the largest breeding colonies in North America. Great Salt Lake’s freshwater wetlands provide excellent breeding, nursery, and foraging habitats for their fish prey. Gunnison Island has historically been a safe place for AWPE to breed because predators cannot access the island. As water levels in Great Salt Lake fluctuate lower, Gunnison Island is exposed via a land bridge to predators, and this is a concern.

The Utah Division of Wildlife Resources (UDWR) studies all aspects of AWPE life history in Utah. To track survival rates, feeding patterns, and movements, a large number of nestling AWPE at Gunnison Island are marked each year with wing tags and leg bands. UDWR requests the public send reports of wing tagged AWPE to help biologists understand their life-history. We need you to report any birds with wing-tags that you see!

The UDWR also keeps track of AWPE movements and migrations through a program called “Peli-track.” Some AWPE are outfitted with small backpacks, which transmit the AWPE’s location every hour. These data are used to better manage our charismatic AWPE and to avoid conflicts with people (for example, avoiding pelican-airplane collisions at airports).

Great Salt Lake PELI Project (Partnership for Education and Longitudinal Investigation of American White Pelicans) began in 2017 to further understand the AWPEs on Gunnison Island and the effects of our changing environment. The partnership includes Tracy Aviary, MesoWest at the University of Utah, Great Salt Lake Audubon, Great Salt Lake Institute at Westminster College, and UDWR. The first phase of the PELI Project was to install PELIcams on Gunnison Island which document predators, weather, and rarely-observed nesting behaviors.



For more information about the PELI Project and the PELIcam go to:

GSLPELIproject.ORG

You can see where pelican’s have traveled here:

https://wildlife.utah.gov/pelican_webmap/