

Pelican Monitoring 2011

Tips

- Take lots of photos every trip (Setup Photo Points)
- Use high powered scope from shore “possible photos through scope”
- Boat Training (Try to have Paulette or NPWRC on all boat trips)
- Check weather before using the boat, document major weather events
- South Island is full of poison ivy
- PPE when walking amongst colony and handling birds
- To avoid hot weather “overheating juveniles” and wind surveillance, activities should be conducted early morning.
- Contact Mike with any concerns or questions
- ~ 15% of the continental American White Pelican colony nests at Chase Lake NWR
- Enter data into excel data sheet

April

- Establish access point for new boat with trailer.
- No seasonal
- Setup predator fence on Peninsula.
- Shoreline visit once a week “One Hour” filling out form and taking photos. Once a month walk the power lines on the south side of the refuge collecting dead birds. Documenting nest setup dates will provide valuable insight to chick ages distribution around the islands.
- This month is important for nest establishment therefore special attention to disturbances

May

- Have Alissa or Paulette show technician where to look and what to look for.
- Shoreline visit once a week “One Hour” filling out form and taking photos.
- Take a boat trip for a close up but do not step on islands “Pelicans are sensitive to disturbance in early nesting stages”
- Nests will be hatching in some areas and adults will still be establishing nests in other areas. From this point forward check the colony after any major weather events.

June

- Airphoto early June before chicks start to roam the island. Once chicks are ~3 weeks old parents will often leave them unattended leaving them very susceptible to weather events.
- Shoreline visit once a week “One Hour” filling out form and taking photos. Majority of the nests will be hatched.

- At least one boat trip with trained personnel doing ground checks for mortality around nesting areas. Use a GPS to track routes and mark noteworthy areas. Larry Igl will also be interested in doing counts of species nesting in the trees on the south island. At some point from here forward get estimates of other species nesting on the islands.
- Remember normal production is around 50% so dead birds will be present.

July (Start of Disease Monitoring)

- Band chicks on Peninsula one day (~20 people) and take a smaller banding crew (~10 people) to other islands on separate day. Contact Northern Prairie for assistance and Mark Clark from NDSU for blood sampling. This is an ideal time to get chick estimates for each island. Check for bands one week after banding to determine banding mortality.
- Check colony once a week “One-Two Hour” filling out form and taking photos. From this point forward put special emphasis on looking for bands and estimating sick numbers. If >20 sick chicks are observed euthanize two sick chicks for the health lab each week “Wildlife Contingency Plant”. Special collection forms need to be filled out. Work with Paulette when collecting specimens the first couple times. This month is typically when WNV starts showing up in the chicks.
- Chicks between 3-10 weeks will often move towards the water and swim. Try not to push chicks onto surrounding islands/mainland. At 10 weeks chicks will start to fly from colony.

August

- Check colony once a week “One-Two Hour” filling out form and taking photos. From this point forward put special emphasis on looking for bands and estimating sick numbers. If >20 sick chicks are observed euthanize two sick chicks for the health lab each week.

September & October

- The colony will continue to get smaller and smaller as chicks fledge so adjust surveillance according to abundance. Continue monitoring until all the pelicans are gone.
- Make one last push when Pelicans are gone with ~5 people to scan the islands for bands.

Date		
Observer		
Time	Start	End
Temp	Wind	
Major weather events since last visit		
Number of Pelicans & Other Species per Nesting Island		
Status of Chicks (% sick, % hatched, age, creche sizes)		
Number of bands collected		
Photo Points Used		
Powerline Collection Data		
Comments (predator signs, courtship flights)		

Map on back to draw nesting locations, observation points, comments