



U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
Office of the Secretary  
Press Service



Release - Immediate.

January 28, 1925.

PELICANS OF PYRAMID LAKE NOT A MENACE

Since time immemorial a large colony of white pelicans has nested on Anaho Island, Pyramid Lake, Nevada. The colony now numbers about 10,000 adults, which on account of interference by man, and destruction by natural enemies and the elements, rear less than a thousand young in a season. The pelicans live almost exclusively upon fishes but the kinds they take in any number are small or coarse-fleshed species not valued as food by man. Lake minnows, carp, and lake chubs are the staple foods of the pelicans of Pyramid Lake, with red suckers, Sacramento perch and catfish, distant seconds in point of quantity consumed.

Complaints which resulted in the investigation made by the Biological Survey of the United States Department of Agriculture were to the effect that the pelicans were serious enemies of trout, the most prized fish of the region. These charges were proved unfounded, as only two trout were found in the food of the pelican colony during the entire course of a three-months' investigation, and indications were that instead of being caught alive, they had been picked from a number of dead salmon observed at the time in stagnant pools along the lower Truckee River. The fishes most often caught are the abundant species that swim near the surface of the water; the pelicans rarely dive, and the usually deep-lying trout are beyond their reach. The findings of this investigation are similar to those resulting from studies of pelicans in other regions. The birds seem to subsist almost exclusively upon coarse and common fishes not used as food by man, and instead of doing the vast damage their size and fishing expertness suggest, pelicans even in those few places where they do exist in numbers, are practically harmless.

- # # #

624-25