

Report a Lake Brewster pelican

A joint NSW OEH, UNSW and WaterNSW project



Photo: M Carnegie

Have you seen a pelican with an orange leg band?

We want to hear from you!

Pelicans from Lake Brewster in the Murray-Darling Basin have been given orange leg bands as part of a research project to learn more about their movements.

You can play a part in this research project by reporting your sightings via the email address on the back of this factsheet.

Lake Brewster pelicans

Lake Brewster, in the Lachlan River catchment, is an important site for pelicans. It is one of the few sites in the Murray Darling Basin where pelicans breed in large numbers (more than 5000 nests) on a semi-regular basis. Pelicans have nested at Lake Brewster since 1984 when records were first kept. In recent years, the size of the pelican colonies has increased to about 8000 birds in the summer of 2016-2017. WaterNSW, which manages water storages and delivery in the Lachlan valley, and



NSW Office of Environment and Heritage, which manages the environmental watering program, have been working together to enable the waterbird breeding events which occur at the lake to be completed successfully.

After prolonged flooding in the Lachlan River catchment in 2016, pelicans bred at several locations in the Lake.

Pelican banding

One important factor of pelican ecology that is poorly understood is whether pelicans return to the site where they hatched. This is known as natal site fidelity. If pelicans exhibit natal site fidelity, it has important implications for wetland and water management.

In May 2017, 66 juvenile pelicans were banded with uniquely numbered orange leg bands. These bands will stay on for approximately 10 to 15 years and help us keep track of their movements – whether they revisit Lake Brewster or other wetlands.

Lake Brewster

Lake Brewster was originally a natural ephemeral wetland, which was developed in the 1950s into secondary storage to re-regulate the delivery of water to the lower Lachlan. More recently, work has been undertaken to restore wetland habitats in the lake.

Reporting sightings

If you see a pelican with an orange leg band, please email pele.bands@environment.nsw.gov.au.

In your email please include:

- the number on the band (if you can see it)
- the location of your sighting (a GPS point or nearby locality will help)
- the context – if the bird was alone or with a group
- the bird's behaviour – feeding, flying etc.
- the condition of the bird – healthy, unwell or deceased.

If you find an orange leg band but no bird, we would also like to hear from you.

Photos, all by M Carnegie.
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