

## FIELD NOTES

### White and Brown Pelicans Feeding Together

The two species of pelicans inhabiting Florida commonly occur together in the same coastal habitats but usually forage in very different ways. Brown Pelicans (*Pelecanus occidentalis*) normally forage by diving from the air to capture fish at or under the water's surface, whereas White Pelicans (*P. erythrorhynchos*) forage by swimming and scooping fish up from the water (Gunter, *La. Acad. Sci.*, 21: 34-39, 1958).

On 30 May 1973 at 0850 I saw a mixed flock of 40 Brown Pelicans and 7 White Pelicans feeding together at McKay Bay, Hillsborough County, Florida. Both species of pelicans were swimming and foraging at the water's surface in typical White Pelican style. Judging from the definite swallowing motions that followed nearly every bill thrust, the pelicans were capturing food at a high rate of success. The pelicans were closely packed and several additional Brown Pelicans flew to and joined the flock as I watched. The swimming direction of the flock changed several times as if the pelicans were following a school of fish in the shallow water. The pelicans did not line up or "herd" their prey, nor did I see any fish shoaling at the water's surface. About 10 Laughing Gulls (*Larus atricilla*) joined the flock and about 50 Least Terns (*Sterna albifrons*) foraged by plunge-diving in the water in the immediate vicinity. After foraging for 10 minutes, several of the Brown Pelicans flew to the nearby shore while the other birds stopped feeding.

This record is unusual in that it shows that the two species of pelicans at least occasionally feed together and also because it records Brown Pelicans foraging in a manner different from their usual plunge-diving. The interspecific feeding flock of the two species is unique in over 75 hours of observation I have made at McKay Bay. Ralph Schreiber, who is making a comprehensive study of the Brown Pelican, informs me (pers. comm.) that he has never seen the two species foraging together and, except at docks and marinas where people feed them dead fish, he has rarely seen Brown Pelicans foraging on the water's surface. Both Gunter (1958) and Goss (*Auk*, 5: 25-27, 1888) note that Brown Pelicans rarely forage while swimming, and I have seen Brown Pelicans do so on one other occasion (11 Sept. 1973), this time without any White Pelicans being present. *James J. Dinsmore, Biology Department, University of Tampa, Florida 33606.*

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Seymour Byrd writes that he has now seen 30 varieties of birds in his suburban yard and suspects that this is a record for yards of less than one acre in size.