

# PELICAN FACTS



1-5

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Pablo is a brown pelican. He lives in the Galapagos Islands, about 600 miles (1000 km) from the coast of South America.





On most days, Pablo would catch plenty of fish. The ocean around the Galapagos Islands is full of all kinds of sea life.





The Galapagos Islands belong to Ecuador, and most are part of a national park. But some islands have towns on them.





Pablo tried out the fish market in the town of Puerto Ayora, on Santa Cruz Island. Pelicans there really do beg for scraps.





When Pablo goes fishing, he starts by soaring close to the waves. He watches for fish close to the surface.





The strong wings of the brown pelican help it soar a long time without flapping. It uses the pouch in its beak as a fish net.





When a brown pelican sees fish, it plunges into the water. It scoops the fish into the pouch in its lower beak.





Pablo can scoop up lots of fish in his pouch. But he has to float awhile and let the water drain out before he can swallow the fish.





While he is waiting for the water to drain, Pablo watches for pesky gulls. They will steal some of his fish if he isn't careful.





Brown pelicans like Pablo live along the warm parts of the North and South American coasts, and around the shores of the Gulf of Mexico.





It's fun and exciting to see brown pelicans diving. But there was a time when you were lucky to see even one brown pelican at the shore.





During the 1960s, there were fewer and fewer brown pelicans each year. Their eggs were not hatching. They became endangered.





The eggs of the pelicans were breaking before they hatched, because the shells were too thin. The pelicans were getting poison in their food.





Farmers were using a poison called DDT to kill insects. Rain washed some of the DDT into the ocean.





The DDT got into the fish. When the pelicans ate the fish, the DDT stayed in their bodies. It made their eggs break easily.





A law against using DDT was passed in 1972. The numbers of brown pelicans quickly began to climb. Their eggs were hatching again!





Now we can once again expect to see brown pelicans like Pablo along the sea shores of North and South America.





But we would have to go to the Galapagos Islands to find pelicans in a fish market!





THE END  
THE END





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Pelican Facts is the supporting book for the Pablo Pelican activity set, which also includes Pablo's Bad Day, comprehension tests, a photo collection, and a printable pelican to cut out and fold. If you don't have the complete set, you can download it free from the web site. Story text and photos by Ann Brundige, with the following exceptions:

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