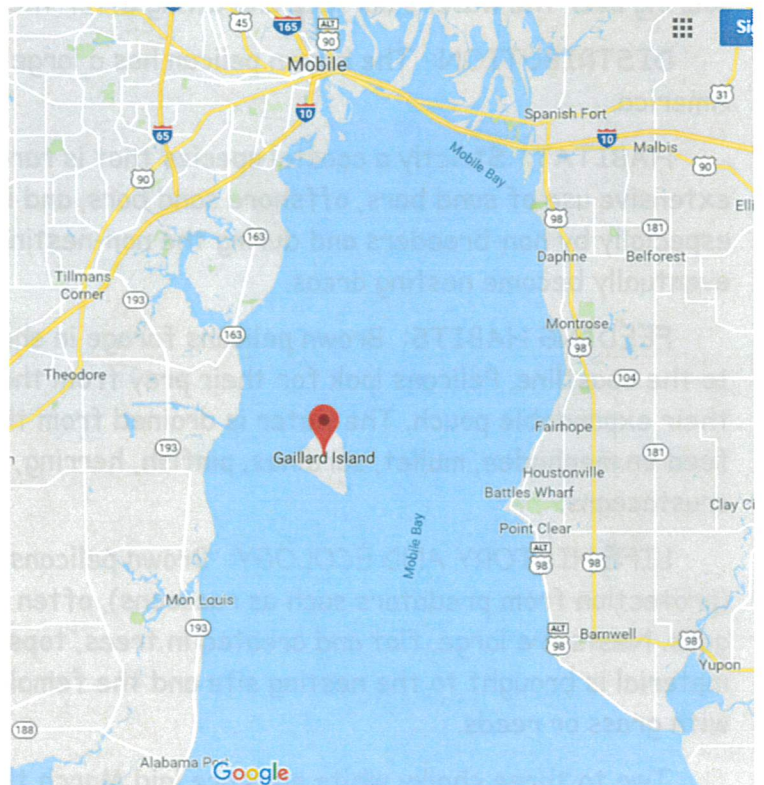


the pelican population in 1982 died as a result of fish die-offs in connection to chemical runoffs (e.g., organophosphates).

Currently, breeding numbers in most states are stable or increasing. However, **pelicans are extremely vulnerable to chemical and pesticide pollution, which results in eggshell thinning and reproductive failure.** Other threats to pelican populations include **disturbance of nesting birds by humans**, declining fish (food) populations, increased turbidity (e.g., from dredging, resulting in reduced visibility of prey); oil and other chemical spills, entanglement in fishing gear, shooting, extreme weather conditions (freezing of soft parts, destruction of nest sites by hurricanes, storms), disease, and parasitism. Human disturbance, such as recreational boating and poaching, not only disrupts reproductive success, but may affect distribution patterns and age structure of pelicans using roosting sites during the nonbreeding season (Jaques and Anderson 1987). Habitat degradation affects both roosting and nesting patterns. On the Gulf Coast, nesting efforts have failed because nesting sites are susceptible to flooding as a result of continued site erosion (McNease et al. 1992).

The Brown Pelican was first listed as Endangered on June 2, 1970. It is currently designated as Endangered in its entire range, except Florida and Alabama. It was removed from the endangered list in Florida and Alabama on February 4, 1985.

What is Gaillard Island? In 1979, the Army Corps of Engineers elected to dredge a channel to the Theodore Industrial Park and pile the displaced sediment into a man-made avian preserve near the mouth of Dog River, on the west side of Mobile Bay. The planners promised it would attract brown pelicans, who had all but disappeared from the area, to nest. Thirty thousand pelicans later, **Gaillard Island has become yet another success story of the Bay.** Sport fish are more plentiful in Mobile Bay, also - the fishing resources (speckled trout, flounder, redfish) are plentiful as well. If the sport fish are there, **the food chain must be healthy!** [The population of the pelicans, terns, laughing gulls, egrets, ibis and little blue and tricolored herons nesting on Gaillard Island is determined by **the food supply**, said Roger Clay, a wildlife biologist with the Alabama Division of Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries.]



Gaillard Island is just a 20-minute boat ride from downtown Mobile, but folks taking a boat out into the bay shouldn't plan a stop at the 1,300-acre island, AKA Pelican Island. It's not something you can see on foot because it's against the law to access the island itself. The reason why is simple: it's gone to the birds. **Gaillard Island is home to 15 species of birds** including the formerly endangered brown pelican. **The island gets its name from a Mobile dentist who envisioned the island as a bird refuge,** but first, the island had to be created. The Army Corp. of Engineers dredges the Theodore ship channel every two years so that ships can navigate the shallow waters of Mobile Bay. The material dug from those dredgings ends up at Gaillard Island.