Successful Brown Pelican Mating Reported In State

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — Louisiana is helping its state bird to come back from near extinction at the hands of human progress.

Louisiana Wild Life and Fisheries Commission officials today announced the first successful nesting of brown pelicans in the state in more than a decade.

Nine Young

A restocking program begun in 1968 finally paid off when 13 nests containing 20 eggs survived the elements and nine young pelicans crawled out of the eggs.

Professional bird-watchers of the commission said the last successful nesting of brown pelicans in Louisiana was in 1951.

Human Takeover

Wild life officials blamed the decline of the brown pelican population on the human takeover of pelican nesting grounds and more recently, the ill effects of pesticide programs. Officials said studies over the past several years showed pelicans dying of high concentrations of such common pesticides as DDT and other chlorinated hydrocarbons.

The newly hatched pelicans and their proud parents are nested on Grand Terre Island, just off the Louisiana coast.

Louisiana, with the brown pelican its state bird, was forced to import populations of pelicans from Florida to get the regeneration process started.

Brown pelicans are now found in Louisiana, Florida and some areas of the Caribbean and Latin America.