

Researchers to tackle a pelican mystery

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Federal and state researchers say they will perform the first continent-wide census of the American white pelican population conducted in about 25 years.

The mission was announced following a Jamestown, N.D., meeting last week of federal and state wildlife experts and researchers from Minnesota's St. Cloud State University and Canada's University of Regina.

The summit was prompted by mass pullouts of white pelicans from Chase Lake National Wildlife Refuge north of Medina, N.D., the past two springs and summers, the Bismarck (N.D.) Tribune reported Thursday. The Chase Lake colony once was believed to be the largest in North America.

The white pelican census will be conducted next year.

White pelicans are one of North America's largest birds, with a length of about 5 feet and a nearly 10-foot wing span.

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