

Brown

Pelicans

Return to

Calhoun

County

Tim McFarland

birds,  
including  
brown  
pelicans,  
lay their  
eggs on the  
beach or in  
small  
shrubbery  
only one or  
two feet  
above

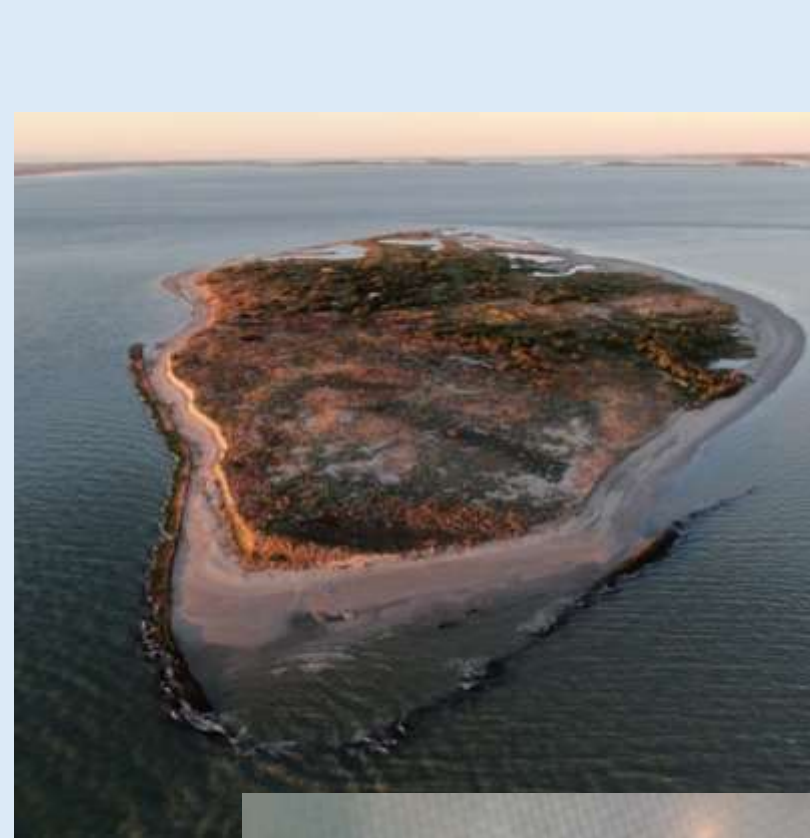


The eggs  
are at  
high risk  
of damage  
or  
destruction  
from  
heat,  
other  
birds

In 1962, the Port Lavaca Ship Channel was dredged. Some of the spoil was used to build an island in Matagorda Bay.

There were no predators, so soon thousands of shore birds safely raised their young.

Fishermen in the area, called it Bird Island



## Brown Pelican

By 1969 brown pelicans were almost extinct, down to 10 nesting pairs.

There were no brown pelicans in Calhoun





By the late 1960's  
it was found that a  
chemical that was  
being widely used to  
kill insects,  
including mosquitos,  
was causing the  
severe decline in  
some bird  
populations,  
including



The shells of the  
eggs were so thin  
that the eggs  
cracked before the  
chick was full

# Chester Smith



Audubon Texas  
manages the  
rookery islands  
in the state of  
Texas. In 1970,  
they asked a Port  
O' Connor  
resident, Chester  
Smith to be the  
first manager, or

Mr. Smith worked to make the island home for more birds. He built low structures for more birds to roost.

Then he built a fenced chicken coop.

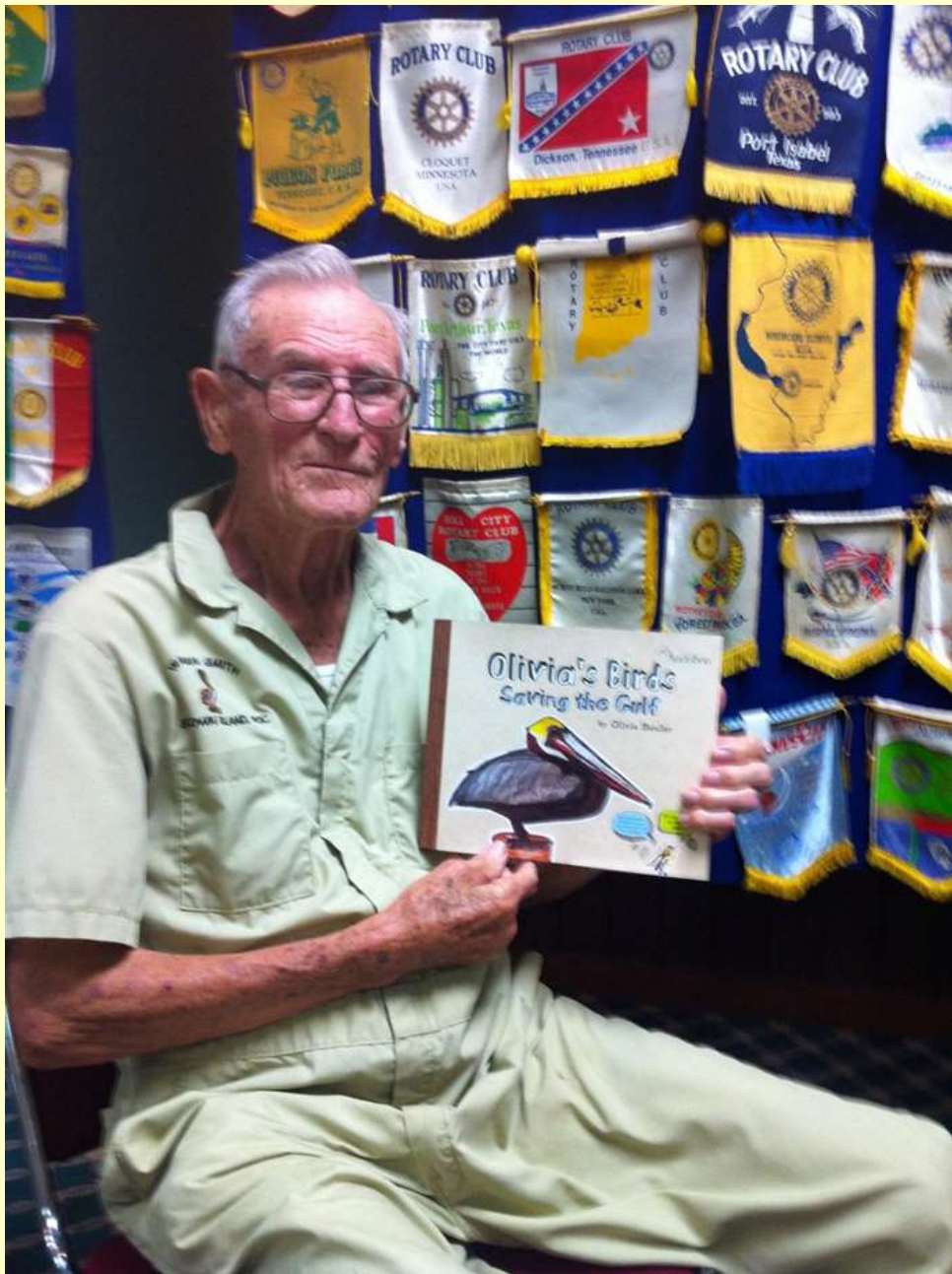




Chester went to the Corpus area where there were still a few brown pelicans. He brought back a pair of chicks. He put them in the coop he had built on Sundown Island. Every morning, he went to the island and cast netted for bait and fed







Chester Smith  
loved educating  
people about the  
importance of  
rookery islands.  
He told the story  
of the return of  
brown pelicans to  
school children

Now Calhoun county is  
home to over 2,000  
brown pelicans.

Almost every brown  
pelican in Calhoun  
County is because of  
the concern and work  
of one man,  
Chester Smith.







**The island now is  
home  
to 19 species of  
birds  
and over 22,000  
birds.**

**The island has  
been renamed and**



# Chester Island

2024



Pelican Nest  
with eggs.





Audubon Texas still manages Chester Island. The Warden of Chester Island is Tim Wilkerson. His wife, Peggy, is also involved with protecting the island and the birds of Chester Island.

Chester Smith was her dad.

We all must work



Please take a  
copy of Audubon  
Texas'  
recommendations  
for protecting  
rookery beaches  
and islands.

