

Louisiana Flag Facts

The flag of Louisiana represents the U.S. state of Louisiana. It consists of a "pelican in her piety", the heraldic charge representing a mother pelican "in her nest feeding her young with her blood" on an azure field with state motto reworded to "Union Justice [and] Confidence." First adopted in 1912, it was last modified in 2010.



Prior to 1861, the state of Louisiana had no official flag, though a flag similar to the present one was often used unofficially.

In January 1861, after declaring secession from the United States but before the formation of the Confederate States of America, Louisiana unofficially used a flag based on the flag of France with seven stars on the blue stripe.

In February 1861, Louisiana officially adopted a flag with a single yellow star in a red canton, with thirteen red, white and blue stripes. This was used through the end of the American Civil War, though the Pelican flag and Flag of January 1861 remained in use unofficially.

The mother pelican's head and outspread wings covering the three pelican chicks nestled below her form a stylized fleur-de-lis, another emblem of similar significance often depicted in Louisiana. This symbol, emblematic of Christian charity (and of Catholicism), is also found on the state seal. During the 19th century it was traditional in Louisiana flags and the state seal for the pelican in her piety to have three drops of blood on her chest. In later years the tradition (on both the state flag and seal) had been haphazardly followed, which was noticed by an eighth-grader at Vandebilt Catholic High School in Houma, who brought this to the attention of his state legislator. In April 2006, the Louisiana State Legislature passed a law which specifies three drops of blood to be depicted on the pelican used in both the state's flag and seal. In November 2010, the current flag design was revealed at a state swearing-in ceremony; state officials said the current design "was required by" the 2006 law and featured a more detailed pelican than the previous design and removed the word "and" from the ribbon.