



The flag in use today originated from an 1800 design, but was officially adopted by the Louisiana State Legislature in 1912. It displays the state bird, the Eastern Brown Pelican, from the state seal, in white and gold, on a field of blue. The mother pelican is shown tearing flesh from her own breast to feed her three young. Louisiana's motto, "UNION, JUSTICE and CONFIDENCE" is printed in blue letters on a white and gold banner below the pelicans.

The pelican has been a symbol of Louisiana since the 1800's and, in fact, one of the state's nicknames is "The Pelican State." Early settlers in the area found pelicans to be generous and nurturing birds and it was believed that, when food was scarce, pelicans would tear at their breast with their beaks to feed some of their blood to their young.