

# Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act Grants Program

*New Jersey, Delaware, Argentina, Chile*

## Trinational Partnership Receives a \$222,653 Conservation Grant.

On May 3, 2004, as authorized under the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act (Act), Steve Williams, Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, acting on behalf of Secretary of the Interior Gale Norton, approved \$222,653 in funding for the Multinational Conservation of Red Knots Project in New Jersey's Cumberland, Cape May, and Salem Counties in Congressional District 2, and in Delaware's Kent, Sussex, and New Castle Counties. Project partners also will be carrying out activities in Argentina and Chile to complement and further advance the conservation goals of this trinational project. The Act is nonregulatory and calls for voluntary partnerships to develop initiatives in the United States, Latin America, and the Caribbean to conserve neotropical migratory birds and their habitats. Certain activities defined by the Act are eligible for funding, and partnerships must match grant requests 3:1. Contributions from U.S. federal partners do not qualify as match.

Red knots are long-distance migratory shorebirds, breeding in the Arctic and wintering in southern South America. Their population has declined an alarming 45 percent over the past 20 years. Project partners are contributing \$667,690 to advance conservation efforts on the breeding and wintering grounds. They include Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences, State of New Jersey-Endangered and Nongame Species Program, Fundación Inalafquen, Universidad Nacional de Patagonia Austral, Province of Tierra del Fuego, and Bahía Lomas Shorebird Expedition.

### In New Jersey and Delaware

The Delaware Bay is a Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network (WHSRN) Hemispheric Site and a prominent staging area for red knots en route to Arctic breeding grounds. The concurrent spawning of

horseshoe crab eggs at the bay offers them a key fuel source for the journey. However, egg abundance has been declining in recent years. Using 7-years-worth of data on horseshoe crabs and shorebirds, project partners will develop a model that quantifies the crab eggs needed to support red knots during their stopover,

considering an array of environmental and other variables. This project area spans the Northeastern and Mid-Atlantic Coastal Forests Ecoregions and is within Bird Conservation Region 30 (New England/Mid-Atlantic Coast).

### In Argentina

At San Antonio Oeste, a WHSRN International Site, partners will create a Nature Interpretation Center to serve as an environmental education and nature-guide training facility and as a control point for restricting beach access during critical shorebird-use times. Partners also will help develop a management plan for the site, which lies within the Argentine Monte Ecoregion.

At the 12-kilometer Río Gallegos Estuary Provincial Reserve, project partners likewise will create a Nature Interpretation Center to provide environmental education and nature-guide training programs, and to serve as a base for reserve guards. Partners will collect data necessary to develop a management plan for the area and to nominate it as a WHSRN site. This project area spans the Patagonian Grasslands and Patagonian Steppe Ecoregions.



*Delaware Bay in Cape May, New Jersey*

George Gentry/USFWS

### In Chile

Bahía Lomas hosts the hemisphere's largest population of wintering red knots. Since a lack of on-site facilities and appropriate access has hampered needed research and conservation actions in the area, project partners will create a modest research and education station. Using existing data from an intrepid research team, partners also will nominate Bahía Lomas as a WHSRN site. The project area is within the Magellanic Subpolar Forests Ecoregion.

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