



Photo by Barbara Keeler



Louisiana Red Knots

Project Status

Project Year: 2014-Present

Status: Ongoing

Category: Migratory Bird

Location: Grand Isle and Port Fourchon, Louisiana

Project Partners: Coastal Bend and Bays Estuary Program, U.S. Dept of the Interior, Fish & Wildlife Service, Louisiana Dept. of Wildlife & Fisheries Natural Heritage Program, and Audubon Louisiana

Background and Problem Addressed:

The Red Knot, federally listed as a threatened species, is a medium-sized shorebird about 9 to 11 inches in length. They migrate annually between its breeding grounds in the Canadian Arctic and several wintering regions, including the southeastern United States, the northwestern Gulf of Mexico, northern Brazil, and Tierra del Fuego at the southern tip of South Africa. Each year some red knots make one of the longest distance migrations known in the animal kingdom, traveling up to 19,000 miles annually. Red knots undertake long flights that may span thousands of miles without stopping during both northbound (spring) and southbound (fall) migrations, and thus, use key staging and stopover areas to rest and feed. The red knot occurs in Louisiana during spring and fall migrations and the winter months (generally September through May). However, there are few data from Louisiana to help explain the migratory patterns of the red knots wintering in and migrating through the northwestern Gulf of Mexico.

Current data indicate a complex pattern of migration and wintering movements of the red knot between the northwestern Gulf of Mexico and the Atlantic coast that is not yet fully understood.



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Project Description:

The project's objectives are to gather additional migration data on red knots in Louisiana, in coordination with similar efforts in Texas, in order to provide information needed to development recovery criteria and conservation strategies for the northwestern Gulf of Mexico region. Specifically, there are intentions to apply approximately 25 geolocators and individually marked leg bands to at least 25 red knots during the 2017 spring migration season. The study area will likely include coastal shorelines along Grand Isle, Elmer's Island, and the Caminada headland in Jefferson and Lafourche Parishes where beach access does not require travel by boat. With data that result from this banding effort, the Service will obtain better information to inform development of recovery plan criteria and the species conservation strategy for the northwestern Gulf of Mexico.

Capture of red knots with a canon net will be used in accordance with the CBBEP's research permit for banding red knots and applying geolocators. Up to 25 randomly selected captured birds will receive geolocators which will be applied using accepted methodology. As soon as all leg bands/flags have been applied and measurements are taken, the birds will be releases as quickly as possible back to the beach where they were captured.

Once geolocators are deployed on released birds, BTNEP and CBBEP will collect date transmitted from geolocators and data collected will be analyzed.

CCMP Action Items Addressed:

Protection of Habitat for Migratory and Resident Birds
(Ecological Management #15)



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