



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 Bays and Estuaries Program (CBBEP); U.S. Dept. of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service; Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Natural Heritage Program and Audubon Louisiana.

BACKGROUND AND PROBLEM ADDRESSED

The Red Knot is a medium-sized shorebird about the size of a robin found primarily in coastal habitats. The population of this coastal shorebird has experienced a steep decline since the 1980's. This species faces multiple challenges from climate change and habitat loss throughout its known range, including breeding, wintering and stopover habitats. In December of 2014, the *Rufa* Red Knot, a subspecies of the Red Knot was listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act. Red Knots migrate annually between their 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 America. Annually, some Red Knots make one of the longest distance migrations known in the animal kingdom, traveling up to 19,000 miles. 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. Larger numbers occur in Louisiana primarily during spring migration but birds are



also observed during fall migration and during winter months on the coast (generally September through March). Current data indicates a complex pattern of migration and wintering movements between the northwestern Gulf of Mexico and the Atlantic coast that is not yet fully understood.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This project's objectives are to gather additional migration data on Red Knots in Louisiana in coordination with similar efforts in Texas. Since 2015, over 100 Red Knots have been marked in Louisiana with unique alphanumeric flagged bands. Continued re-sighting efforts have begun to track these species' movements to better identify stopover sites, estimate their population and to discover how many survive from year to year. Specifically, 50 geolocators in addition to the unique alphanumeric flagged bands have been applied to Red Knots during the 2017 spring migration season. The study area includes 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. Resulting data from this banding effort will assist the U.S Fish and Wildlife Service in the development of recovery plan criteria and a species conservation strategy for the northwestern Gulf of Mexico.

Capture of Red Knots with a cannon net has been used in accordance with the CBBEP's research permit for banding Red Knots and applying geolocators. Fifty randomly selected captured birds received geolocators that were applied using accepted methodology. Once all leg bands/flags were applied and measurements taken, the birds were released as quickly as possible back to the beach where they were captured.

Future efforts will include retrieving the deployed geocator devices by recapturing these birds so that BTNEP and CBBEP may collect the data transmitted from geolocators and analyze it.

CCMP ACTION ITEMS ADDRESSED

EM = Ecological Management

EM-15: Protection and Enhancement of Native Biological Resources

