

SHOREBIRD SCIENCE

Field Plans for 2008



News from Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences, Shorebird Science Program
www.shorebirdresearch.org, www.arcticwings.org and www.shorebirdworld.org

Summer 2008



A rare sunny evening on the coast of the Arctic Ocean. © S. Brown

Arctic Refuge Coastal Shorebird Survey

This past summer we completed our second year of field surveys along the entire coast of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Our initial plan was to end the survey after two years, but we have found that bird numbers along the coast vary enormously among sites during the very short staging season. Preliminary data analysis has shown that different sites are important at different times, and we need additional work to understand which sites are the most important for staging birds. Because Manomet bases its conservation work on solid science, we need to be confident about which sites have the highest value for staging birds. We are planning a third year of field work to definitively establish the relative importance of the various river deltas. This year's work will include both the coastwide survey and also three fixed camps where we can track changing numbers of birds during the staging season. Taken together, the two types of data will help determine which areas must be protected to

ensure the survival of our arctic shorebirds as they begin their annual treks to southern wintering areas.

Teshkepuk Lake Special Area Survey

The Teshkepuk Lake Special Area is a critical portion of the National Petroleum Reserve — Alaska where oil exploration was formerly off limits due to exceptional wildlife habitat values, but which is now under pressure for development in the near future. Manomet completed the first survey ever conducted of the entire Special Area last spring, working closely with our partners at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. High priority species occurred throughout the area in impressive numbers. We are gearing up for our second year working in this area, with the goal of providing the first population estimates of high priority shorebirds in the region. This information will be critical for developing management plans as the Bureau of Land Management considers whether to allow oil drilling. This work will again be coordinated with Avian Influenza testing.



A polar bear surveys the shorebird crew in the Arctic Refuge. © B. Winn



Wetlands along the shore of Teshkepuk Lake teem with shorebirds. © S. Brown

Red-necked Phalarope Study Expanding

Manomet is helping to develop a new project to help determine where the Red-necked Phalaropes in the Bay of Fundy nest. Robin Hunnewell is continuing her work in the Bay on determining the size of the remaining population of Red-necked Phalaropes, and possible reasons for the precipitous decline the species has suffered in recent years. At the same time, pilot radio-telemetry studies in Alaska will help get us ready to identify the source of the birds

Big Plans for American Oystercatchers

Manomet is helping develop a new plan to protect American Oystercatchers along the entire Atlantic coast, and we are excited about the emerging opportunities for significant conservation activity. Stay tuned for more details on our plans!

For more information or to help support our work, please contact Stephen Brown at sbrown@manomet.org or 508-224-6521.