INTERNATIONAL SHOREBIRD SURVEY

Newsletter | Fall 2026

Help Shape the Next 50 Years of ISS

TAKE THE ISS QUESTIONNAIRE

Contributors to the **International Shorebird Survey (ISS)** have been counting shorebirds for more than 50 years. Now we want your help thinking about what comes next.

Some of our newest ISS contributors from the Yucatán. Photo: Esteban Velázquez Amador

Whether you've completed one ISS survey or thousands, we want to hear from you. **What do you love about ISS?** What makes it hard to participate? What could we do to make surveying easier, more useful, or more rewarding? What would make you more likely to keep participating, or encourage someone new to get involved?

This is your chance to help shape where ISS goes next.

We've put together a 10-15 minute questionnaire about your experience with ISS and what you would like to see in the future. Your answers will help us think about everything from training and resources to communication, technology, and how we support the people who make ISS possible.

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Check your tertials!

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International Shorebird Survey and the Caribbean Waterbird Census (CWC)

This year, we have been working with BirdsCaribbean to strengthen the connection between the International Shorebird Survey (ISS) and the Caribbean Waterbird Census (CWC). Both programs now use eBird Projects, which makes contributing to both remarkably simple: you can submit a single eBird checklist to both the CWC and ISS projects.

***One** Checklist*

***Two** eBird Projects*

Lisa Schibley, Manomet Conservation Sciences' North American Coordinator for ISS, had the chance to travel to Puerto Rico in February to join BirdsCaribbean's Shorebird and Waterbird Identification and Caribbean Waterbird Census (CWC) training workshop, where 27 conservationists from 10 Caribbean countries spent a week building their skills in bird identification, monitoring, and wetland conservation. Lisa introduced participants to the International Shorebird Survey and talked about how the data they collect through their CWC checklists can also contribute to ISS.

At the workshop, Lisa also showed CWC participants how to go back and add the ISS Project to CWC surveys they had already completed. One participant, Mirielle Villanueva, added an incredible 282 surveys from 2026 alone to ISS! You can read more about Mirielle and her monitoring work in the Contributor Highlight.

Participants in the BirdsCaribbean shorebird and waterbird workshop. *Photo: Lisa Sorenson*

Lisa Schibley introducing attendees to Manomet and ISS. *Photo: Lisa Sorenson*

Nia scanning for shorebirds at Jobos Bay Wetlands. *Photo: Lisa Sorenson*

We are grateful for how enthusiastically BirdsCaribbean has always embraced our monitoring partnership. This fall, they are encouraging CWC participants across the Caribbean to conduct at least three shorebird counts during migration and add each checklist to both the CWC and ISS eBird Projects. One count can contribute to two long-term monitoring programs, increasing the value of the work volunteers are already doing. We'll continue working with BirdsCaribbean to promote both programs and expand long-term shorebird monitoring throughout the Caribbean.

READ THE BIRDSCARIBBEAN STORY ->

Welcome ACACPY to the ISS family

We are excited to welcome the **Asociación para la Conservación de las Aves Costeras de la Península de Yucatán (ACACPY)** to the ISS family! The group has started monitoring three sites along the northern coast of **Yucatán: Chuburná, Progreso, and Sisal**. They completed their first surveys in early September with a great team of volunteers from Mérida and the local communities. With important shorebird resting sites in the region threatened by real estate development and other pressures, ACACPY plans to monitor these sites over the long term. As we have seen with other groups, ISS can be a great way to bring local communities together around shorebird monitoring and conservation, and we are excited to see that happening in the Yucatán.

ACACPY Shorebird Survey volunteers in the Yucutan.
Photo: Magali Diaz

Contributor Highlight: Mirielle Villanueva Feliciano in Puerto Rico

I am passionate about protecting birds and conserving their habitats. Upon learning about both the ISS and CWC projects, I committed to helping Manomet and BirdsCaribbean with eBird data from my birding trips and surveys. I always select both projects when starting a list because they go hand-in-hand and I have learned how important the data is for scientists and these organizations. I enjoy going out looking for shorebirds during migration season at beaches, wetlands, and dairy farms. If there are shorebirds, I'm there.

Where I live, Puerto Rico, their habitats are threatened, and my goal is to educate others on their importance and engage my community members so they can also contribute to data collection and become citizen scientists. - Mirielle

We are especially grateful to Mirielle Villanueva Feliciano for embracing ISS alongside her work with the Caribbean Waterbird Census. After learning at the Puerto Rico workshop that CWC surveys can also contribute to ISS, Mirielle went back and added the ISS eBird Project to her previous CWC checklists. In the process, she added an incredible 282 surveys from 2026 alone to ISS! Her efforts are a wonderful example of how CWC and ISS can work together, with a single survey contributing valuable data to both long-term monitoring programs. We are thrilled to have Mirielle in the ISS family!

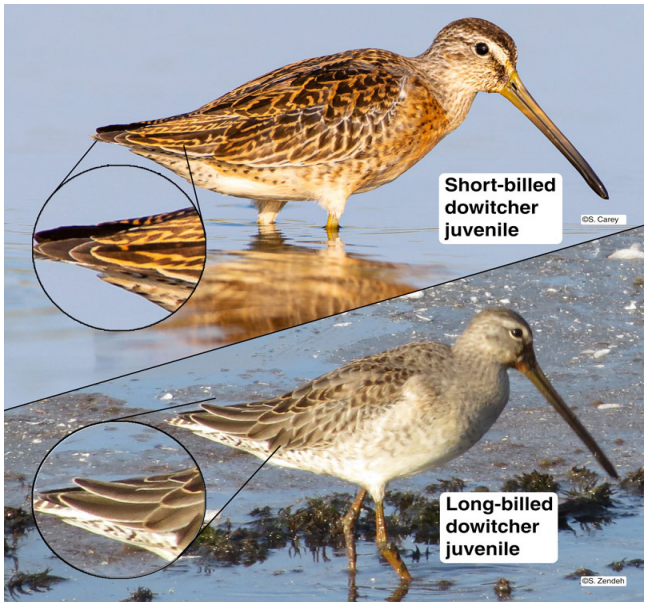
Left: Mirielle at the Reserva Natural Comunitaria Mabodamaca, Isabela, Puerto Rico. Right: Short-billed Dowitcher.
Photo: Mirielle Villanuava Feliciano

Dowitcher ID Tip brought to you from the New England Shorebird Guide

Don't let the name fool you! The New England Shorebird Guide, created by Soheil Zendeh and freely available through Bird Observer, is useful well beyond New England. Many of the same shorebirds we see here at Manomet HQ travel all the way to the southern tip of South America. So if you're in Argentina trying to tease out a Baird's from a White-rumped Sandpiper, this guide can help!

The guide covers 37 species and is designed for introductory and intermediate birders, with lots of photos, comparisons, and helpful ID tips. It's designed to be used on your phone in the field, but also works on a tablet or computer.

Here's a great example of the kind of ID help you'll find. Long-billed (LBDO) vs. Short-billed Dowitcher (SBDO) is one of the trickiest ID challenges in the Western Hemisphere. It doesn't help that SBDO has three subspecies, one of which can look even more like LBDO. We aren't going to dive into the whole ID challenge here, but check out this graphic Soheil Zendeh created showing one very useful field mark for juveniles: the different tertial patterns of Short-billed and Long-billed Dowitchers.



View the guide online

Contributor Highlight: Marcio Matto in Brazil

We are excited to highlight ISS volunteers Dr. Marcio Motta and Rafael dos Anjos, who are monitoring shorebirds in the Barra Velha Estuary on Ilhabela, São Paulo, Brazil, through SAVE Brasil. Marcio is a biologist and Director of VIVA Instituto Verde Azul, which has conducted weekly bird monitoring in the estuary since 2024.

The Barra Velha Estuary is an important area for resident and migratory waterbirds, with mangroves, salt marsh, sandy beaches, and extensive mudflats. Marcio describes participating in ISS as one of the most important citizen science activities he is involved in. As he says, "We continue seeking to learn more about these incredible birds through research and to protect this environment through awareness, education, and citizen science."

We are grateful to Marcio and Rafael for bringing ISS into their ongoing work to understand and protect this important coastal habitat.

Left: Black-necked Stilt (White-backed)
Photo: Rafael dos Anjos Costa. Right: Marcio and Rafael.
Photo: Simone Santos

ISS Site Information *65 sites and counting!*

Thank you to everyone who has completed an **ISS Site Information Form**. These forms document survey areas, habitat, disturbance, and management, strengthening the long-term value of ISS data.

Congratulations to **Shae Fea**, a Coastal Ecologist at the Trustees of Reservation from Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts, the winner of our ISS t-shirt giveaway! If you haven't completed a form for your site yet, please do. It takes 10–15 minutes and only needs to be completed once per site, unless conditions change significantly.

COMPLETE YOUR SITE INFORMATION FORM

Barra Velha Estuary. Photo: Marcio Motta

ISS at the South American Bird Fair

In September, Arne Lesterhuis, Manomet's Senior Shorebird Conservation Specialist and ISS Coordinator for Latin America, joined several Manomet colleagues at the South American Bird Fair in Paraguay. Held in a different country each year, the fair brings together birders and specialists from around the world for birding outings, talks, workshops, exhibits, and the exchange of ideas.
Arne presented "A Tribute to Common Birds: Because the Everyday Is Vital," highlighting the importance of paying attention to the birds we see regularly, not just the rarities. That idea is central to ISS: counting every shorebird on every survey helps us recognize changes in populations over time.

Throughout the fair, the Manomet team led talks and workshops, helped guide birding outings, and welcomed visitors to the Manomet booth. They also highlighted ISS as a way for birders to contribute their local observations to shorebird research and conservation across the Western Hemisphere.

Representing Manomet: Cindy Galeano, Nathalia Aguilar, Rob Clay, and Arne Lesterhuis.

MORE FROM ISS

Stay engaged, contribute, and explore what's new with ISS

ISS Resources

ISS Protocols

Everything you need to conduct an ISS count

View the protocols →

eBird Project Instructions

How to add a current or historic checklist to the eBird project

View Instructions →

Explore ISS Data

Explore survey locations and results and add ISS Site Information with the ISS Mapping Tool

manomet.org/iss-map →

Help Shape the Next 50 Years of ISS

THE ISS QUESTIONNAIRE

Bring ISS to your Bird Club

Are you part of a bird club or organization with potential ISS contributors? We would love to present on the International Shorebird Survey at your next meeting. Contact *lschibley@manomet.org* to schedule.

Let's grow the ISS community together!

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