

International Shorebird Survey

Newsletter November 2022

Highlight: Texas and Louisiana



Shorebirds migrating along the Midcontinental Flyway can travel up to 18,000 miles each year, between their wintering grounds in South America and their breeding grounds in the Arctic. For many of these species, the Gulf Coast region is their first stop in North America as they travel north in the spring and their last chance to fuel up before they cross the open ocean as they return south in the fall. Over five million shorebirds from more than 35 species rely on the beaches, wetlands, and working lands in the Gulf Coast region - from Texas to Alabama - to rest and refuel. Manomet's work in this area will identify threats to shorebirds and develop measures to alleviate pressure on their most valuable and sensitive ecosystems.

Louisiana

Historically, in Louisiana, these shorebirds used areas of coastal marshes, wet prairies, and inland wetlands to rest and forage, but these habitats are increasingly rare. Agricultural lands such as rice and crawfish farms can provide alternative habitat if shorebird-friendly practices are implemented. Today Manomet conservation biologist Karis Ritenour is working on the ground with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and other regional partners, landowners, and producers through the Working Lands for Wildlife Shorebirds of Louisiana

Wetlands program and has enrolled 27,000 acres where farmers have committed to manage water post-harvest to increase habitat for shorebirds. Going forward, Karis is planning to expand the program to include cattle ranchers and sod farmers which will benefit dry land species such as Upland Sandpipers and Buff-breasted Sandpipers.

Texas

In Texas, a team of Manomet scientists spent much of this past spring knee-deep (sometimes literally) in Whimbrel research, identifying key roosting and feeding areas and then capturing individuals and deploying GPS tags in partnership with Paula Cimprich, a graduate student at the University of Oklahoma. The real-time location information from the tags allowed the team to do same-day tracking of birds' movements and start answering some key questions. In what types of habitat are these birds feeding? How long do they stay at an individual feeding site? How large are their congregations? What other species are associated with them?

In addition to this field work, Texas Shorebird Biologist Sam Wolfe has been building relationships with conservation groups and land owners to establish and enhance protection of critical sites for shorebirds. Sam has identified five potential sites for Western



K. Ritenour

Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network (WHSRN) designation, conducted shorebird surveys at each, and spoke with landowners and land managers to better understand their history, challenges, and threats.

ISS is a key tool used by conservation planners to



understand and track changes in shorebirds populations and habitat use. ISS has a long history in both Texas and Louisiana, with early volunteers sending in nearly 200 surveys per year, but the coverage in this region as never been as comprehensive as that of the Atlantic Flyway. In order for analysis to be as rigorous in the Midcontinental Flyway, it is important to find new ISS contributors. In addition to their work to increase shorebird friendly habitat management, identify important shorebird stopover sites, and provide field support for other shorebird research projects in Texas and Louisiana, Karis and Sam are tasked with recruiting volunteers to increase coverage for ISS in these states. They have reached out to Master Naturalists and Audubon Chapters, birding festivals and shorebird workshops, scientific meetings, and local bird clubs, and have successfully found new contributors. Welcome and thank you if you are reading this newsletter as one of their new recruits!

From Nov. 9th to 13th, Sam (along with Lisa Schibley) will be representing ISS at the Rio Valley Grande Birding Festival, helping with shorebird field trips and sharing information about ISS and Manomet's shorebird work at the Manomet booth. If you happen to be in the area, please stop by!

State of the Birds 2022

Published by 33 leading science and conservation organizations and agencies, the 2022 U.S. State of the Birds report reveals that shorebirds along with many other families continue to face steep population declines.

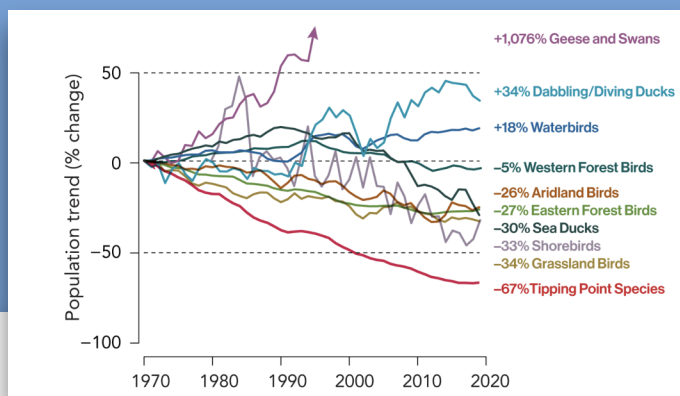
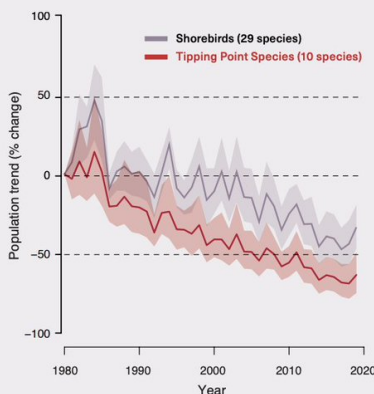


Status: Steep losses in the last three decades

Many shorebirds make epic long-distance migrations, flying thousands of miles between Arctic breeding grounds and South American wintering areas—and encountering threats throughout the Western Hemisphere. Shorebird populations are down significantly in the last 40 years. Threats include disturbance and loss of stopover habitat along coastal beaches and estuaries, unregulated hunting in the Caribbean and South America, and continued draining of shallow wetlands.

- One-third of shorebirds (10 species) are Tipping Point species with cumulative population losses exceeding 70% since 1980.
- Collaborative international shorebird conservation strategies have been completed in both the Atlantic and Pacific Flyways; a mid-continent shorebird conservation strategy is under development.

SHOREBIRDS Conservation Spanning the Hemispheres



The results for many of the shorebirds species used in this study comes directly from ISS.

Thank you for your counts!

To read the full report, including how we still can #BringBackBirds, click:

stateofthebirds.org/2022/

Volunteer Highlight:

Miguel Ansenuza, Argentina

My name is Miguel, and I am known as Miguel Ansenuza, because I come from the Ansenuza region of Córdoba, Argentina. I was born in 1963 in a rural area, to a family that was dedicated to dairy production. I have been a Veterinary Doctor for 35 years. My hobbies have always been connected to nature, but The Big Year movie in 2013 really caught my attention. With the encouragement of my wife, I bought some binoculars and a small camera and went out to find birds.

I devoted myself to birdwatching in my spare time, gradually at first, just weekends and not too often. Before too long it became an obsession, though not so much that I lost the true objective of birding, to delight in birds and nature and friends, and to come to understand how biodiversity is all interrelated. Visiting the beach and enjoying the birds fills my senses, calms my mind and my existence, and fills me with happiness.



I remember my first encounter with the shorebirds at Mar de Ansenuza (also known as Laguna de Mar Chiquita - the largest saline lake in South America at 500 thousand hectares), in November of 2013. We walked the beach with a group of friends, all of us newly started as birders. We found flamingos, a group of thousands, their size and color attracting our attention. As we approached, we noticed a large flock of shorebirds next to the flamingos, delighting us by forming clouds with movements that drew figures in the air.

Once at home, we processed photos and researched. We found that there were several species present, that their plumage was quite similar, but there were characteristics in their bills and legs that differentiated



them. We learned that they had come from great distances and that at the end of the summer they would return to these places once again. It was these two ideas that attracted me and I returned to visit them regularly. Reflecting on the birds, their travels, their customs, their habits and their declining population drove my fascination.

For me this is what a day of shorebirding looks like: I arrive at the coast with sunrise and determine the best place to situate myself, a good distance from the beach, aiming to not disturb the birds and trying to be a natural part of their environment, so I can enjoy their normal life, see how they feed, how they take care of their feathers, how they interact with each other, and see how they play as they fight for feeding spaces. They always surprise me seeing them free, how they have fun, how they enjoy each day, how they are adapted to live and survive. Generally we are two or three friends sitting enjoying the show of nature. We spend the day, eating, drinking maté, enjoying simple things. At sunset, we lift the chairs and other items and return to the vehicles planning where we will go the next weekend.



My group of birdwatchers belong to Aves Argentinas. I always shared my observations through eBird and after participating in workshops about shorebirds in 2016 I began sharing my lists with ISS, thus sharing my observations with people dedicated especially to caring for and studying these birds. I also met Rob Clay executive director of WHSRN, with whom I participated in the phalarope census. He taught me to differentiate the Ansenzuza shorebirds in photographs.



Our group shares our knowledge about the birds, particularly about the flamingos and shorebirds that few people have knowledge about. We make known the great importance that Ansenzuza holds for this group of birds, how important it is to preserve the habitats unaltered, especially those of greatest importance such as the mouths of rivers.



From the ISS team:

Thank you Miguel for your story. We value your data and appreciate you taking the time to send your surveys to ISS on behalf of shorebird conservation.



It's a great time to try Digiscoping!



Benefits of Digiscoping

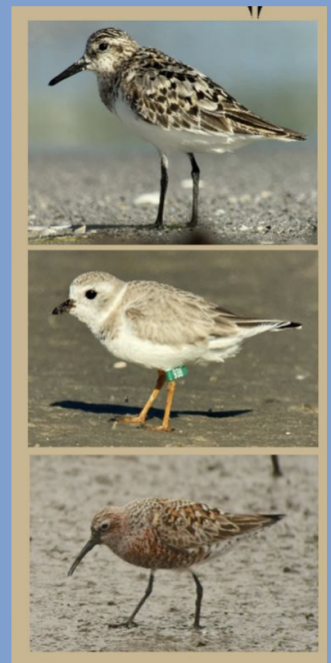
- Great images without needing to carry a camera
- Fantastic captures in low-light conditions
- Your tripod helps eliminate shake on a windy beach
- Perfect tool for documenting a rarity or confusing bird, determining flock size and composition, and capturing flag codes
- Focal lengths in excess of a 3000 mm camera lens

Tips and Tricks

- An adapter like Phone Skope makes centering your birds a snap and eliminates light leaks
- Use your phone camera zoom to obtain a brighter image with more detail
- Take videos with your phone to capture the full experience

Discounts are available!

- Reach out to **Kowa** at jeff.bouton@kowa.com for the current discount available to ISS contributors
- Use the code ISS22 for 30% off at checkout on phoneskope.com





Wader Conservation World Watch

5th & 6th November 2022



- Go out and see waders wherever you are in the world
- Share what you have seen, where and with whom

by either



- Sharing your eBird checklist with the WaderQuestTeam account

or



- Sending an email to wcww@waderquest.net

STAND UP FOR WADER CONSERVATION AND SAY:

I CARE!

REMEMBER

CARING IS THE FIRST STEP TOWARDS CONSERVATION



THE NATURAL HOME FOR WADER LOVERS
WADERS NEED LOVE TOO
www.waderquest.net

An Invitation to Participate in #WCWW9

These species have never been reported for WCWW. Do you have them at your ISS site? Be the first to record them!

- Diademed Sandpiper-Plover
- Andean Avocet
- Puna Plover
- Noble Snipe
- Fuegian Snipe
- Andean Snipe
- Imperial Snipe
- Rufous-bellied Seedsnipe
- White-bellied Seedsnipe
- Gray-breasted Seedsnipe

Did you know that in much of the world shorebirds are called Waders? Since 2012 waderquest.net has been an advocate for waders and shorebirds across the globe, launching Wader Conservation World Watch #WCWW9 to highlight shorebirds and the problems they are facing and to celebrate the people involved in their conservation.

We invite our ISS contributors to join the celebration. Wader Quest asks all shorebird enthusiasts to find shorebirds on the first weekend in November. Conduct your ISS count that weekend and also share your eBird checklist with "WaderQuestTeam" or send what you saw, where, and with whom, plus fun photos of birds or birders in action to wcww@waderquest.net. Thank you!

There is always more to explore

Explore all ISS data at manomet.org/iss-map

More about ISS at

manomet.org/project/international-shorebird-survey/

Join the Facebook Page

facebook.com/InternationalShorebirdSurvey

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Are YOU an ISS contributor AND a photographer? We'd love to feature your favorite shorebird photo in our next newsletter. Reach out to us!