

**INTERNATIONAL SHOREBIRD SURVEYS AND PROGRAM FOR REGIONAL AND
INTERNATIONAL SHOREBIRD MONITORING
MANOMET CENTER FOR CONSERVATION SCIENCES
BOX 1770, MANOMET, MA 02345 USA
sschmidt@manomet.org**

This is our request for help with the International Shorebird Surveys (ISS) and the Program for Regional and International Shorebird Monitoring (PRISM). We'd be delighted if you could help us during the spring or autumn migration, and best of all, both! If your site is a good shorebird area in one, but not the other season, we'd be very keen to know. The best way is to give us counts for both seasons, but if you can't do that, a simple statement would be much better than nothing.

The following guidelines are designed to assist you as an ISS/PRISM cooperator, and to encourage basic consistency between surveys, for purposes of analysis and reference. We have tried to keep them to a minimum, in order that they don't interfere with your shorebirding. If you feel they are too restrictive, or inappropriate to your area, or for some reason cannot be met, please contribute whatever information you can, and let us judge whether or not we can use it. Also remember that we are not just interested in high counts; low counts tell part of the story too, and are important factors when looking for changes in the use of an area.

We hope you can join us. If you have questions about the enclosed materials, please don't hesitate to contact us!

To sign up as an ISS Cooperator for one of our PRISM sites please follow these steps:

- 1) Review our Site List and choose an available site you will be able to survey consistently. Read the site information and choose one of the survey options outlined below.
- 2) Download a Survey Form and Site Questionnaire. (If you can confidently identify adult from juvenile shorebirds, please use the Age Form for counts made between Aug 1 and Oct 31.)
- 3) E-mail Stephanie Schmidt sschmidt@manomet.org with your contact info, selected site and any questions you have about the survey protocol.

Enclosed forms:

Site List (Northeast)
ISS Form
ISS Site Questionnaire
ISS Age Form

SURVEY FREQUENCY AND TIMING

Option 1) (Preferred) Our request is for one count to be made each third of the month throughout the survey period, at ten day intervals, on or about the following dates:

<u>Spring</u>	<u>Fall</u>	<u>Winter</u> (Optional)
March 15	July 15	November 5
March 25	July 25	November 15
April 5	August 5	November 25
April 15	August 15	December 5
April 25	August 25	December 15
May 5	September 5	December 25
May 15	September 15	January 5
May 25	September 25	January 15
June 5	October 5	January 25
June 15	October 15	February 5
	October 25	February 15
		February 25
		March 5

(For those surveying in northern states, please begin your spring counts on April 1st if you can.)

Try to do your surveys on the recommended dates, or as close as possible +/- 3 days, but don't be discouraged if for some reason you can't. Less frequent counts are also welcome and much

better than none at all. In recognition of this, we have outlined the following less preferred options:

FALL MIGRATION

Option 2) Survey your site once in July between the 11th and 31st, twice in August, twice in September and twice in October. Counts should be done at least one week apart. If you'd like to continue your counts after October 31st, we'd be delighted.

Option 3) Survey your site three times between July 15th and October 15th. The first count should be between July 15th and August 15th, the second between August 16th and September 15th and the third between September 16th and October 15th. Counts should be done at least 14 days apart.

SPRING MIGRATION

Option 2) Survey your site twice in April, twice in May and once in June between the 1st and 10th of the month. Counts should be at least 1 week apart.

Option 3) Survey your site three times between April 1st and June 10th. The first count should be between April 1st and 23rd, the second between April 24th and May 16th and the third between May 17th and June 10th.

In general, the more counts made and the longer the record of years, the more valuable a census series becomes as a scientific record. A minimum of one count per month is much better than no survey at all, but we'd like to reiterate that the 10-day counts as described above provide the most useful record.

Continuation of counts in an established ISS/PRISM site by a new Cooperator

If you are covering a site formerly counted by someone else or temporarily substituting for another cooperator, please try to minimize the change in coverage by consulting with them about their routine. If changes are necessary, we would appreciate a description of the changes and a guess as to how this might affect the new counts.

CENSUS TIME AND LOCATION

If you are surveying a PRISM site, descriptions will contain information on census location and timing (site info at <http://www.manomet.org/science-applications/shorebird-recovery-project/iss-prism> - Note: this site is under construction so all information may not be currently available). At coastal sites, please try to count at times when the census will be most accurate. At some stations this will be at high tide when birds gather at resting areas, or at other sites it may be at lower tides when they are feeding. In any case, **please record the tide** as best you can, as follows: 1 = high; 2 = almost high, and rising; 3 = almost high, and falling; 4 = half tide, rising; 5 = half tide falling; 6 = almost low, rising; 7 = almost low, falling; 8 = low; 9 = not observed, not applicable, or observations made during more than one of these periods. Please also record the approximate time of your count.

At inland sites, please record the time, and in wetlands (including lakes, ponds, etc.) tell us whether you think the water levels were normal (N), High (H), or Low (L).

CENSUS ACCURACY

At best it is rather difficult to count a thousand small sandpipers milling about on a beach, and of course, we won't ask you to try. However, we would like to know if your tally is actually a count, an estimate made by a more or less methodical procedure, or an outright (albeit educated) guess. A systematically-made estimate is one where you actually have a chance to count one or more portions of a flock and then extrapolate the total number from the count(s). An educated guess ("guesstimate") is when you look at a flock and estimate the number of birds in it -- it's the method most of us use. If your tally is a count, please place an asterisk (*) next to it; if it is a figure extrapolated from a count, please place two asterisks(**) next to it, and if it is a "guesstimate," please circle it.

SPECIES IDENTIFICATION

We cannot always identify all of the shorebirds we see. Often, for example, it is not practical to look at a large flock and identify each of 5,000 Semipalmated Sandpipers. Most of us check a portion of the flock, and make our identification, brushing over the possibility that one or two Western Sandpipers may be present. For the International Shorebird Survey, please record as "identified" ONLY the birds that you HAVE identified. Thus, if you identify 100 Semipalmated

Sandpipers from among 5,000 peep, please record them as 100 Semipalmated Sandpipers and 4,900 peep. If you did not identify any of the sandpipers but presumed they were all Semis, please record them as 5,000 peep. If you are not sure whether a flock was comprised of Sanderlings or a mixture of Sanderlings and Sandpipers, please make a new row labeled "peep/Sanderling?" or even shorebird sp.?" In short, resist the temptation to present accuracy that does not exist!

REPORTS

We are excited to say that International Shorebird Survey (ISS) and ISS/PRISM focal site cooperators can now report their counts via the internet at [ISS eBIRD](http://ebird.org/content/iss/) (<http://ebird.org/content/iss/>)!

Traditional reports on paper or on electronic spreadsheets **will continue to be welcomed** from persons choosing that option.

eBird's goal is to maximize the utility and accessibility of the vast numbers of bird observations made each year by recreational and professional bird watchers. There are a number of advantages to reporting ISS and focal site counts through eBird. Key among these is saving a large amount of work at Manomet, still largely done by volunteers, including your (now retired) editor and project coordinator. So please do consider using eBird to report your ISS survey this year.

Our recent practice has been to key all data received on paper into an electronic database. This database then is checked for possible errors made during the data-entry, and finally is placed for inclusion in the Main ISS database. All this requires weeks of work each year. This work can be reduced by cooperators who report their shorebird counts directly via eBird in the future. Once submitted and approved, ISS eBird counts will be added directly to the 30 years of existing ISS data, and will be available through eBird (and the Avian Knowledge Network) to anyone desiring use of ISS and focal site data in the future.

To report your counts through eBird first enable your web browser. Then go to [ISS eBIRD](http://ebird.org/content/iss/). **Please note that data entered through this site will be fully integrated with your personal eBird account.** If you use eBird to track your personal life list and your daily birding outings, then fear not, your ISS surveys will appear in your personal account as well.

One very important note: 1a. If this is your first ever visit to eBird you will need to log in and obtain a user identification. This is easy to do – start by clicking “**Register as a new user**” and follow the succeeding instructions. Please be sure to include your name as well as email address, in case we need to contact you. Then continue with step 2 below.

1b. If you are a prior user of eBird you can use your existing username and password to login on the ISS eBird page. Contact Marshall Iloff at, mji26@cornell.edu if you need help locating your eBird username and password.

Please use the [ISS eBIRD](http://ebird.org/content/iss/) entry point for all ISS reports instead of the traditional eBird entry points for reports other than ISS. Why use ISS eBird instead of the ‘regular’ eBird (www.ebird.org) for ISS reports? In the ISS we request and we ASSUME that all shorebird species have been counted. We make this assumption even if you have stated that some bird species (other than shorebirds) were not reported. Because all shorebird species are recorded in the ISS, we can make DIRECT comparisons between species, an important conservation tool. In contrast, reports in the ‘regular’ section of eBird can be made without including all of the shorebird species seen. In short, reporting through [ISS eBIRD](http://ebird.org/content/iss/) increases the conservation power of your counts and is the way that your eBird observations will become part of the **ISS Database**. On the other hand, please do not use the ISS entry point for your observations that were not made at your ISS location. Instead, use the traditional eBird entry point ([eBird](http://ebird.org)) for non-ISS observations. If you have questions about this please contact Marshall Iloff or Brian Harrington (Email addresses below).

2. Once you are logged in to [ISS eBIRD](http://ebird.org/content/iss/), you will need to identify the location you are reporting. IF THIS IS YOUR FIRST ISS REPORT via eBird, please select “**find it on a map**” as your starting point for finding the location. You will be presented with a Google Map showing red stickpins for eBird ‘hotspots, which will include ISS survey locations and ISS/PRISM focal sites as well as all other eBird hotspots. Zoom in to the area of your survey and click on the red stickpin to see the name of the hotspot. In some cases the location may be up to a mile away; please check surrounding stickpins to find your location (and let us know if it needs to be relocated). Click on the stickpin to select the location and press continue when found (In later visits you can use the drop-down window under ‘My Locations’ to identify your location.)

2a. **IF YOUR LOCATION DOES NOT APPEAR ON THE MAP** (or the red stickpin needs to be moved) please contact Marshall Iloff of eBird (mji26@cornell.edu). Marshall will work with you to

add a 'hotspot' for the new ISS location. Once the location has been assigned, you can enter your counts, including ones you have made months or years earlier (but not ones you have previously reported to ISS... they will already be there, or are in the process of being added). As this is the first year, we expect some glitches with finding the ISS survey locations, so please do not hesitate to contact Marshall with any questions.

3. Once your reporting location is identified you will be asked whether all species of birds are being reported, or whether just select species are reported. We encourage reporting of all birds. But if you are reporting just the shorebird species, please answer "No" to this question.

4. After entering your counts press 'continue' and follow the continuing directions and guidelines.

5. When done, sign out.

[ISS eBIRD](#) you have opportunities to see various kinds of summaries of data that have been reported by you and others. To have a look at possibilities, click on the eBird tabs for "View and explore data", or on the tab for "My eBird". Try it – you'll like it. And consider using eBird for all your bird record keeping—the results are pooled with those of thousands of other birders to inform scientists and conservation planners.

IF YOU STILL HAVE QUESTIONS, please feel free to contact: **Stephanie Schmidt** sschmidt@manomet.org, **Brian Harrington** (bharrington@manomet.org) or **Marshall Iliiff** (mji26@cornell.edu).

If you choose not to use eBIRD, please return your reports to the ISS at Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences (P.O. Box 1770, Manomet, MA 02345) as soon after you finish your counts as is convenient. Persons who wish to continue cooperative censuses through the next migration period are encouraged to do so. Additional survey forms will be sent upon request.

Reports may also be submitted as e-mail attachments to iss@manomet.org. Due to occasional problems with our mail server, we ask that if you are submitting your forms by e-mail you also let us know when you have sent them with a separate e-mail to bharrington@manomet.org. Sending reports as electronic files (eg. spreadsheets) is fine too; if we have questions about format or software you used, we will get back to you.

If you are surveying an ISS/PRISM focal site in the Southeast (North Carolina to Florida)

Please consider submitting your results to an online database. A secure web site for direct data entry is available so that surveyors may enter their own results. To receive a database user ID and password, please contact John Stanton John_Stanton@fws.gov. For our records, we ask that if you are entering your own results, you also let us know when you have done so with a separate e-mail to Brian Harrington bharrington@manomet.org.

Alternatively, please return your reports to the ISS at Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences (P.O. Box 1770, Manomet, MA 02345) as soon after you finish your counts as is convenient. Persons who wish to continue cooperative censuses through the next migration period are encouraged to do so. Additional survey forms will be sent upon request.

ABOVE ALL,

Enjoy your shorebirding. We hope our requests add to your shorebirding enjoyment, or at least do not detract from it, but should it dampen your enthusiasm, for gosh sakes, don't bother with it. If you wish to send a note with some constructive criticism, or suggestions, please do so. This whole project is a cooperative effort... together we are all helping to gather information that ultimately will benefit shorebirds. Any help and suggestions are welcome!

Website links:

ISS/PRISM information and protocols - <http://www.manomet.org/science-applications/shorebird-recovery-project/iss-prism>

USGS Shorebird monitoring techniques manual -

<http://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/monmanual/techniques/shorebirdsnonbreedingsites.htm>

U.S. Shorebird Conservation Plan - <http://www.fws.gov/shorebirdplan/>