

PRESS RELEASE



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WILDLIFE BEACH RESTORATION GROUPS APPLAUD ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT DESIGNATION FOR RED KNOT

Shorebird Now Federally Protected as Threatened Species under Endangered Species Act

Wildlife conservation organizations leading the efforts to restore New Jersey's Delaware Bay beaches for at-risk shorebirds today applauded the [U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service](#) decision to designate the [Red Knot](#), a migratory shorebird, as "threatened" under the Endangered Species Act. A "threatened" designation means a species is at risk of becoming endangered throughout all or a significant portion of its range.

"This federal designation will make a big difference in strengthening the protections of this incredible shorebird," said David Wheeler, Executive Director for [Conserve Wildlife Foundation of New Jersey](#).

"Here in New Jersey, we are restoring the vital beach habitat that had been decimated by Hurricane Sandy, and this designation ensures the safeguards we are providing can be complemented along the East Coast," Wheeler added.

Since the 1980's, the Knot's population has fallen by about 75 percent in some key areas. Wildlife biologists believe the major threat to the Red Knot is the dramatic decline of horseshoe crab eggs, an essential food source at the most critical stop over during their 8,000 mile trip from southern wintering grounds to Arctic breeding territory. High-energy horseshoe crab eggs provide nourishment for Red Knots to refuel and continue their journey.

"This is an important and needed step in the conservation and recovery of the Red Knot. It is an essential step in preventing the extinction of this amazing long distance traveler," stated Tim Dillingham, Executive Director for [American Littoral Society](#).

The largest concentration of Red Knots is found in May in the Delaware Bayshore of New Jersey and Delaware, where the shorebirds stop to gorge themselves on the eggs of spawning horseshoe crabs. In just a few days, the birds nearly double their weight to prepare for the final leg of their long journey.

"The major decline of horseshoe crabs in Delaware Bay is one of the largest threats to the survival of the shorebird," explained Dr. Larry Niles, a biologist who leads the beach restoration efforts for Conserve Wildlife Foundation of New Jersey and American Littoral Society, and has studied Red Knots for three decades. "Agency groups have been working hard for the last two years, and will continue for the next two years going forward to rebuild the habitat damaged by Hurricane Sandy that the horseshoe crabs rely on. This work is integral to the recovery of the Red Knot and the shorebird's best hope for survival."

In the wake of Hurricane Sandy, American Littoral Society and Conserve Wildlife Foundation of New Jersey worked with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife and the New Jersey Recovery Fund to

remove 8,000 tons of debris and added 45,000 tons of sand to the beaches just before the annual spring arrival of the Red Knot in 2013.

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The Conserve Wildlife Foundation of New Jersey (CWF) is a private, non-profit organization dedicated to the protection and preservation of New Jersey's endangered and threatened wildlife and the habitats they depend on. CWF utilizes science, research, wildlife management, habitat restoration, education and volunteer stewardship to help conserve and protect a variety of at-risk species of wildlife in New Jersey, the most densely populated state in the nation. For more information on CWF, please visit www.ConserveWildlifeNJ.org.

The American Littoral Society (ALS) is a member-supported coastal conservation non-profit that promotes the study and conservation of marine life and habitat, protects the coast from harm and engages communities to do the same through work in education, advocacy, and conservation. Founded in 1961 on Sandy Hook, New Jersey, the American Littoral Society now has regional offices in throughout New Jersey, New York and Florida. Learn more at www.LittoralSociety.org.