

## U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service



## News Release

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### Red knot status assessment report available

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A final status assessment report on the red knot, a migratory bird designated last year as a candidate for Endangered Species Act protection, is now available according to Martin Miller, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's chief of endangered species in the Northeast Region. The report is a comprehensive review of threats to the red knot throughout the Western Hemisphere.

The status assessment report is available at <http://www.fws.gov/northeast/redknot/> or individuals may contact the Service's New Jersey Field Office for a CD: phone 609-646-9310; mail New Jersey Field Office, 927 North Main St., Heritage Square, Building D, Pleasantville, N.J. 08232.

The Service initiated review of the red knot in 2004 through the internal candidate assessment process, according to Miller. The report was

prepared for the Service by the New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife in coordination with shorebird biologists from the United States, Canada, South America, Australia and the United Kingdom.

Based in part on information compiled for the review, Service biologists determined that the red knot warranted protection, but placing the bird on the endangered species list is precluded by higher priority listing actions for species at greater risk.

The rufa subspecies of red knot, a kind of sandpiper, winters near the tip of South America and begins its long journey north in mid-February. Large numbers of red knots arrive at Delaware Bay beginning in mid-May. By the time the birds arrive, they have depleted their fat reserves and must refuel before continuing their migration to their Arctic breeding grounds. The birds rely heavily on the eggs of horseshoe crabs to replenish their energy. At the end of May or the beginning of June, the birds depart the mid-Atlantic coast on the last leg of their journey, arriving in the Arctic in early to mid-June.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting and enhancing fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 95-million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System, which encompasses 545 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands and other special management areas. It also operates 69 national fish hatcheries, 64 fishery resources offices and 81 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, and helps foreign and Native American tribal governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Assistance program, which distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state fish and wildlife agencies.

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