



# Point Blue Publication Brief

## Understanding Habitat Needs and Threats to Shorebirds Across the Pacific Americas Flyway

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Shorebird migration is one of the most spectacular natural phenomena with many species regularly traversing thousands of miles between breeding and non-breeding sites, often crossing national and continental boundaries. In doing so, they are highly dependent on networks of coastal and interior wetlands for resting and refueling.

To aid in effective shorebird conservation, standardized data on their abundance and threats are needed from multiple sites representing a gradient of conditions across their full ranges.

We designed the Migratory Shorebird Project, now implemented in 13 countries along the Pacific Coast of the Americas, to characterize trends in shorebird abundance, to understand which non-breeding habitats and threats most influence their populations, and to increase capacity for integrated research, monitoring, and conservation across the flyway.

With over 40 partner organizations, we counted birds

annually at 84 critical wetland sites between Canada and Chile. In each of the first three annual surveys from 2013/14 to 2015/16, we counted ~1 million shorebirds of 44 species, including five species for which >20% of their population was recorded annually, and nine additional species with >5% recorded. Results highlighted new areas of importance for shorebirds including Delta del Rio Estero Real in Nicaragua which supports 20% of the population of Wilson's Plovers.

Shorebird abundance increased with the area of intertidal mudflats, beaches, and salt and shrimp production. Survey units with a mix of bare ground and flooding had the highest abundance of shorebirds. As for threats, we found that shorebird abundance was higher in places with high abundance of their predator, Peregrine Falcons, which highlights that predators will predictably follow their prey.

The Migratory Shorebird Project provides essential baseline data and a collaborative international partner-driven network that is

increasing knowledge of the factors affecting shorebirds across the Pacific Coast of the Americas. It is also identifying what conservation actions will provide the most benefit and where they should be implemented.

### Main Points

The Migratory Shorebird Project implements standardized surveys at 84 wetland sites in 13 countries along the Pacific Coast of the Americas to assess shorebird population trends and threats.

Shorebird abundance was greatest in intertidal mudflats, beaches, and shrimp and salt production ponds which have a mix of flooded and bare ground.

Project data supported the designation of the first Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network site in Nicaragua.

There are currently over 40 partner organizations providing an essential data foundation and partnership network for identifying the most important conservation actions for shorebirds.

Reiter, M. E., E. Palacios, D. Eusse-Gonzalez, R. Johnston González, P. Davidson, D. W. Bradley, R. Clay, K. M. Strum, J. Chu, B. A. Barbaree, C. M. Hickey, D. B. Lank, M. Drever, R. C. Ydenberg and R. Butler. 2020. [A monitoring framework for assessing threats to nonbreeding shorebirds on the Pacific Coast of the Americas](#). *Avian Conservation and Ecology* 15 (2):7.