

Atlantic Canada Shorebird Survey

History

The ACSS is a shorebird monitoring program that has generated data for more than 700 sites in the Maritime Provinces and Newfoundland and Labrador. It was started in 1974 by Guy Morisson (CWS biologist) as part of a wider effort to identify important shorebird areas in Canada and the United States with sister surveys the Ontario Shorebird Survey (OSS) and the International Shorebird Surveys (ISS).

Why is the ACSS important?

The data gathered by the ACSS is used to identify important sites for conservation and to monitor trends in migratory shorebird populations. This can lead to the assessment of threats to shorebird habitat and to the establishment of conservation measures.

Canada has a unique responsibility with respect to shorebirds. For many species, more than half of their breeding range occurs in Canada.

WHAT IS THE ACSS?

The Atlantic Canada Shorebird Survey was designed to evaluate the use of coastlines by migrating shorebirds, to identify habitats important to various species, to document areas of significant concentration and to monitor trends over time. The survey is coordinated by the Canadian Wildlife Service of Environment Canada and depends on the contributions of volunteers throughout Atlantic Canada.

SHOREBIRDS OF PEI

PEI is host to a wide variety of shorebirds each year, especially during fall migration. Our shorelines are dotted with important staging sites. Here are just a few of the shorebirds you can expect to see:

- **Sanderling**



- **Whimbrel**



- **Semipalmated Plover**



- **Ruddy Turnstone**



- **Semipalmated Sandpiper**



- **Greater Yellowlegs**



CONCERN

According to the 2012 Report on The State of Canada's Birds, "Shorebirds need urgent action. As a group, shorebird species have declined by almost half. Most shorebirds migrate very long distances and are being affected by loss and alteration of wetlands, estuaries, deltas and mudflats at all stages of their journey, from their breeding grounds in Canada to stopover sites and wintering grounds throughout the Western Hemisphere."



STAGING HABITAT

Staging areas are sites where shorebirds stop to re-fuel during their long migration. These sites are the critical link between northern breeding grounds and southern wintering grounds. They must have plentiful food and relatively low disturbance.



SHOREBIRDING HOTSPOTS ON PEI

Malpeque Bay - located along the north shore of west-central Prince Edward Island, bordering the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Endangered Red Knots are often seen at Malpeque Bay. Malpeque Bay is also a Ramsar site (a Wetland of International Importance).

Bedeque Bay - located along the southeastern shore of PEI. McCallum's Point, a cape that juts out northwest along the eastern shore of the Bay is an especially good vantage point from which to observe shorebirds.

Brackley & Covehead Marshes - these shallow and well protected bays offer good feeding sites at low tide. Good numbers of shorebirds can be observed here, or along the north side beaches, when weather has thrown significant amounts of seaweed onto the shore.

Tracadie Bay - this site provides excellent opportunities to view large numbers of shorebirds. Shorebirds can best be viewed by either walking the sandbar south from the beach access or by going directly to the harbor and setting up for a stationary view. Either way, good optics are a must as the extensive mudflats mean you may be viewing birds up to 800m away.

St. Peters Harbour - Located just south of the tip of Greenwich Sandspit in St Peters Bay and accessed via St Peters Harbour Rd. Ebb tide is the ideal time to move out onto the extensive flats as shorebirds congregate along the waters receding edge.

Rollo Bay Wildlife Management Area - this site may be accessed via Peter's Lane and at the end of this road you will overlook extensive salt marshes and vast mudflats which, in the fall, host large numbers of shorebirds and other species.

Cascumpec Bay - the Alberton harbor mudflats, located just off of the harbor provide another opportunity for migrating shorebirds to feed and rest.

How can you help?

- Become an ACSS volunteer.
- Learn more about the shorebirds of PEI, including how to identify species.
- Report large numbers of shorebirds even if you don't know what species they are.
- Keep dogs on a leash at the beach when shorebirds may be present.
- Take part in a local shoreline clean-up.
- Do not operate motorized vehicles on the beach.

To Learn More:

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