



SPONSOR: Sen. Sturgeon & Sen. Hansen & Rep. Griffith

DELAWARE STATE SENATE
150th GENERAL ASSEMBLY

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 44

DESIGNATING THE WEEK OF MAY 19, 2019, AS “MIGRATORY SHOREBIRD CONSERVATION WEEK” IN THE STATE OF DELAWARE.

1 WHEREAS, as many as a million individual shorebirds of 30 different species can be found along the Delaware
2 Bay during spring migration in May, including as much as half of the Western Hemisphere population of some species; and

3 WHEREAS, some of these shorebird species winter at the southern tip of South America and migrate north to
4 breed in the Canadian Arctic, stopping in Delaware on the way, and traveling about 20,000 miles per year; and

5 WHEREAS, species like the red knot and semipalmated sandpiper can make non-stop flights of 2,000 miles or
6 more from the coast of South America, arriving in Delaware Bay at very low weights; and

7 WHEREAS, once in Delaware, the exhausted birds gorge on horseshoe crab eggs along bayshore beaches,
8 doubling their body weight in about two weeks, allowing them to make another long flight to the Arctic tundra to breed.
9 The weight the birds put on here will help sustain them during the initial nesting period until food becomes available in the
10 Arctic; and

11 WHEREAS, on wingspans of only 20 inches, some red knots fly more than 9,300 miles from south to north every
12 spring and repeat the trip in reverse every autumn, making this bird one of the longest-distance migrants in the animal
13 kingdom. An exceptional individual red knot was tracked for 19 years and is estimated to have flown some 400,000 miles,
14 nearly as far as a round-trip from earth to the moon; and

15 WHEREAS, populations of many migratory shorebirds have suffered serious declines. Semipalmated sandpiper
16 populations have been declining since the 1970s at an estimated rate of 5% per year. In 2015, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife
17 Service listed the North American *rufa* subspecies of red knot as threatened under the Endangered Species Act; and

18 WHEREAS, Delaware’s migratory shorebird populations are threatened by numerous factors, including habitat
19 loss, climate change, and declines in horseshoe crab populations as a result of harvesting; and

20 WHEREAS, the Delaware Shorebird Project has been conducted by multiple partners since 1997 to study and
21 conserve migratory shorebirds, and has banded over 42,000 shorebirds on Delaware’s beaches; and

22 WHEREAS, the Delaware Bird-A-Thon, an annual fundraising project of the Delaware Ornithological Society,
23 has raised over \$450,000 since 2007 and worked with partners and the State to help to protect 1,914 acres of coastal habitat
24 for migratory shorebirds and other sensitive coastal species in Delaware; and

25 WHEREAS, conserving coastal habitats like beaches, tidal marshes, and adjacent uplands also benefits many other
26 declining species including waterfowl like the American black duck and breeding species such as saltmarsh and seaside
27 sparrows, piping plover, and black rail; and

28 WHEREAS, conservation of coastal habitats is also critical to fuel Delaware's ecotourism economy. According to
29 the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership, outdoor activities such as hunting, fishing, camping, cycling, and
30 wildlife viewing contribute nearly \$4 billion annually to the economy of the Delmarva Peninsula; and

31 WHEREAS, Delaware's horseshoe crab and migratory shorebird spectacle is a major source of visitors to the
32 Delaware Bayshore, with birders, photographers, researchers, and wildlife enthusiasts coming from around the U.S. and the
33 world to witness this globally unique phenomenon; and

34 NOW, THEREFORE:

35 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the 150th General Assembly of the State of Delaware, the House of
36 Representatives concurring therein, that the General Assembly designated the week of May 19, 2019, as "Migratory
37 Shorebird Conservation Week" in the State of Delaware.

SYNOPSIS

This Concurrent Resolution designates the week of May 19, 2019, as "Migratory Shorebird Conservation Week" in the State of Delaware.

Author: Senator Sturgeon