

# Red knot birds threatened by crab decline

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Virginia Tech and New Jersey scientists say a reduction in the number of red knot shorebirds is linked with a decline in Delaware Bay's horseshoe crabs.

The medium-sized red knots make a 20,000-mile round-trip each year from the southern tip of Argentina to the Arctic Circle -- one of the longest migrations of any bird.

And each year, during their migration, the birds stop at Delaware Bay to gorge on horseshoe crab eggs. The birds nearly double in body mass during the feeding to store energy to complete the migration.

The researchers have documented the relationship between reductions in the number of red knot birds and declines in horseshoe crabs due to the crabs' popularity as fishing bait.

The research is to be reported in *The Journal of Wildlife Management*.

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