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PRESS RELEASE

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Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences Awarded Major Grant to Conserve Threatened Red Knot Across the Hemisphere

WASHINGTON, D.C., June 15, 2010—The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) recently approved a \$314,713 grant to the Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences to support the long-term conservation, restoration and protection of *rufa* Red Knot populations throughout the Western Hemisphere.

The activities that are funded by the grant will be conducted by the Shorebird Recovery Project (SRP), a major initiative of Manomet. The NFWF funds will be matched by Manomet and other non-governmental organizations, for a total investment of more than \$668,899 for Red Knot conservation projects. The overarching vision and timeframe is to double the Red Knot population within 10 years from 30,000 to 60,000.

"This award supports innovative approaches to conserving the Red Knot, an endangered species and one of the longest-distance migrants in the animal kingdom," said Dr. Daniel Petit, Director of the NFWF Bird Conservation Initiative. "Working with partners across the hemisphere, implementing new methods for minimizing human threats and habitat disturbance, educating and engaging the public more effectively, and using improved metrics, we are very hopeful that we can make a difference in addressing the problems facing this species."

"This award greatly expands our capacity to conserve this key species and its habitats," said the Shorebird Recovery Project Director, Dr. Charles Duncan. "This species faces enormous challenges in its

recovery, and we are grateful for the support and partnerships that have made it possible to make a difference.”

The grant will support the following projects and activities:

South America—At the Bahía Lomas in southern Chile, the most important wintering site for Red Knots in the Hemisphere, the Shorebird Recovery Project will provide continued monitoring, habitat mapping, and assistance in the development of a Management Plan for this Ramsar/WHSRN site.

These activities, which will be under the responsibility of Diego Luna Quevedo, Manomet’s new Southern Cone Program Coordinator, will contribute to the implementation of Manomet’s Shorebird Recovery Project in Patagonia, developed by Manomet with support from the US Forest Service’s International Program, “Wings across the Americas.”

North America—An innovative approach to "structured decision-making" will be implemented to address the priority threats, primarily from habitat degradation and human disturbance at stopover and wintering sites. Often, state and federal agencies lack knowledge of the legal basis for protection. The Shorebird Recovery Project’s study will focus on two main objectives: 1) determine the impact of people and pets on roosting and foraging behavior of Red Knots and other shorebirds, and 2) determine the efficacy of experimental management on simultaneously minimizing impact both to knots *and* to recreational users. A framework for measuring the economic impact (whether positive or negative) of habitat disturbance will be developed.

Working at three widely-separated sites, the SRP team will provide an assessment of impacts of disturbance to knots and the array of applied management techniques available to ameliorate those impacts. SRP will provide participating managers with a methodology for:

- establishing stakeholder groups
- assisting local groups in developing management objectives suited to the site
- setting an experimental framework for conducting the study.

Manomet’s SRP will provide a coordinated “social marketing” campaign for communicating with relevant segments of the public. At each site, stakeholder groups will determine the best method to implement the study so as to take advantage of existing protections, volunteer efforts and cooperating agencies. Sites selected for the study are:

- Brigantine Beach / Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge, New Jersey
- Northeast Florida / Southeast Georgia
- Florida Gulf coast near Tampa Bay.

Hemispheric scale—SRP will continue to lead in the collection of recovery data and demographics, producing and distributing an annual scorecard of the status of *rufa* Red Knots in an easily understood format. This scorecard contains the most important long-term metrics for the species’ recovery. Data collection sites (from north to south) are the Mingan Archipelago of Quebec, Canada; the Delaware Bay, US; southern Brazil; Uruguay; Bahía Blanca, San Antonio Oeste, and Río Gallegos, Argentina; and two sites in Tierra del Fuego, one in Argentina and one in Chile.

To ensure necessary coordination and communication at the Hemispheric scale needed for Red Knots, SRP has formed the *Red Knot Working Group*, currently working with NFWF staff to develop a business plan to guide the Foundation's investment in recovering populations. SRP will continue to coordinate the working group's activities including an annual meeting and development of other appropriate tools, including a re-sighting network.

About the Red Knot: The Red Knot is a migratory shorebird about the size of a mourning dove. In breeding plumage (April to July) a bright salmon face and breast against a spangled black-and-white back give this shorebird an overall pinkish look from a distance. Each spring, Red Knots migrate from wintering areas as far south as Tierra del Fuego, at the southern tip of South America, to breeding grounds in the Canadian Arctic – an 18,000 mile round trip. Red Knots are one of our longest-distance migrants, spending over 6½ months of the year migrating back and forth between their wintering and breeding areas.

About the Shorebird Recovery Project: Manomet has played a leadership role in shorebird research and conservation for nearly 40 years. Its long-term commitment to understanding populations of shorebirds and the factors that affect them has revealed dramatic decreases for many species. Manomet's Shorebird Recovery Project strives to rebuild populations with a three-pronged approach: (1) building the science foundation, (2) advancing site-based conservation, and (3) using explicit success measures to evaluate and demonstrate progress. Read more about this initiative at www.manomet.org.

About Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences: As one of the nation's oldest non-profit environmental research organizations, **Manomet** is dedicated to conserving natural resources for both humans and wildlife. Through science and public engagement, Manomet works to integrate society's social, economic, and environmental values to create sustainable systems for present and future generations. Manomet's headquarters are in Plymouth, Massachusetts, but it also has offices in Maine, Vermont, Mexico, and Chile. Learn more about Manomet at www.manomet.org.