

Seven Municipalities Agree to Protect Shorebirds

Las Grutas [The Caves], Argentina.

"A thousand things separate us as human beings, but these small shorebirds unite us. For this, I celebrate the 'twinning' agreement between the mayors who represent the places that shorebirds travel to on their migratory route. We cannot save ourselves without saving these birds, and vice versa. This is a unique agreement in the world that will stand out because of the works that are going to result from this exchange of experiences."

With these moving words, Charles Duncan, Executive Director of the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network, began a ceremony held in the auditorium of the Las Grutas Automobile Club as part of a meeting between Daniel Lopez (President of the City Council [representing **San Antonio**]), and representatives of six other Argentine cities containing key sites for migrating shorebirds, especially the Red Knot (*Calidris canutus rufa*), now in danger of extinction.



Representatives from San Antonio, Marull, La Para, Balnearia, Miramar, Río Grande, and Río Gallegos declared their shared interest in protecting and preserving the Red Knot (*Calidris canutus*) and other migratory shorebirds.

The purpose of the meeting was to carry out the signing of an agreement that included a declaration of interest about this bird as a priority species for conservation, as well as an amendment called "Municipalities Proud of our Local Shorebirds" in which authorities expressed the value of hosting migratory shorebirds in their territories, agreeing to establish joint actions for the care and conservation of the habitat on which the birds rely.

The mayors in attendance were Daniel Constantine of Marull Municipality, Vicente Costamagna of Balnearia Municipality, Mindo Tito of La Para Municipality, and Adrian Walker of Miramar, all four representing the towns surrounding the **Rio Dulce y Laguna Mar Chiquita Provincial Multiple-use Reserve** (Cordoba); Luis Martín of Rio Grande Municipality, representing the **Tierra del Fuego Atlantic Coast Reserve** (Tierra del Fuego Province); and Alberto Roque of Rio Gallegos, representing the **Rio Gallegos Estuary** (Santa Cruz Province). Also attending from the nongovernmental conservation organization "Rare" were Wendy Paulson, President of the Board, and Brett Jenks, Chief Executive Officer.

Before signing the agreement, each of the mayors explained how his municipality is working to prevent the decline of the species, based on the local factors detected that are contributing to the problem. In the case of San Antonio Oeste, a significant threat is the use of ATVs (4-wheel All-terrain Vehicles), which disrupt the birds' feeding and resting areas. In Rio Grande, a main threat is pollution in the estuary of the river; in Rio Gallegos, it is the presence of garbage on the coast that creates a range of problems.