

Volunteer opportunities in the field (updated October 2015)

Project Puffin

Each summer about 30 volunteers work side by side with the Project Puffin research staff on all seven sanctuaries managed by NAS in the Gulf of Maine. Students, naturalists, aviculturists, avid birders, and biologists give their time and energy to assist their research.

Volunteer assignments are worked out on an individual basis in the early spring, prior to the start of the field season. Commitments range from two to twelve weeks. Volunteers assist in all aspects of our research including banding, band reading, burrow monitoring, feeding and productivity studies.

Depending on the field station assigned, volunteers will assist with field studies on puffins, terns and other species. Must be over 18 years old and available for a minimum of two weeks between June 4 and July 30, with exact dates to be negotiated depending on schedule openings. Volunteers contributing \$1500 or more will receive preference for available openings.

Individuals employed in aviculture or related fields are invited to participate to gain valuable field experience while increasing their knowledge of colonial seabirds and research techniques.

To apply: Application can be found at this website: <http://projectpuffin.audubon.org/volunteer-opportunities-10>

For more information contact rborzik@audubon.org.

The yearly window for submission of applications is January 1 through March 15.

Red knot banding

Red knots (*Calidris canutus*) are a small-medium sized shorebird. There are 6 subspecies of red knot. A majority of the population of *rufa* red knot winters in Tierra del Fuego (the southernmost point of South America) with its breeding grounds in the Canadian Arctic. During their migration, one of the most important stopover points are the beaches of the Delaware Bay. Here the birds have a 2-3 week period of time to refuel for the rest of their journey to their breeding grounds in the Arctic. The birds arrive in early-mid May and leave in early June. Their migration is timed precisely with the spawning of horseshoe crabs. Horseshoe crab eggs are an

energy rich, easily digestible food that birds can use to gain a lot of weight in a very short period of time. The decline in the population of horseshoe crabs over the last 30 years in the Delaware Bay has reduced the amount of eggs available for animals that depend upon them for survival. This project collects data from primarily red knots to determine the health of the population due to environmental impacts. Volunteers will help wildlife biologists and researchers collect biometric data.

Volunteers can help on both sides of the Delaware Bay:

For Delaware side please contact

Delaware Shorebird Project - deshorebirds@gmail.com

Please contact in **late March/ early April** for the upcoming field season

They recommend people volunteer for a minimum of three days so that they can ensure volunteers are exposed to all aspects of their monitoring work. They rent a field house in Slaughter Beach DE, and can provide food and housing options, either floor space or there is always room for a tent in the backyard, for volunteers while they are there.

As far as a list of items to bring with them here is an initial list:

Binoculars

Sun Screen

Insect Repellent

Rain Gear!

Water bottle

A small notebook and writing implement something that works well in damp conditions

Boots or old shoes that you don't mind getting wet

A backpack to carry things to the field

Enthusiastic attitudes!

For New Jersey side- please contact

Larissa Smith

Biologist/Volunteer Manager

Conserve Wildlife Foundation of NJ

2201 County Route 631

Woodbine, NJ 08270

609-628-2103

Direct: 609-628-040

Larissa.Smith@conservewildlifenj.org

Again, please contact in **late March/ early April** for the upcoming field season

They also recommend people volunteer for a minimum of three days so that they can ensure volunteers are exposed to all aspects of their monitoring work. There are several hotels and many campgrounds in the area around Reeds Beach, NJ.

In addition to Delaware's recommendations, bring whatever gear/food you would need to stay comfortable, fed and hydrated on a hot sunny day or a cold, wet, windy day out in the field for several hours.