May on the Bay

Every May, the Delaware Bay hosts the largest spawning population of horseshoe crabs on the Atlantic Coast and up to half a million shorebirds of various species descend on the Delaware Bay to restore energy reserves lost after long flights from the Southern Hemisphere.

But this Story has Changed.

Overharvesting of horseshoe crabs in the 1990s, has drastically reduced the number of eggs available for shorebirds.

By The Numbers:

- Each female horseshoe crab lays 80,000 eggs.
- 80% decline in shorebird population in 1990s.
- Shorebirds travel as much as 9,000 Miles.
- Shorebirds need to put on 2X their weight.
- 53% of rufa Red Knots left the Bay in good condition in 2014.

Take Action to Help Delaware Bay Shorebirds:

Visit www.CelebrateDEBay.org

---

Red knot population estimates were collected from aerial counts. No aerial counts were conducted during the years 1984, 1985, or 2009; the value for 2009 is a peak ground count. Values for 2012-2013 are derived from the baywide aerial count and simultaneous ground counts for areas including Mispillion Harbor, DE, and Egg Island, NJ.

---

The Players

- Red Knot
- Ruddy Turnstone
- Semipalmated Sandpiper
- Short-billed Dowitcher
- Sanderling

Photos by Jan van de Kam