

International Shorebird Survey

Newsletter August 2020

Volunteer Highlight: **Karina Avila** in Brazil



Shorebirds came into my life when I needed them most. In my career as an ornithologist I have always worked with endemic birds, but when it was time to change countries I was completely lost not knowing exactly what direction my career would take in my wonderful new country: Brazil. One day I decided to go for a walk on the beach and enjoy the sun and sea, when I saw two long-legged shorebirds and immediately realized that they were Lesser Yellowlegs (*Tringa flavipes*). They made me feel like I was home, as this same species appears year after year in my home city, Cd. Juárez, Chihuahua, Mexico. It was at that exact moment that I decided to dedicate myself to studying them and doing conservation to protect them. They travel thousands of miles and are foreigners just like me, and just as I was well received in Brazil, I wanted them to feel protected too.

As a biologist in Mexico, I had limited connection to shorebird conservation, collaborating only with the Wader Conservation World Watch surveys organized by Wader Quest, and I was not aware of the ISS project. But I am grateful to Juliana Bosi de Almeida from SAVE Brazil, who introduced me



to ISS, sent me instructions, and encouraged me to join as a volunteer.

I quickly familiarized myself with the protocols and decided to initiate a regular cycling routine to observe and count shorebirds in the municipality of Peruíbe-SP during the morning and learn more and more about their identification and behavior. During the surveys my four-year-old daughter always accompanied me and began to gain a huge interest in these birds. That is how I realized that one of the best ways to conserve shorebirds was through environmental education, especially with children and adolescents. So I gradually started a small project through Wader Quest Brasil and MoCAN (Environmental Protection of Iguape and Peruíbe), informing the community about the importance of protecting the habitats where these travelers decide to stop for food and rest. We want local people to appreciate and feel proud that, despite the birds having the opportunity to stop at any other beach, they decided to rest and spend the boreal winter on their beaches.

Through this I discovered that ISS is part of a whole community across continents protecting shorebirds, and it is highly gratifying to receive their support and affection. ISS made me reinforce the idea of studying these wonderful travelers to help them return safely to their home and above all to do citizen science and transmit that love and passion for shorebirds.

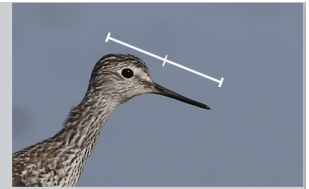


Enjoy some ID tips for **Karina's** Spark Shorebird



@lan Davies

Lesser Yellowlegs



Smaller - "delicate" and "refined"
Bill - about the same length as head, always all black
Flanks - plainer in breeding plumage
Voice - 1-2 soft tu's
Foraging - calmer, more deliberate



@lan Davies

Greater Yellowlegs



Larger - "stockier" and "bulkier"
Bill - longer than head and thicker, can be two-tone
Flanks - more extensive dark barring in breeding plumage
Voice - 3-4 strident tu-tu-tu's
Foraging - quick aggressive movements

ISS BY THE NUMBERS

DURING THE FIRST HALF OF 2020

222 CONTRIBUTORS

thank you for your data!



SITES

676

Beaches, grasslands, mudflats, wetlands, fields, saline ponds, mangroves, and more



**SHOREBIRDS
COUNTED**

500K

15 COUNTRIES

from Anchor Point, Alaska to Jacarandá, Tierra del Fuego, Argentina



Don't forget! Kowa is offering wholesale discounts enabling supporters of ISS to enjoy substantial savings from retail pricing! To benefit from the "Friends of ISS" program, please contact Jeff Bouton at jeff.bouton@kowa.com and request a quote for your optics of interest. For more information about Kowa Optics: <https://www.kowaoptic.com/about-us/>



Red Knot digiscoped with an iPhone 11 through Kowa PROMINAR TSN-883 spotting scope

Using your data to unravel shorebird migration

We are always looking for new ways to tell shorebird migration stories. On the right is a chart that compares migration patterns of different species. As the year progresses, we see species travel from South to North and back again and note differences. For example, it's easy to see that yellowlegs (*Tringa flavipes* and *melanoleuca*) are first to arrive in North America.

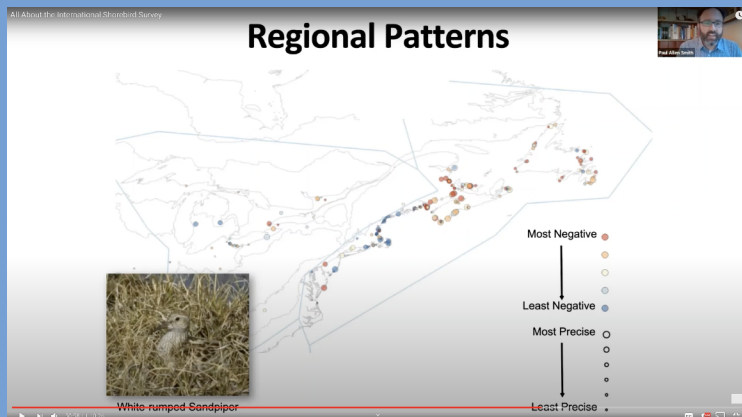
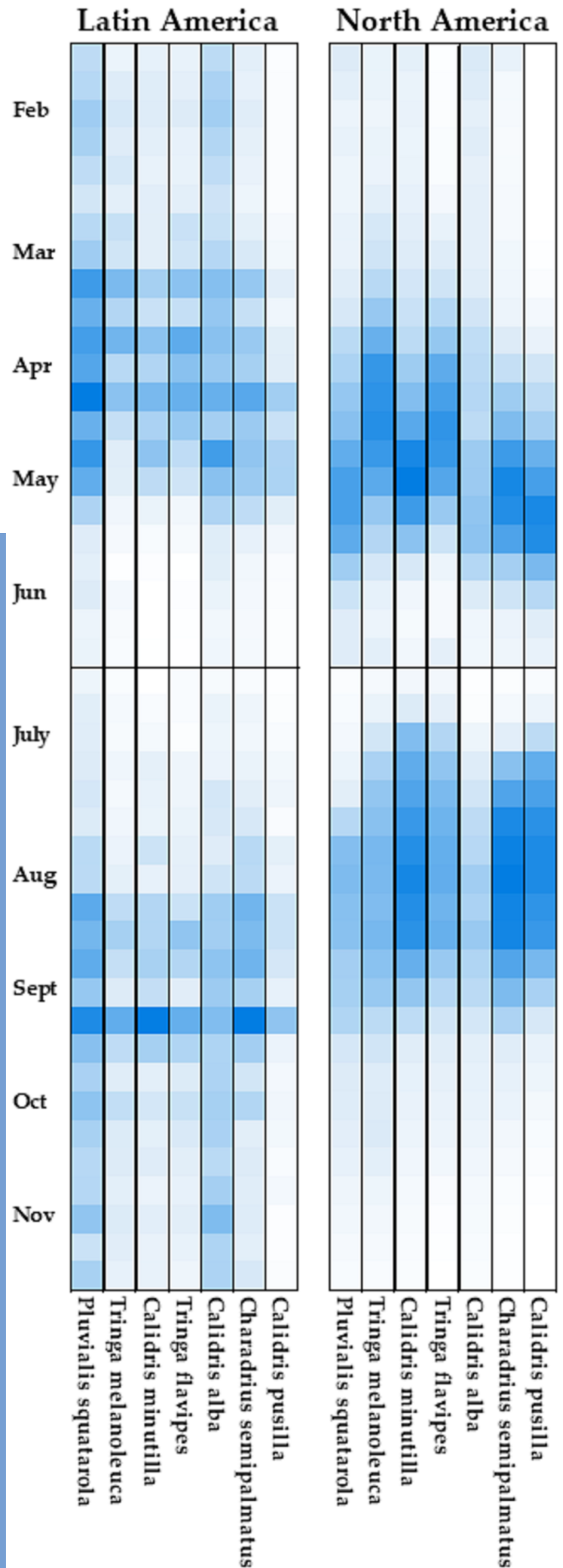
Also we note the shades from North America are a bit smoother. More data creates less noise. We take this as inspiration to engage even more shorebird enthusiasts from Latin America while still valuing our contributors from North America. More shorebird data is always better! Thank you!

Don't miss: "All about the ISS"



www.youtube.com/watch?v=aQldEhfmbL4

Follow the [Webinar](#) link to hear Brad, Arne, and Lisa talk ISS plus special appearances by Brian Harrington, founder of ISS and Manomet scientist emeritus, and Paul Smith, research scientist, Arctic Birds and Ecosystems, with the wildlife research division of Environment and Climate Change Canada and co-author of 3 Billion birds.



Site Highlight: **Kansas**

by Robert Penner, Avian Conservation Manager
The Nature Conservancy

When most folks think Kansas, they probably don't immediately think shorebirds. But at the heart of the Central Flyway, Kansas is a lynchpin of migration, acting as a key stopover on both the north- and south-bound routes. When conditions are favorable, it can be a migratory bird paradise, with tens of thousands of shorebirds stopping to rest and feed across the state from the Playa Lakes in the west to the large wetland complexes in the center to the tall grass prairie in the east. But the shorebirds face a complex landscape. Migrants passing through the interior of the U.S. are affected by unpredictable weather patterns, ephemeral wetlands conditions, and less dependable food supplies. Add to this threats such as invasive plants, fragmentation, energy development, and urban growth, and the need for careful monitoring becomes obvious.

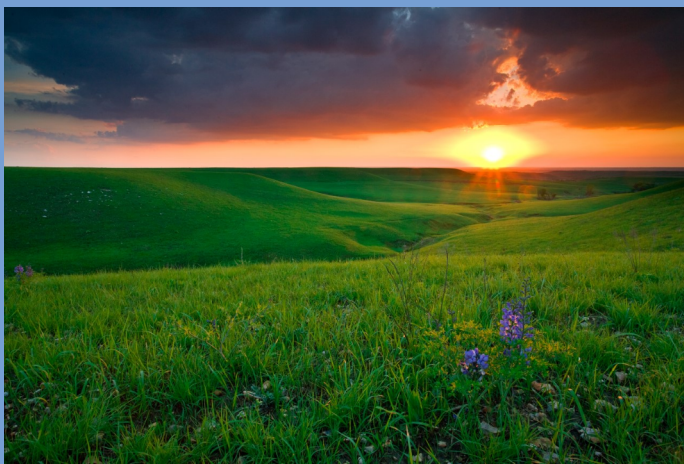
The midcontinent hosts impressive population slices of about a dozen shorebird species. GPS tracks seem to show nearly the entire population of Hudsonian Godwits passing through Kansas during spring migration. Significant portions of Baird's Sandpipers and Long-billed Dowitcher populations visit places like Cheyenne Bottoms and Quivira NWR, both WHSRN sites. And 50% of all



Buff-Breasted Sandpipers are hosted by the Flint Hills in the east, a tall grass prairie landscape that is part of Manomet's Coalitions for Shorebird Conservation.

Unfortunately, the lack of shorebird surveys currently being conducted in the state means a missed opportunity. At this point in time we only have three sites conducting ISS on a regular basis; Cheyenne Bottoms, Quivira NWR and Neosho Wildlife Area. Yet there are dozens of sites that have been identified as potentially important to shorebirds.

Because of the importance of Kansas to shorebirds, we are trying to increase the number of sites that are part of the International Shorebird Survey. This vital data is necessary to develop population trends, to target conservation efforts, to identify potential WHSRN sites, and to tell shorebird stories. Moreover, ISS in Kansas will be of major importance in the development of the Midcontinent Shorebird Conservation Initiative. With targeted recruitment and enthusiastic contributors, we have reason to be optimistic. As I write this, we have more than tripled the number of sites that will be surveyed and hope that more will be added in the coming months.



There is always more to explore

Use the ISS "Observation Type" on the eBird App or ebird.org

Explore your and all ISS data at manomet.org/iss-map

Review the protocols at manomet.org/project/international-shorebird-survey/

Join the Facebook Page
facebook.com/InternationalShorebirdSurvey

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