



Red Knot

(*Calidris canutus*)

Description: The red knot is a medium-sized, highly migratory shorebird approximately 9 inches long with a wingspan of about 20 inches. Some red knots fly more than 9,300 miles from south to north every spring and repeat the trip in reverse every autumn, making this bird one of the longest-distance migrants.



The red knot spends most of the year in flocks, sometimes with other species. As the knot heads north to breed in the tundra of the central Canadian Arctic, its plumage becomes rusty red and then returns to gray as they head south to wintering grounds.

For much of the year red knots feed on invertebrates, including small clams, mussels, snails and occasionally crustaceans, marine worms, and horseshoe crab eggs. At their breeding grounds, red knots rely on insects as their main food source.

Habitat: In Maine, red knots are found along sandy, gravel, or cobble beaches, tidal mudflats, salt marshes, and shallow coastal impoundments. At high tide they roost on intertidal ledges, islands, jetties, or on beaches in mixed flocks with other shorebirds. The wrack line is an important habitat feature for foraging and roosting.



Occurrence in Maine: Red knots nest in the high Canadian arctic and occur in Maine during their spring and fall migrations. They may be observed along the entire coast of Maine, but are consistently observed and in larger numbers in eastern Maine (Hancock and Washington Counties). Their wintering grounds are along the Atlantic and Gulf coastal areas from North Carolina to Texas, throughout the Caribbean, and from northern Brazil to the tip of South America.