



Karen Gautreaux © TNC

Beyond Our Borders

Conserving nature in Louisiana always has an impact beyond our borders. How can it be any other way when elements like water or species like birds are involved? This work wouldn't be possible without your continued support. It also benefits from our dedicated and talented staff, and guidance from our Board of Trustees.

On that note, allow me welcome our new Board leadership, effective July 1, 2024: Mary Lavigne of Shreveport, LA and Arden, NC (Chair), Adams Rodgers of Monroe (Vice-Chair), Scott Anderson of Alexandria (Secretary) and Christine Figley of Fort Worth, TX (Treasurer). I look forward to working with our new leaders over the next two years.

Karen Gautreaux, State Director

SUPPORT OUR WORK

Make a donation with the enclosed envelope or online at nature.org/lagiving



Levees like this around small towns in Louisiana are common and help mitigate flooding. © Rory Doyle

World Water Week

TNC introduces a new water management tool on an international stage

This year, our Nature Conservancy scientists accepted the unique honor of presenting to peers from around the world during World Water Week, the world's largest meeting dedicated to water issues, which is based in Stockholm, Sweden every summer. Led by Dr. Bryan Piazza, TNC's lead scientist in Louisiana and for the Mississippi River Basin Program, the presentation focuses on takeaways from using the Nature-Based Solutions Explorer. This online, publicly available decision-support tool, developed with RTI International, allows users to assess the capacity of various nature-based solutions to reduce flood risk, build resilience to changing weather and climate conditions, and secure freshwater for people and wildlife at local and watershed scales. Years in the making, the tool is helping local communities, industry leaders and government agencies who seek a user-friendly, cross-border approach to equitably managing and protecting water resources and mitigating flood risk in Louisiana, with the potential to expand across the southeastern United States.

Nature-Based Solutions Explorer

The Nature Conservancy and RTI International worked with representatives from the Village of Natchez, Natchitoches Parish and the Louisiana Watershed Initiative (LWI) to examine flooding issues plaguing socially vulnerable areas. With limited data on the cause of flooding outside of local observations, the partners

used the Nature-Based Solutions (NBS) Explorer and its integrated data to model four potential approaches to capturing runoff from large rain events to decrease the risk of localized flooding. Thanks to this plan and associated modeling, LWI approved funding for this project.



Delaina LeBlanc releases a banded red knot. © Justin LeClaire; Red knots feast on tiny mollusks and other nutrients that wash up along Louisiana shores. © Delaina LeBlanc

Red Knot Research

A 10-year study solidifies Louisiana’s role in supporting a threatened bird

Each year, birders from around the world descend upon Grand Isle, Louisiana to witness species crossing the Gulf of Mexico during spring migration. In addition to welcoming enthusiasts, the event attracts scientists who are studying the birds. Among them are David Newstead from the Coastal Bend Bays and Estuaries Program in Corpus Christi, Texas and Delaina LeBlanc with the Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program. For 10 years now, they have convened with partners from the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries and other organizations to learn more about red knots in the Western Gulf.

“These islands are tightly coupled for red knots. If one of the sites suffers, the knots would blink out regardless of the status of the other. It’s a fragile balance.”

David Newstead, Director, Coastal Bend Bays and Estuaries Program

According to Newstead, a large body of work existed for red knots migrating on the Atlantic Flyway. However, little was known about populations observed on Grand Isle and nearby Chandeleur and Elmer’s islands. Fast forward 10 years, and a decade of surveying, trapping, tagging and tracking has revealed more about Louisiana’s role in the red knot life cycle. Of particular interest is the

federally threatened rufa subspecies of Red Knot that migrates along an alternative route to the Atlantic Flyway.

The scientists have learned that many of these birds arrive from summer grounds in the Arctic and stay for winter rather than continuing farther south to Central and South America. Likely that is because the Louisiana barrier islands feature mild weather and a special recipe of tiny clams and other tasty nutrients that wash onto miles and miles of coastal flats during low tide. On the flip side, these critical feeding and nesting areas are also vulnerable to hurricanes and oil spills common in the Gulf of Mexico region.

Learn more at [nature.org/louisiana](https://www.nature.org/louisiana).

NATURE LOUISIANA

Red Knot Migration

During their bi-annual migrations, rufa red knots (*Calidris canutus rufa*) have to double their weight within only a few weeks to complete their journey. Depending on where they are in their life cycle, they might seek out a buffet of tiny bivalves, seeds and grasses, or insects. To meet these needs, The Nature Conservancy and other organizations work to conserve and restore tidal flats, saltmarshes, estuaries and bays, and other key habitat for red knots and other bird species.

Have you seen a red knot with a band around its leg? Our partners would love to hear about it! We invite you to upload photos and locations at bandedbirds.org.



Red knot © Jim Wright

“ Documenting the importance of our barrier islands to the survival of red knots enriches our body of knowledge about this part of Louisiana. We are grateful for these partnerships and are glad that the annual Migratory Bird Festival can bring awareness to this work that informs our efforts to secure healthy habitat for these and many other birds.

— **Jean Landry**, The Nature Conservancy’s Grand Isle program manager