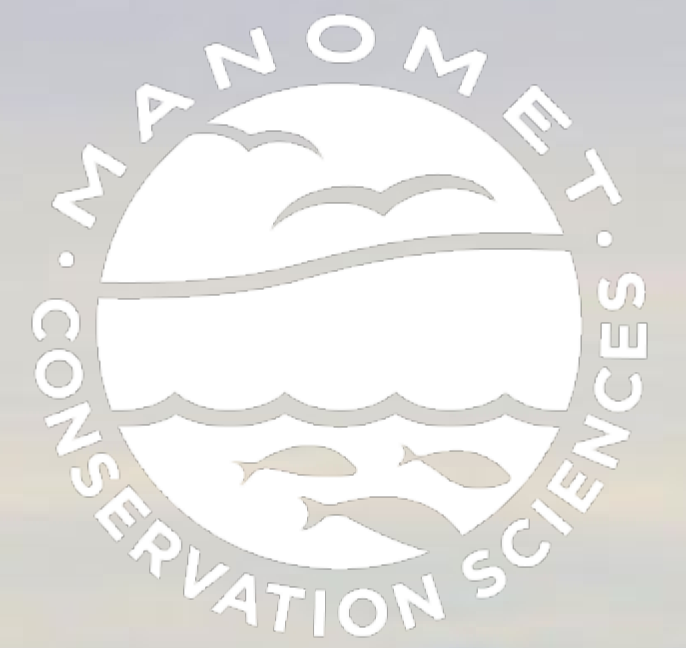


# The International Shorebird Survey: How Alaska Can Participate

Lisa Schibley, Manomet Conservation Sciences

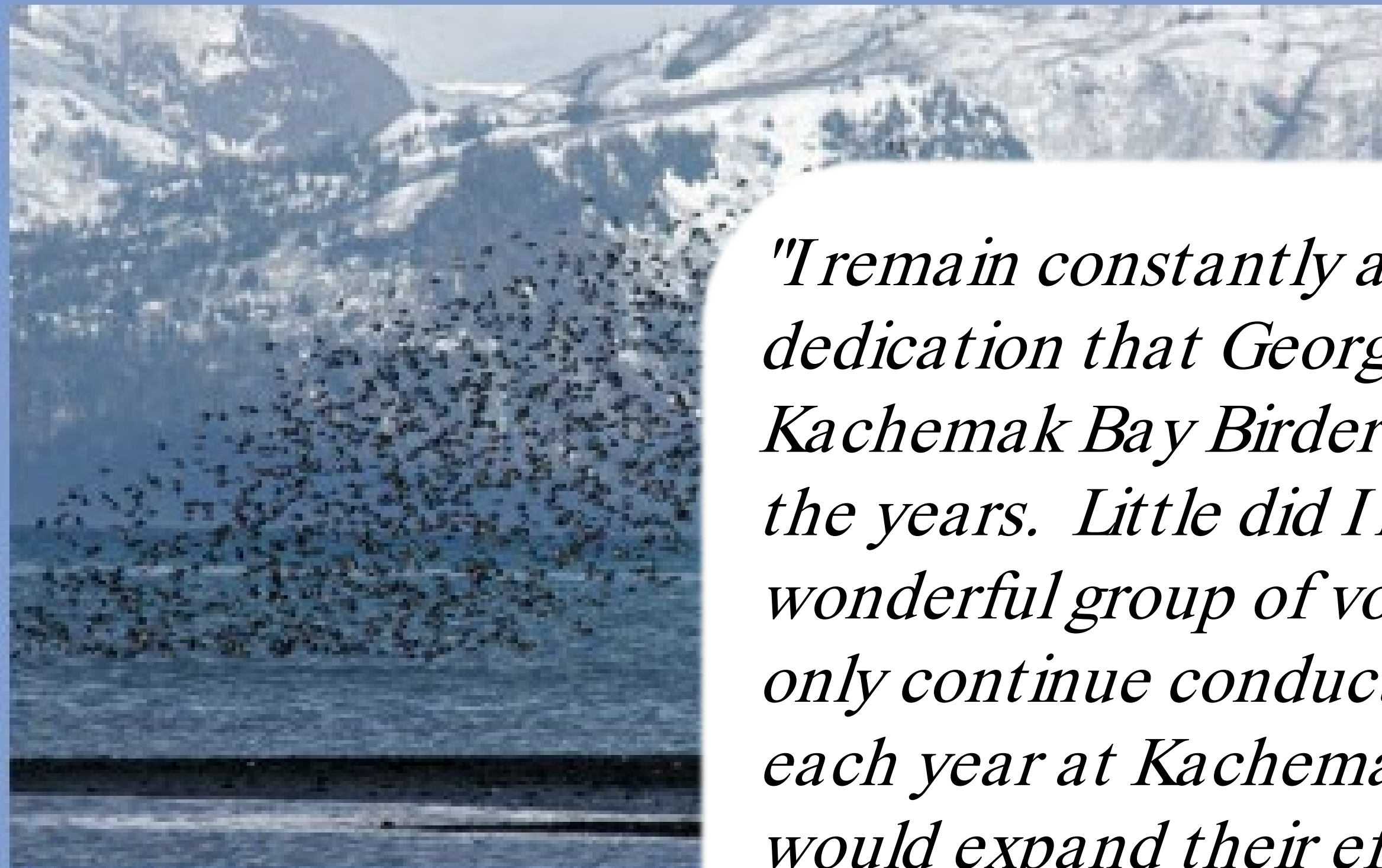


# International Shorebird Survey

- Established by Brian Harrington at Manomet in 1974
- Standardized, long-term shorebird migration monitoring network
- Repeated surveys at consistent sites
- Professional and volunteer participation across the Western Hemisphere
- Fills critical gaps between breeding and winter surveys
- >1,000 sites, ~500 contributors



# Site Highlight: Kachemak Bay, Alaska



Bounded by snow-capped mountains with impossibly dense spruce forest along the shoreline, Kachemak Bay is a wilderness on Kenai Peninsula, Alaska. Homer, at the end of the North Star system. Below dramatic peaks and jagged cliffs, a complex area of spits, tidal flats, sandy beaches, and rocky shores supports an abundance and diversity of wildlife including 36 species of shorebirds. These shorebirds have long been part of the Kachemak Bay

*"I remain constantly amazed by the dedication that George Matz and the Kachemak Bay Birders have exhibited over the years. Little did I know that this wonderful group of volunteers would not only continue conducting annual surveys each year at Kachemak Bay but that they would expand their effort both temporally and spatially. It remains one of the few long-term migratory shorebird sites monitored in Alaska."* - Dr. Richard

Lanctot, USFWS

In addition to contributing data to help shorebird scientists understand global trends for shorebird populations, Kachemak Bay Birders wanted to monitor the status of shorebirds in Kachemak Bay, particularly the status of the shorebird population. This monitoring project also helps birders by offering them a chance to see and enjoy shorebirds. Each year, a mix of both accomplished and novice birders and enthusiasts. And Kachemak Bay Birders have seen that the project has helped protect local shorebird habitats.

The project is an Annual Project that collects monitoring data which is used by the Alaska Shorebird Group.

Dr. Richard Lanctot, PhD, Shorebird Coordinator for the Alaska Region of the US Fish and Wildlife Service tells us, "I remain constantly amazed by the dedication that George Matz and the Kachemak Bay Birders have exhibited over the years. Little did I

Smith, P. A. et al. 2023. Accelerating declines of North America's shorebirds signal the need for urgent conservation action. *Ornithology* 125.



Rosenberg, K. V. et al. 2019. Decline of the North American Avifauna. *Science* 365(6461).

“Because most shorebirds breed too far north to be monitored by the BBS and winter well south of traditional coverage by CBC, we relied on migration counts from **International Shorebird Survey** for the most complete and reliable estimates of continental population trends for 20 shorebird species.” –Lead author, **Ken Rosenberg**, Applied Conservation Scientist at **Cornell** and **American Bird Conservancy**

**-37%**  
**SHOREBIRDS**



# International Shorebird Survey Protocol

1. Identify a site you can visit consistently
2. Visit at least 3 times per migration season (more is better!)

Cover the same area each visit

Spend roughly the same amount of time

Aim for similar tide conditions

3. Carefully count all shorebirds

Be conservative with identification —use “sp.” when uncertain

4. Submit via the ISS eBird project



# Expanding Migration Monitoring in Alaska

Who can be an ISS contributor?

Shorebird biologists already in the field

Add an ISS eBird checklist during existing site visits

Migratory Shorebird Project (MSP) volunteers

Extend monitoring into migration through ISS

Bird clubs, Audubon chapters, student groups

Adopt local migration sites

Individual shorebird enthusiasts—put their passion to work

Outreach pathways - Club presentations, zoom trainings, shorebird festivals and workshops



# Thank you!

Lisa Schibley

lschibley@manomet.org

