

*** AMERICAN BIRD CONSERVANCY * DEFENDERS OF WILDLIFE *
NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY**

September 26, 2006

Governor Ruth Ann Minner
150 William Penn Street
Dover, DE 19901

Dear Governor Minner:

On behalf of the undersigned groups, we respectfully urge you to approve a complete moratorium on the take of harvest shoe crabs in order to maximize protection for the highly imperiled Red Knot.

As you know, biologists from your state, in cooperation with the state of New Jersey, have been part of an extensive research team studying the plight of this shorebird. Research teams have traveled to the knot's breeding and wintering habitats and migration stopovers and as a result the bird is now amongst the most well studied species in the world.

The research is compelling and has now been compiled into one comprehensive document. This document is entitled *Status of the Red Knot (Calidris canutus rufa) in the Western Hemisphere* and is enclosed for your review. In it you will note that one of the primary consensus opinions amongst the authors and experts that participated in the status assessment is that this bird is declining due to an insufficient amount of horseshoe crab eggs, which is the result of years of overfishing of the adult crabs.

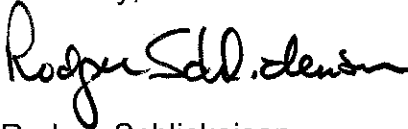
At many Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission meetings, officials from your state have made compelling arguments for the need for strong protections for this species and publicly supported the need for such protections. Most recently, at the May meeting, Mr. Roy Miller stated, "I wanted to point out that the two-year harvest moratorium has the highest level of support within the government of the state of Delaware." This position has been echoed at meetings with representatives from our organizations.

Unfortunately, it has come to our attention, that the state's commitment to a full moratorium may now be faltering and that the basis for this change in position is due to a single non-peer reviewed document. Neither this document nor any other peer-reviewed studies exist that dispute the facts in the status report.

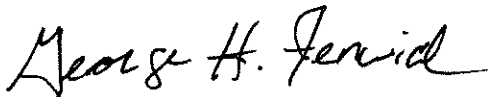
The need for the moratorium has increased in recent months due to the failure of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to list the bird under the Endangered Species Act. The addition to the candidate list affords no real protections. In its candidate review, the Service confirmed that the Red Knot's decline is serious and its listing as an endangered species is warranted. Their decision not to list the species immediately is predicated on strong management commitments by the states.

We trust that you will share the enclosed document with the appropriate state officials and after proper evaluation will make the only decision that provides maximum protection for the imperiled Red Knot – a full moratorium on the harvesting of horseshoe crabs.

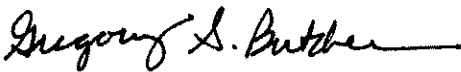
Sincerely,



Rodger Schlickeisen
President
Defenders of Wildlife



George Fenwick
President
American Bird Conservancy



Greg Butcher
Director of Bird Conservation
National Audubon Society

CC:

Lieutenant Governor John C. Carney Jr.
Secretary John Hughes
Roy Miller, Fisheries Administrator