

# Sharing Beaches with Migrating Shorebirds



Pam Hunt



NH AUDUBON

# A Migrant Shorebird Primer





Roughly 30 species of shorebirds migrate through New Hampshire and Maine each spring and fall.

Twenty of these regularly occur in coastal habitats, primarily beaches, rocky shores, salt marshes, and mudflats.





# Common species include:



These birds are renowned for their annual migrations...





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NGA, GEBCO

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# Shorebird Migration by the Numbers:

Bar-tailed Godwits fly non-stop for 7000 miles from breeding areas in Alaska to wintering sites New Zealand, one leg of a 15,000 mile annual migratory journey.

To accomplish such feats, shorebirds can almost double their body weight by putting on fat during pre-migratory foraging bouts.

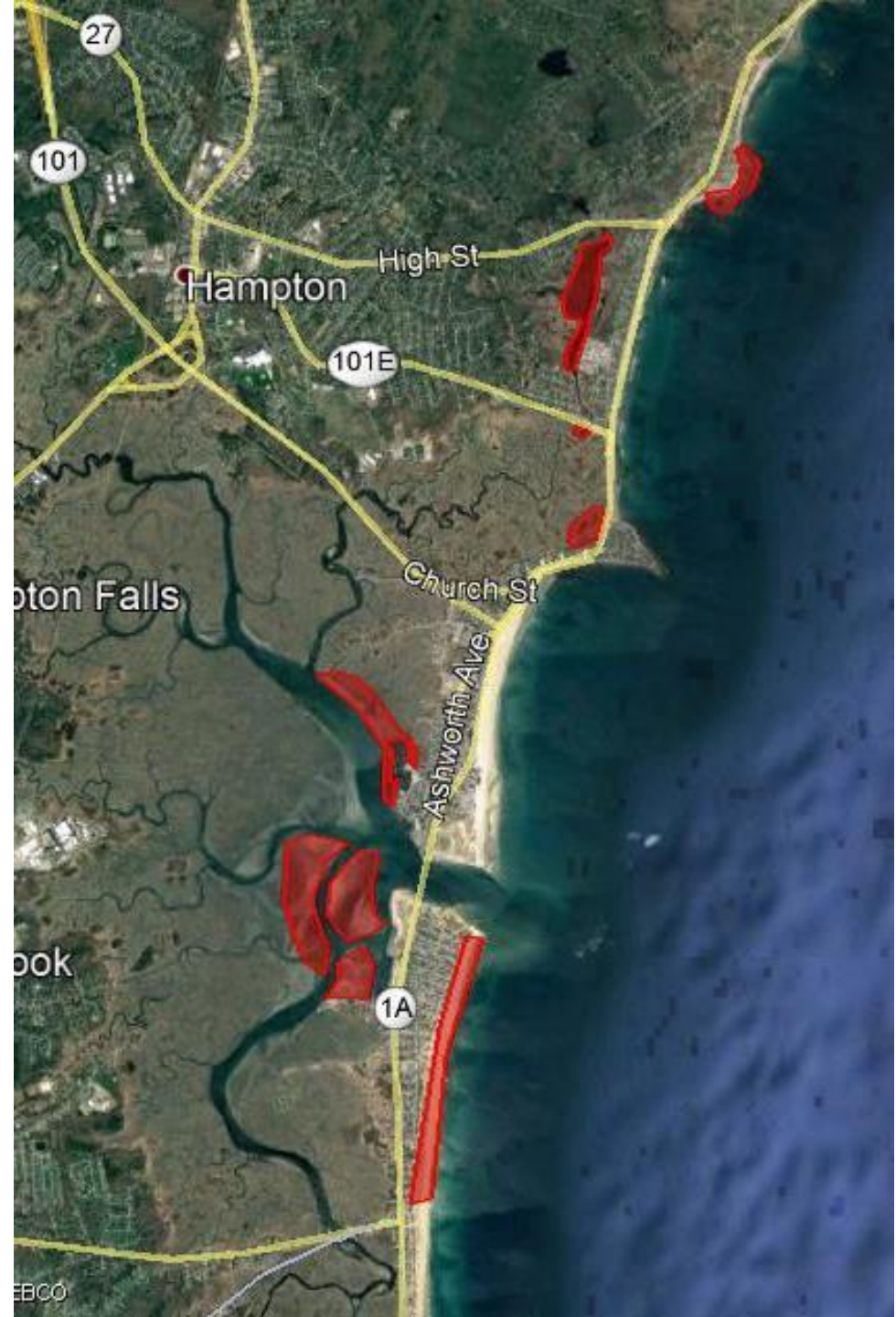
500,000 to 1.5 million shorebirds arrive on and depart from Delaware Bay beaches within a three to four-week period in the spring. They feast primarily on the eggs of horseshoe crabs.



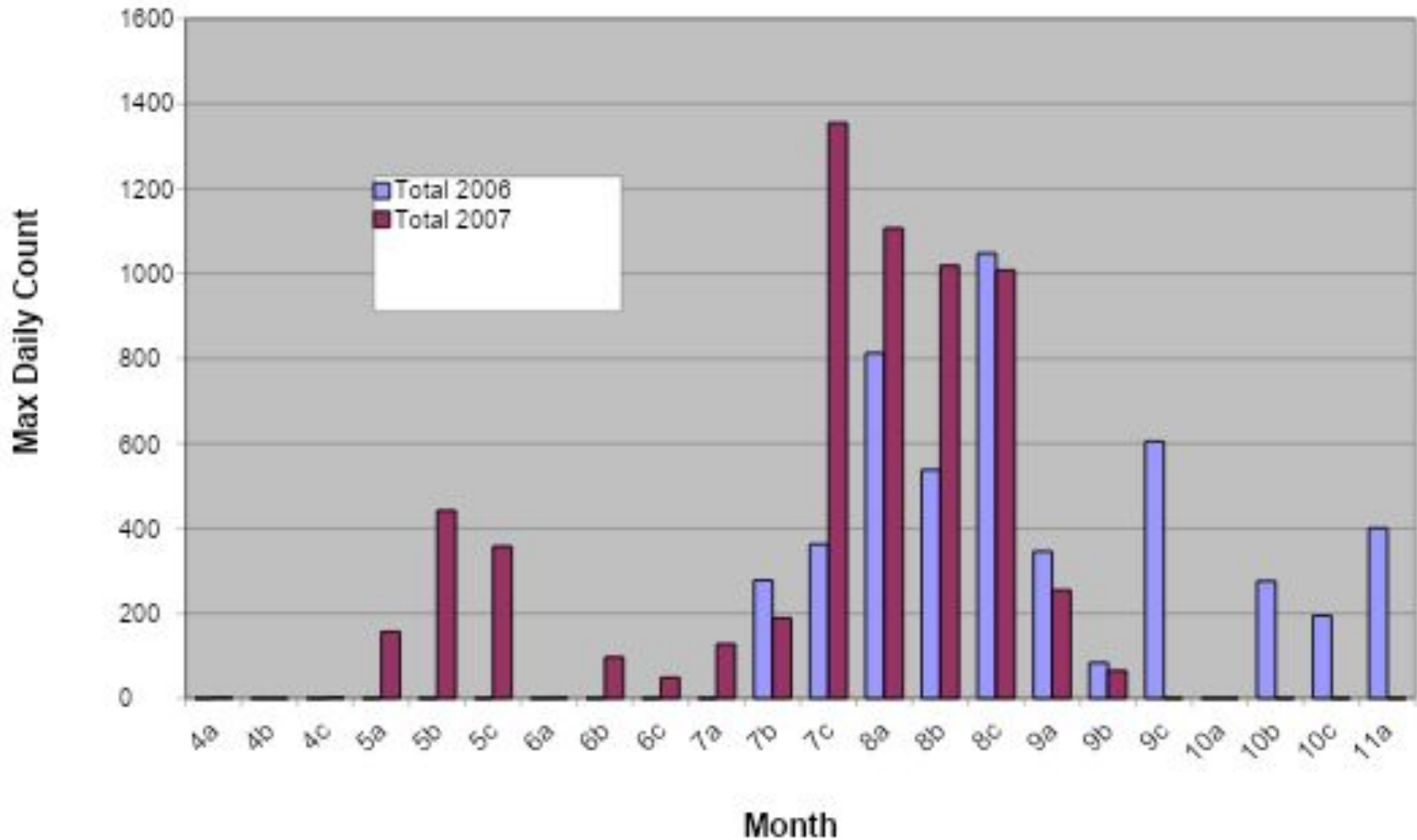


An estimated 2000 Semipalmated Plovers and 2000 Semipalmated Sandpipers pass through coastal New Hampshire each fall.

Most of them stop to rest and feed in the Hampton-Seabrook Estuary.



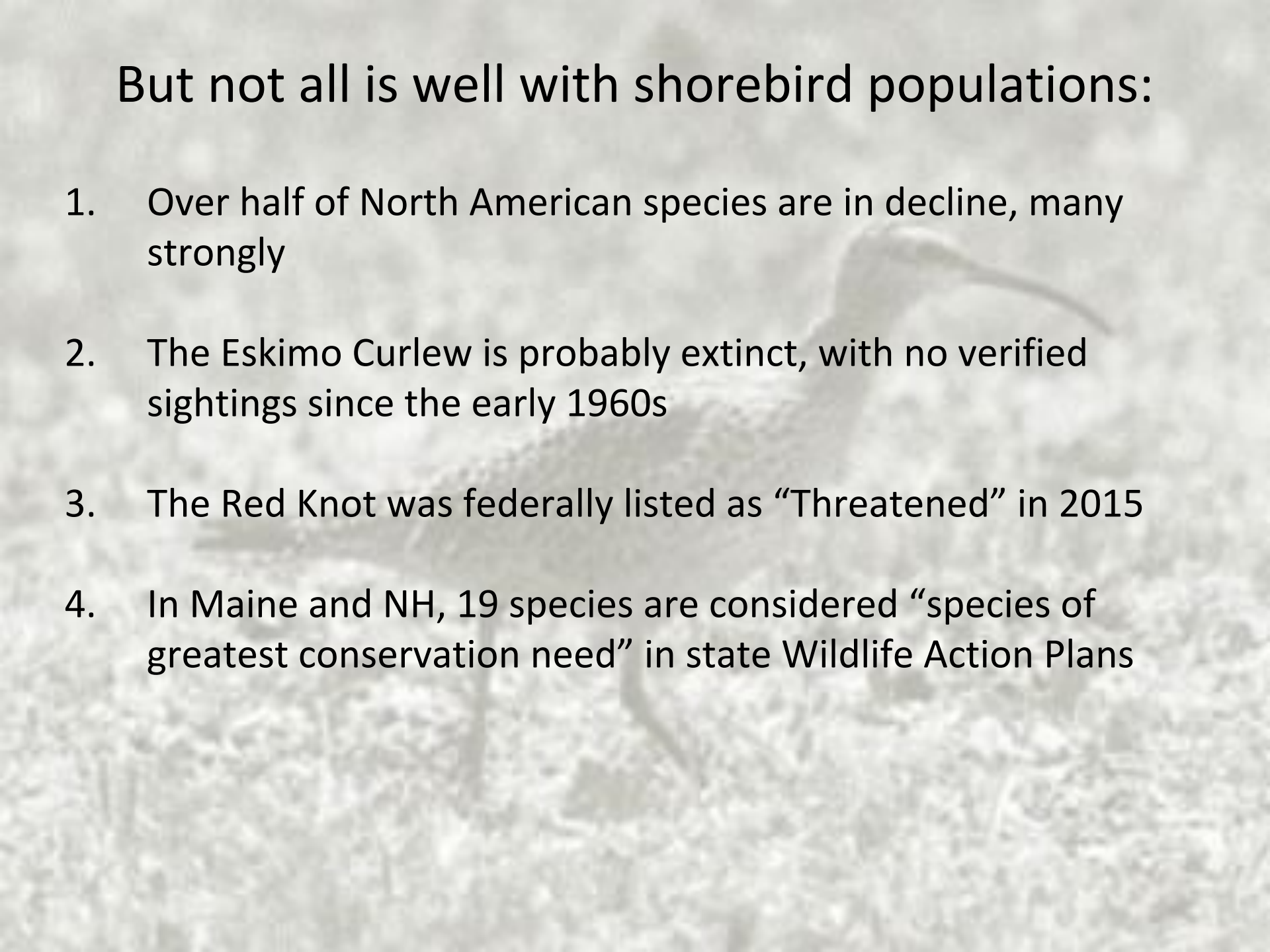
Fall Migration is much more protracted than spring, and involves significantly more birds.



(data from Hampton-Seabrook Estuary: 2006-2007)

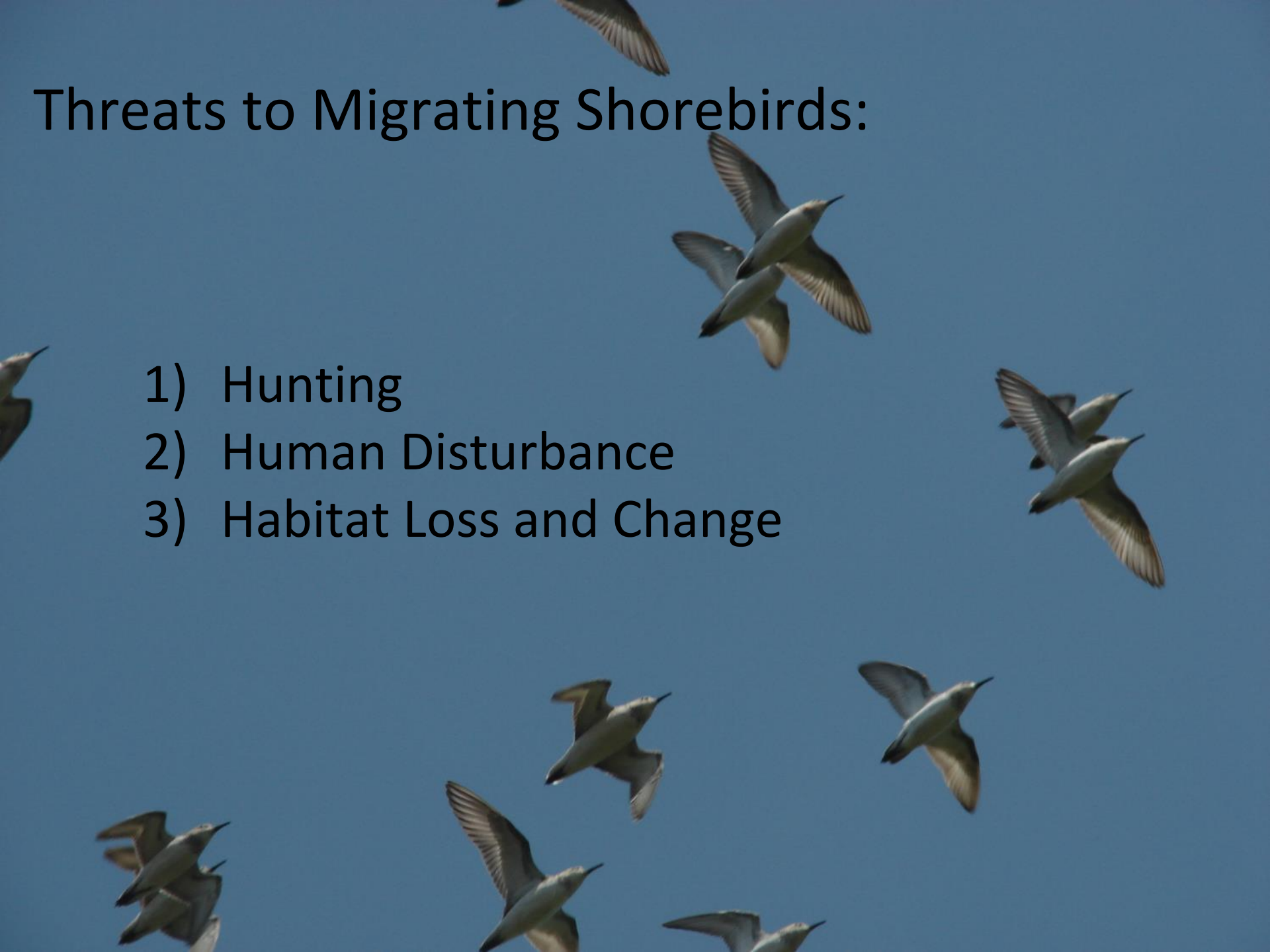


# But not all is well with shorebird populations:

1. Over half of North American species are in decline, many strongly
  2. The Eskimo Curlew is probably extinct, with no verified sightings since the early 1960s
  3. The Red Knot was federally listed as “Threatened” in 2015
  4. In Maine and NH, 19 species are considered “species of greatest conservation need” in state Wildlife Action Plans
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# Threats to Migrating Shorebirds:

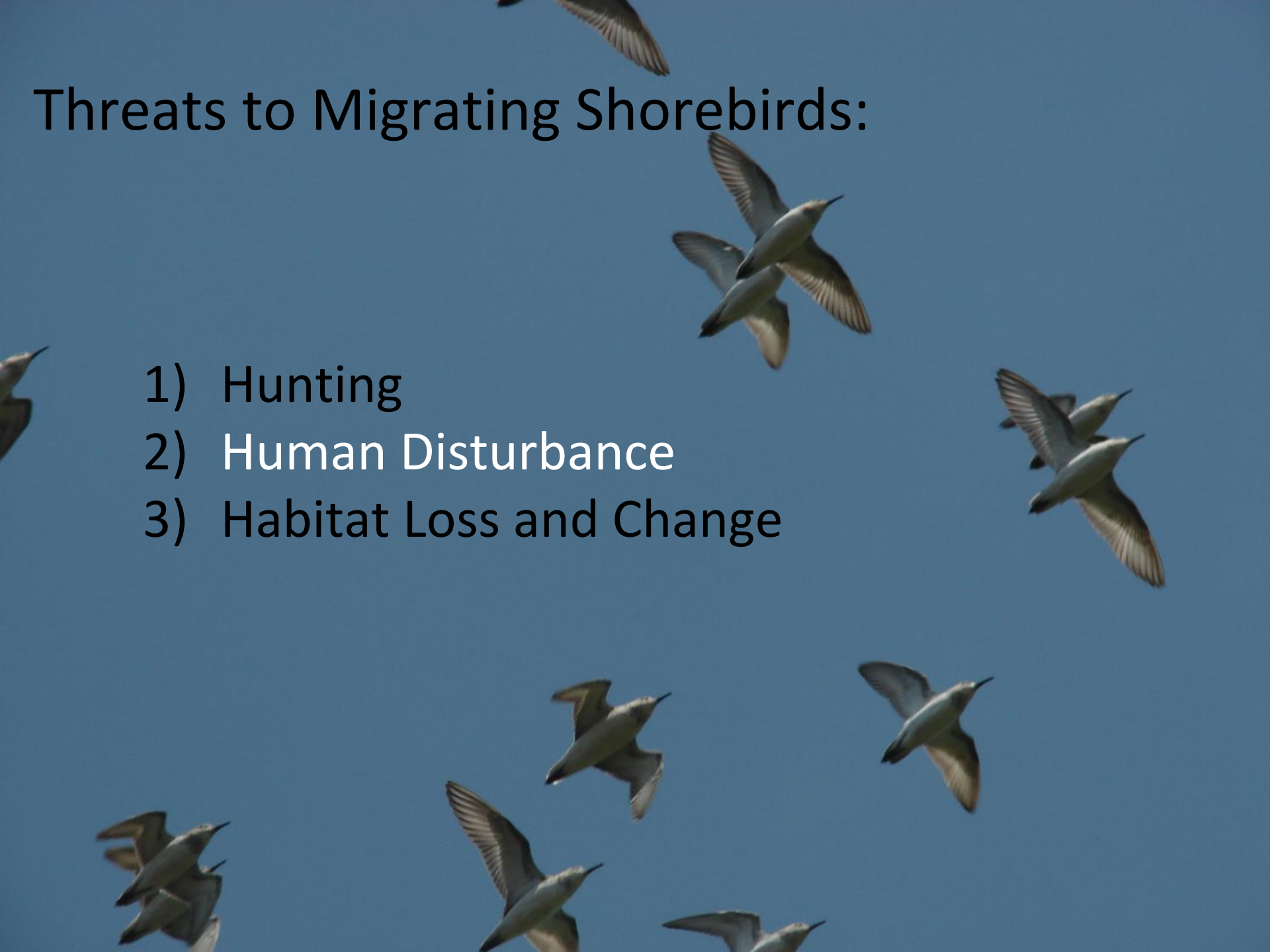
- 1) Hunting
- 2) Human Disturbance
- 3) Habitat Loss and Change





# Threats to Migrating Shorebirds:

- 1) Hunting
- 2) **Human Disturbance**
- 3) Habitat Loss and Change











Threats to Migrating Shorebirds: Beach Driving





Threats to Migrating Shorebirds: Free-running Dogs

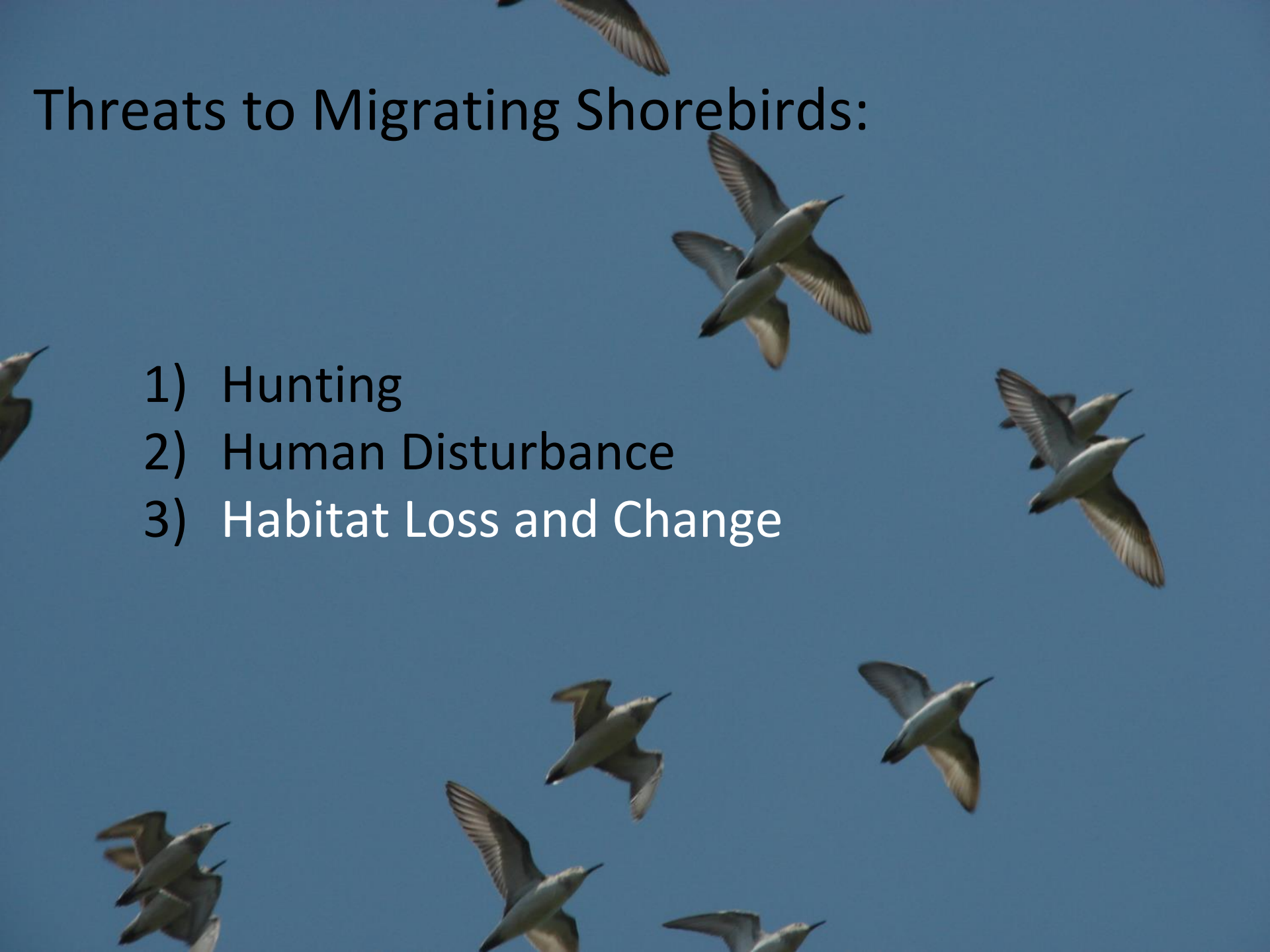




Threats to Migrating Shorebirds: General Beachgoing

# Threats to Migrating Shorebirds:

- 1) Hunting
- 2) Human Disturbance
- 3) Habitat Loss and Change







Threats to Migrating Shorebirds: Beach Raking



Threats to Migrating Shorebirds: Coastal Engineering





Threats to Migrating Shorebirds: Sea Level Rise

# Conservation Actions:

- 1) Educate beachgoers
- 2) Consult during beach modification
- 3) Restrict timing of beach modification
- 4) Protect important habitats
- 5) Collect missing data





# Some Resources:

Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network:

<https://whsrn.org/>

Atlantic Flyway Shorebird Initiative:

<https://atlanticflywayshorebirds.org/about/>

Maine Wildlife Action Plan:

<https://www.maine.gov/ifw/fish-wildlife/wildlife/wildlife-action-plan.html>

New Hampshire Wildlife Action Plan:

<https://www.wildlife.state.nh.us/wildlife/wap.html>

**Any Questions?**

