

\_\_\_\_\_ Date

The Honorable James McGreevey  
Governor of New Jersey  
State House, PO Box 001  
Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0001

Dear Governor McGreevey:

I am writing to ask you to declare an emergency order stopping the harvest of horseshoe crabs in New Jersey. Data from the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (NJ DEP) conclusively links the rapid disappearance of Red Knot, a state threatened species, and other shorebird species to the overharvest of horseshoe crabs. Red Knots and eight other shorebird species rely on horseshoe crab eggs as food to fuel their flight from Delaware Bay to their Arctic breeding grounds each spring.

NJ DEP researchers have documented that the number of wintering Red Knots in Tierra del Fuego, South America has declined by 51% in two years. Similarly, the number of Red Knots on the Delaware Bay has dropped 12% between 2001 and 2002. Alarming, between 2001 and 2002, the peak count of nine species of shorebirds in the Bay area declined by 50%!

In addition, NJ DEP and NJ Audubon Society research on the Delaware Bay has shown a sharp decline in daily weight gain for Red Knots and Semipalmated Sandpipers; many birds leave Delaware Bay unable to reach their Arctic breeding grounds. NJ DEP research also shows a statistically significant decline in the number of horseshoe crabs eggs available to shorebirds from 2000 to 2002. Likewise, Delaware trawl data has shown a 75% decline in the number of horseshoe crabs in 11 years.

The NJ DEP report on Delaware Bay ecotourism valued the industry at \$34 million per year. This figure alone surpasses the US Fish & Wildlife Services' (USFWS) estimate that the horseshoe crab harvest industry from Florida to Maine is worth \$11 million annually. In addition, the USFWS valued the biomedical industry's non-lethal collection of horseshoe crab blood at \$150 million.

The state of New Jersey and Atlantic Marine Fisheries Council has initiated stock assessments for horseshoe crabs. It is ecologically and economically bankrupt to allow harvest in the absence of a sound, scientific management plan which is based upon sustainability for shorebirds.

In summary, we ask you to take a leadership role to conserve our natural resources for future generations by:

1. Immediately instituting a moratorium on NJ horseshoe crab harvest. The moratorium should persist until a management plan, which guarantees a more than adequate food supply for shorebirds and population viability for horseshoe crabs, is passed and approved by a peer-review panel including shorebird ornithologists and horseshoe crab ecologists.
2. Support regional efforts with states including Delaware to better address this shared resource.
3. Support an Atlantic Coast (Maine to Florida) and New Jersey horseshoe crab stock assessment

I appreciate your consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_ Address 1

\_\_\_\_\_ Signature

\_\_\_\_\_ Address 2

\_\_\_\_\_ Name

\_\_\_\_\_ City, State & Zip