



State of New Jersey

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Nelly Catalina Nunez Martinez
Profesional de Apoyo
Comision Nacional del Medio Ambiente
Magallanes y Antartica Chilena
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Dear Nelly,

I was very glad to hear from you. It's always the best for the birds if the local government can join in with the protection of important bird areas. Our team has been working very hard to improve the long term protection of Bahia Lomas. This letter outlines what we have accomplished so far and requests your help in accomplishing these two objectives:

- setting up a foundation in Punta Arenas to receive funds we have raised for a research center on the shore of Bahia Lomas (see 3. below)
- establishing a local team to carry out shorebird research before and after the international team's work at the site (see 6. below).

Here is what we have done so far:

1. Published research demonstrating Bahia Lomas as critical shorebird habitat. With our surveys of red knots and hudsonian godwits we have published evidence that Bahia Lomas is one of the most important shorebird wintering areas in the western hemisphere. Most of the populations of both species, which migrate from the Arctic, winter in Bahia Lomas. The red knot is being considered for a new federal status here in the U.S. because of its fast declining numbers, and the hudsonian godwit is judged to be declining and in need of further protection. As both species migrate more than 10,000 miles twice a year, they are both very vulnerable. For the red knot, the Delaware Bay and Bahia Lomas are its most critical habitats.

2. Conducted studies at Bahia Lomas to determine the most critical shorebird habitats and food sources. Our team has conducted a number of important studies to help determine the most important habitats on the bay and the foods most important for the birds. This is important in order to understand why these birds persistently favor the bay. Most of this work is being conducted by Dr. Carmen Espoz.

3. Obtained funding for a Research Center at Bahia Lomas. We have received several grants to support our work. The most important grant we currently have is one from the Neotropical Bird Conservation Act, to establish a Bird Center along the Atlantic Coast of South America. We recently received approximately \$25,000 to construct a small research center on the shore of Bahia Lomas. We will need your help in setting up a foundation in Punta Arenas to implement this project. If we can establish a new foundation, then we can also begin to try to raise additional money to help run the center.

4. **RAMSAR designation of Bahia Lomas.** We are working hard to help your government develop the RAMSAR designation. This international recognition of Bahia Lomas would not only provide more protection but also help create awareness of the area to help in attracting tourists and in raising more money from US foundations.

5. **Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network Designation:** We are working on a new designation through the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network. This will place Bahia Lomas with the most important Shorebird reserves in the Western Hemisphere and will help focus attention and hopefully additional funds.

6. **Establishing a Local Team.** We are trying to establish a local team to carry out work at Bahia Lomas before and after the time when the international team conducts its work. We could definitely use your help on the effort to establish a local team, as we have yet to have any local participants other than Ricardo Matus and Olivia Blank. Ricardo and Olivia have helped us immensely.

I am very grateful for your interest. Perhaps when we come next February, we can meet and discuss future plans.

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