

GODWIT INQUIRY.

FIRST INTERIM REPORT.

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The Ornithological Society is conducting among its official projects an inquiry into the present status of the bar-tailed godwit (*Limosa lapponica*) in New Zealand, and members are invited to assist by sending information relative to this bird to the writer, who is organiser of the project. All contributions used will be acknowledged.

An analysis of information to date in publications of the Society shows that the most favoured haunts of the godwit are the tidal flats of the Auckland and Nelson districts. These are enumerated more particularly as follow:—

Auckland District (from north to south).—Parengarenga Harbour, Whangarei Harbour, Kaipara Harbour, Manukau Harbour, Firth of Thames, Tauranga Harbour, Ohiwa Harbour.

Nelson District.—Farewell Spit, Golden Bay.

In all of the above localities the godwit may be seen during its non-breeding season in large numbers, and there are records of birds remaining in these areas, except Farewell Spit and Golden Bay, during the New Zealand winter, at a period when the vast majority has returned to the Northern Hemisphere to breed. It is probable that some birds remain in the Farewell Spit-Golden Bay area for the austral winter; reports from this district are exceptionally meagre.

Other localities favoured regularly by the godwit in New Zealand are (from north to south):—

North Island.—Ninety-Mile Beach, Mangowai, Muriwai, Clevedon, Raglan Harbour, Kawhia Harbour, Napier, Porangahau and Waitotara, Rangitikei, Manawatu and Ohau estuaries.

South Island.—Wairau Bar, Waimakariri Estuary, Heathcote-Avon Estuary, Lake Ellesmere, Teramākau River, Okarito Lagoon, Waikouaiti, Otago Harbour, near Invercargill and Paterson's Inlet (Stewart Island).

Members who have information regarding additional haunts of the godwit are invited to make it available, so that an accurate map giving details of its occurrence in New Zealand can be prepared. Odd birds or small flocks are liable to be seen in almost any coastal area where there are sand or mudflats, especially at river-mouths, but it is intended to map only those places inhabited regularly by the godwit. More precise information is desired, particularly about the presence or absence of the godwit in the estuaries near Invercargill and other parts of Southland. The Hokianga Harbour area of North Auckland and Kawhia and Raglan harbours are others about which more information is needed.

Members are invited to give particulars of the numbers of godwit in their districts, whether fluctuations occur, and particularly, dates of arrival and departure, and of the number remaining for the New Zealand winter, or other information relating to the movements of this bird. Particulars of habitat, plumage (i.e., proportion of red-breasted birds, especially in autumn) and association of other waders with godwits (for instance the knot commonly mingles with flocks of godwit, its numbers in some instances being equally at great as those of the godwit) are desired.

It is suggested that members placed at strategic points adjacent to known godwit haunts could keep a close watch on the species for the next few years (some members are already doing so) so that a comparison may be made from year to year. If this is done, the information gained should throw some light on the present position of the bird in New Zealand.