

## **SATELLITE TRACKING NEW ZEALAND BAR-TAILED GODWITS TO SUPPORT CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT, ESPECIALLY IN THE YELLOW SEA**

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New Zealand's Bar-tailed Godwits *Limosa lapponica baueri* migrate through the Yellow Sea to their breeding grounds in Alaska. The population is declining and the November 2018 BirdsNZ national wader survey recorded the lowest total in over 35 years of counting (65,345).

The Yellow Sea has been subject to extensive habitat loss through land claim (68% lost in the past 50 years) and severe degradation of much of what remains. Despite China's announcement of a near-total ban on further reclamation in 2018, land claim continues in both North and South Korea, and remaining habitats are still being degraded by various human activities, reducing the ability of the remaining intertidal areas to support waterbirds. Shorebirds that rely on the Yellow Sea are exhibiting reduced survival rates and suffering significant population declines.

The project aims to determine the staging areas used by New Zealand Bar-tailed Godwits in the Yellow Sea in response to habitat reduction and degradation. Bar-tailed Godwits will be caught at multiple sites in New Zealand and fitted with 5-g solar satellite tags. The results will be used to inform future management policies and activities within the Yellow Sea. This is of particular relevance in light of China's serial listing of Yellow Sea coastal wetlands as a World Heritage site (Phase II of which is to be submitted to UNESCO for consideration by the World Heritage Committee in 2023).



*Happier days in the Yellow Sea, when Potamocorbula laevis was an abundant food source.*

*Photo: Phil Battley*