

[1] "*Limosa limosa* — Black-tailed Godwit

Glossary SPRAT Profile

For information to assist regulatory considerations, refer to Policy Statements and Guidelines, the Conservation Advice, the Listing Advice and/or the Recovery Plan. EPBC Legal Status and Documents

Top EPBC Act Listing Status

Listed marine Listed migratory - EPBC Act, Bonn, CAMBA, JAMBA, ROKAMBA

Under threatened listing assessment, due 30-Oct-2022. Approved Conservation Advice

There is no approved Conservation Advice for this species

Listing Advice

There is no Listing Advice for this species

Adopted/Made Recovery Plans

There is no adopted or made Recovery Plan for this species

Adopted/Made Threat Abatement Plans

No Threat Abatement Plan has been identified as being relevant for this species

Wildlife Conservation Plans

Commonwealth of Australia (2015). Wildlife Conservation Plan for Migratory Shorebirds. Canberra, ACT: Department of the Environment. Available from: <http://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/publications/wildlife-conservation-plan-migratory-shorebirds-2016>. In effect under the EPBC Act from 15-Jan-2016.

Other Commonwealth Documents

Top Other EPBC Act Plans

EPBC Act Policy Statement 3.21 - Industry Guidelines for avoiding, assessing and mitigating impacts on EPBC Act listed migratory shorebird species (Department of the Environment, 2015) [Admin Guideline].

National Light Pollution Guidelines for Wildlife Including Marine Turtles, Seabirds and Migratory Shorebirds (Department of the Environment and Energy, 2020) [Admin Guideline].

Shorebirds - A Vulnerability Assessment for the Great Barrier Reef (Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA), 2011) [Admin Guideline].

Information Sheets

Migratory Shorebirds of the East Asian - Australasian Flyway: Population estimates and internationally important sites (Bamford M., D. Watkins, W. Bancroft, G. Tischler & J. Wahl, 2008) [Information Sheet].

Revision of the East Asian-Australasian Flyway Population Estimates for 37 listed Migratory Shorebird Species (Hansen, B.D., R.A. Fuller, D. Watkins, D.I. Rogers, R.S. Clemens, M. Newman, E.J. Woehler & D.R. Weller, 2016) In effect under the EPBC Act from 29-May-2017. [Information Sheet].

Federal Register of Legislative Instruments

Marine: Declaration under section 248 of the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 - List of Marine Species (Commonwealth of Australia, 2000c) [Legislative Instrument]

Migratory: List of Migratory Species (13/07/2000) (Commonwealth of Australia, 2000b) [Legislative Instrument]

Wildlife Conservation Plan: Wildlife Conservation Plan for Migratory Shorebirds (Commonwealth of Australia, 2006r) [Legislative Instrument]

Wildlife Conservation Plan: Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 - Section 285 - Instrument revoking and making a wildlife conservation plan (Commonwealth of Australia, 2016) [Legislative Instrument]

State Listing Status

NSW: Listed as Vulnerable (Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016 (New South Wales): February 2021 list)

Non-statutory Listing Status

IUCN: Listed as Near Threatened (Global Status: IUCN Red List of Threatened Species: 2020.2 list)

VIC: Listed as Vulnerable (Advisory List of Threatened Vertebrate Fauna in Victoria: 2013 list)

NGO: Listed as Near Threatened (The Action Plan for Australian Birds 2010 - non-threatened)

Naming

Top Scientific name

*Limosa limosa* [845]

Family

Scolopacidae: Charadriiformes: Aves: Chordata: Animalia

Species author

(Linnaeus, 1758)

Infraspecies author

Reference

Distribution Map

Top Distribution map

The distribution shown is generalised from the Departments Species of National Environmental Significance dataset. This is an indicative distribution map of the present distribution of the species based on best available knowledge. Some species information is withheld in line with sensitive species policies. See map caveat for more information.

Illustrations

Top Illustrations

Google Images

Other Links, Including



sites. They associate with other waders; often at edges of flocks of other species of Godwit and, in New Zealand, sometimes with Black-winged Stilts, *Himantopus himantopus* (Higgins & Davies 1996). They feed in sea-edge flocks (Rogers 1999b).

**Global Distribution**

**Top**

**Non-breeding distribution**

The Black-tailed Godwit is found in all states and territories of Australia, however, it prefers coastal regions and the largest populations are found on the north coast between Darwin and Weipa. It is generally found in small numbers elsewhere and there are scattered inland records (Watkins 1993). The species is a regular visitor in small numbers to New Zealand (maximum of 21 recorded in a year) as well as Lord Howe Island and Auckland Island. It also occurs in the British Isles, France, the Iberian Peninsula and along the north coasts of the Mediterranean. In Africa, it is found in northern Algeria and north-west Morocco and occasionally elsewhere along the south Mediterranean. Large populations are found mainly from west Africa (south Mauritania to Cameroon), east to south-west of the Red Sea and along the coast of Kenya. They occasionally visit the Horn of Africa and areas south of the main range, however records are scattered in southern Africa. The Black-tailed Godwit also occurs in the northern regions of the Persian Gulf and southern regions of the Caspian Sea. On the Indian subcontinent, the species is known to occur in Pakistan and northern India. It is commonly found east to Bihar and north-west of the Bay of Bengal. It has been sighted from Burma, east through Thailand to Indochina, and south through south-east Asia to New Guinea and Australasia. The species is a passage migrant in eastern China, the Korean Peninsula, Japan, Taiwan and the Philippines. Some are known to pass through Indochina, south-east Asia and Indomalaya. They are vagrants to islands in the north Atlantic, Bering Sea, and in North America and Micronesia (Higgins & Davies 1996).

**Breeding distribution**

For populations occurring in the East Asian Australasian Flyway breeding probably occurs in the far-east Russia. Elsewhere the Black-tailed Godwit is known to breed in Iceland and The Faeroes in the northern Atlantic, Europe, Russia and China. It breeds in widely scattered localities in Norway, south and south-east Sweden and west Finland. It breeds throughout the Netherlands, sparsely scattered sites through the British Isles, France, Belgium, Germany, Denmark, Austria and northern Italy. It breeds at scattered sites in Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Yugoslavia and Rumania; widespread from Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and west Poland, east into Russia, where breeding range extends from shores of Lake Chudskoye, south to Carpathian Mountains, and south-east to Crimean Peninsula, then east to round headwaters of Ob River. At the Ob River the northern breeding boundary is generally 55° N, E of Urals, and up to 60° N farther west. The Black-tailed Godwit breeds around lakes east of Lake Balkash, between the Altai and Tien Shan Mountains; in an area bounded by upper Lena and Vilyny Rivers and the lower reaches of Anadyr and Amur Rivers. The species breeds in China from west Heilungkiang, south to west Liaoning, and also in north-west Sinkiang (Higgins & Davies 1996).

**Population Information**

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**Population overview**

The world population of the Black-tailed Godwit is estimated to be between 561 000–6750 000 pairs. In Australia there are an estimated 81 000 pairs (Watkins 1993). Very low numbers occur in Victoria in most years (Wilson 2001a). In the Coorong, South Australia, recent counts ranged from 105 to 185 birds (Wilson 2001b).

**Trends**

The species is not globally threatened and has increased in some areas due to ability to adapt to man-made habitats such as fertilised meadows, but has declined in other areas, probably due to agricultural intensification, in particular, drainage and rotary mowing (del Hoyo et al. 1996). Three of the six recognised populations have recently had their population estimates revised downwards (Rose & Scott 1997). There is some evidence of population decline in Australia with the species showing a decline between atlases (Barrett et al. 2002).

**Important sites**

An estimated 160 000 Black-tailed Godwits occupy the Flyway, representing 21% of the global population (Bamford et al. 2008). The Black-tailed Godwit occurs in many smaller populations. During the non-breeding season, 11 important sites have been identified in Australia. Note that an important site is calculated using the 1% criterion (i.e. a site is considered important if it is occupied by more than 1% of the bird's total population). Australian sites of international importance and their maximum counts include (Bamford et al. 2008):

Location	State	Population
SE Gulf of Carpentaria	Queensland	26 971
Roebuck Bay	Western Australia	7374
Nungbalgarri Creek	Northern Territory	6350
Buckingham Bay	Northern Territory	6000
Port McArthur	Northern Territory	5230
Boucat Bay	Northern Territory	5000
Hunter Estuary	NSW	4000
Blue Mud Bay	Northern Territory	4000
Roper River area	Northern Territory	3015
Cape Bowling Green	Queensland	2058
Adelaide River Floodplain	Northern Territory	2000
Chambers Bay	Western Australia	1960
Fog Bay and adjacent islands	Northern Territory	1700
Anson Bay, south	Northern Territory	1600

**Habitat**

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**Habitat overview**

In Australia the Black-tailed Godwit has a primarily coastal habitat environment. The species is commonly found in sheltered bays, estuaries and lagoons with large intertidal mudflats or sandflats, or spits and banks of mud, sand or shell-grit; occasionally

recorded on rocky coasts or coral islets. The use of habitat often depends on the stage of the tide. It is also found in shallow and sparsely vegetated, near-coastal, wetlands; such as saltmarsh, saltflats, river pools, swamps, lagoons and floodplains. There are a few inland records, around shallow, freshwater and saline lakes, swamps, dams and bore-overflows. They also use lagoons in sewage farms and saltworks (Higgins & Davies 1996).

**Refuge habitat** \nDuring a period of cyclonic activity waders (including this species) moved to sheltered areas to avoid high winds and heavy rain, and few casualties (none of this species) were observed (Jessop & Collins 2000).

**Habitat for feeding** \nThe Black-tailed Godwit forages on wide intertidal mudflats or sandflats, in soft mud or shallow water and occasionally in shallow estuaries. They use similar habitats on shores of inland lakes and other wetlands. They are found in muddy areas often open and unvegetated, but commonly use drying marshy wetlands preferred by Pectoral Sandpipers, *Calidris melanotos*, and Long-toed Stints, *C. subminuta*, (Higgins & Davies 1996); sometimes they forage among mangroves. They roost and loaf on low banks of mud, sand or shell, bars, islets and beaches in sheltered areas; also on saltflats behind mangroves. They may occur in non-vegetated areas, or among low vegetation, such as samphire (Higgins & Davies 1996).

**Habitat for roosting** \nThe claypan may be an important roost site for this species at least during the non-breeding season (Collins et al. 2001).

**Life Cycle**

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**Breeding overview** \nThe Black-tailed Godwit does not breed in Australia.

**Breeding micro-habitat** \nThe Black-tailed Godwit nests in short vegetation, from open to rather concealed, lined with a thick mat of vegetation (del Hoyo et al. 1996).

**Breeding behaviours** \nThe Black-tailed Godwit nests on the ground (del Hoyo et al. 1996). Nest protection is an important tool for conservation in Europe where the birds nest in dairy farming areas (Guldemon et al. 1995).

**Breeding season** \nThe Black-tailed Godwit nests in the Northern Hemisphere summer, with laying from April to mid-June (del Hoyo et al. 1996).

**Fecundity, lifespan, generation interval** \nThe Black-tailed Godwit lays three to five (usually four) eggs and incubates them for 22\009624 days. They have a nestling period of 28\009634 days. They may breed from one year of age. The annual mortality said to be 20% (del Hoyo et al. 1996).

**Feeding**

**Top**

**Summary of food items or sources** \nThe Black-tailed Godwit is omnivorous. There is little information on feeding habits in the Australian and New Zealand region, however, records from observers provide some insight into the species dietary requirements. The species has been recorded eating annelids, crustaceans, arachnids, fish eggs and spawn and tadpoles of frogs, and occasionally seeds (Higgins & Davies 1996). In Portugal, the bivalve mollusc *Scrobicularia plana* represented 88% of ingested biomass and polychaetes the remaining 12% (Moreira 1994). In a rice-growing region of Senegal, Black-tailed Godwits apparently only ate plant material, mostly (83.7%) rice including during the period of weight gain prior to migration (Tréca 1994). Seeds and berries are thought to be especially important after breeding and on migration (Cramp & Simmonds 1983).

\nThe Black-tailed Godwit feeds in sea-edge flocks, and are often associated with Bar-tailed Godwits, but appear to be quite selective in feeding sites. It has been suggested that they prefer areas with certain bivalves, e.g. *Siliqua* and *Tellina* in Roebuck Bay (Rogers 1999b). The species is diurnal and nocturnal and locate food by touch and sight. They often wade up to the tarsus in water (Higgins & Davies 1996). Outside of Australia they may come into competition with farmers, e.g. in one region with 6000 ha of rice fields, they are estimated to take 3\00966 tons of seed per day; cultivated rice is taken at planting time and during and after harvest (Tréca 1994).

**Movement Patterns**

**Top**

**Migration patterns** \nThe Black-tailed Godwit breeds in the Northern Hemisphere and move south, in broad fronts, often overland, for the boreal winter (Higgins & Davies 1996).

**Departure from breeding grounds** \nThe Black-tailed Godwit leaves Anadyr Territory, Russia, by late August, passing though Russian Ussuriland. The species is a common passage migrant in Japan, throughout September and October. In Korea, the species migrates from August\0096November. It is transient in Manchuria, Mongolia, along Chinese coast and on Hainan from July\0096September. It also passes through west China. The Black-tailed Godwit is uncommon in Taiwan, from September. Small numbers pass through Hong Kong from August\0096November. Few occur in Burma and pass through Thailand. The species is numerous on the west coast of Peninsula Malaysia but uncommon in Singapore. It also migrates through Borneo, Sumatra, Wallacea, and Bali. The species is locally abundant in New Guinea, arriving as early as July but with greatest numbers from October\0096November (Higgins & Davies 1996). The species is not recorded as a passage migrant in the Torres Strait (Draffan et al. 1983). Arrival in Australia \nThe Black-tailed Godwit first arrives in north-west Australia from late August (Lane 1987) with numbers falling from September to mid-November (Blakers et al. 1984). They pass through Darwin from November (Lane 1987) and arrive at the Gulf of Carpentaria from September\0096December (Garnett 1989). Most stay in north Australia, especially coastal Arnhem Land and south-east Gulf of Carpentaria, but some move to east and south Australia. At Gulf St Vincent, South Australia, most birds arrive in



hydrology or structural changes near roosting sites (DEWHA 2009aj).Habitat degradation\nAs most migratory shorebirds have specialized feeding techniques, they are particularly susceptible to slight changes in prey sources and foraging environments. Activities that cause habitat degradation (DEWHA 2009aj) include, but are not restricted to:\n loss of marine or estuarine vegetation, which is likely to alter the dynamic equilibrium of sediment banks and mudflats invasion of intertidal mudflats by weeds such as cord grass\nwater pollution and changes to the water regime\nchanges to the hydrological regime\nexposure of acid sulphate soils, hence changing the chemical balance at the site. Disturbance\nDisturbance can result from residential and recreational activities including; fishing, power boating, four wheel driving, walking dogs, noise and night lighting. While some disturbances may have only a low impact it is important to consider the combined effect of disturbances with other threats. Roosting and foraging birds are sensitive to discrete, unpredictable disturbances such as loud noises (i.e. construction sites) and approaching objects (i.e. boats). Sustained disturbances can prevent shorebirds from using parts of the habitat (DEWHA 2009aj). Direct mortality\nDirect mortality is a result of human activities around the migration pathways of shorebirds and at roosting and foraging sites. Examples include the construction of wind farms in migration or movement pathways, bird strike due to aircraft, hunting, chemical and oil spills (DEWHA 2009aj).\n\n Threat Abatement and Recovery\n\n Top\n\n Governments and conservation groups have undertaken a wide range of activities relating to migratory shorebird conservation (AGDEH 2005c) both in Australia and in cooperation with other countries associated with the East Asian-Australasian Flyway.\nAustraliaThe Wildlife Conservation Plan for Migratory Shorebirds (AGDEH 2006f) outlines national activities to support flyway shorebird conservation initiatives and provides a strategic framework to ensure these activities and future research and management actions are integrated and remain focused on the long-term survival of migratory shorebird populations and their habitats.\nSince 1996\n009697, the Australian Government has invested approximately \$5 000 000 of Natural Heritage Trust (NHT) funding in projects contributing to migratory shorebird conservation (DEWHA 2007e). This funding has been distributed across a range of important projects, including the implementation of a nationally coordinated monitoring programme that will produce robust, long-term population data able to support the conservation and effective management of shorebirds and their habitat; migration studies using colour bands and leg flags; and development of a shorebird conservation toolkit to assist users to develop and implement shorebird conservation projects.\nBirds Australia is currently co-ordinating the Shorebirds 2020 project, which aims to monitor shorebird populations at important sites throughout Australia; and Birdlife International is identifying sites and regions which are important to various species of birds, including shorebirds, and the processes that are affecting them. The aim is to inform decisions on the management of shorebird habitat. It may be possible to rehabilitate some degraded wetlands or to create artificial wader feeding or roosting sites to replace those destroyed by development, such as by creating artificial sandflats and sand islands from dredge spoil and by building breakwaters (Dening 2005; Straw 1992a, 1999).\nThe Significant impact guidelines for 36 migratory shorebirds Draft EPBC Act Policy Statement 3.21 (DEWHA 2009aj) provides guidelines for determining the impacts of proposed actions on migratory shorebirds. The policy statement also provides mitigation strategies to reduce the level and extent of those impacts.\nInternational\nAustralia has played an important role in building international cooperation to conserve migratory birds. In addition to being party to international agreements on migratory species, Australia is also a member of the Partnership for the Conservation of Migratory Waterbirds and the Sustainable Use of their Habitats in the East Asian-Australasian Flyway (Flyway Partnership), which was launched in Bogor, Indonesia on 6 November 2006. Prior to this agreement, Australia was party to the Asia-Pacific Migratory Waterbird Conservation Strategy and the Action Plan for the Conservation of Migratory Shorebirds in the East Asian-Australasian Flyway and the East Asian-Australasian Shorebird Site Network.\nThe East Asian-Australasian Flyway Site Network, which is part of the broader Flyway Partnership, promotes the identification and protection of key sites for migratory shorebirds. Australia has 17 sites in the network (Partnership EAAF 2008):Kakadu National Park, Northern Territory (1 375 940 ha)\nParry Lagoons, Western Australia (36 111 ha)\nThomsons Lake, Western Australia (213 ha)\nMoreton Bay, Queensland (113 314 ha)\nHunter Estuary, NSW (2916 ha)\nCorner Inlet, Victoria (51 500 ha)\nThe Coorong, Lake Alexandrina & Lake Albert, South Australia (140 500 ha)\nOrielton Lagoon, Tasmania (2920 ha)\nLogan Lagoon, Tasmania (2320 ha)\nWestern Port, Victoria (59 297 ha)\nPort Phillip Bay (Western Shoreline) and Bellarine Peninsula, Victoria (16 540 ha)\nShallow Inlet Marine and Coastal Park, Victoria\nDiscovery Bay Coastal Park, Victoria\nBowling Green Bay, Queensland\nShoalwater Bay, Queensland\nGreat Sandy Strait, Queensland\nCurrawinya National Park, Queensland. \n\n Management Documentation\n\n Top\n\n The Department's Wildlife Conservation Plan for Migratory Shorebirds (AGDEH 2006f), the Background Paper to the Wildlife

Conservation Plan for Migratory Shorebirds (AGDEH 2005c) and The Action Plan for Australian Birds (Garnett & Crowley 2000) also contain actions aimed at the conservation of migratory birds within Australia. The Significant impact guidelines for 36 migratory shorebirds Draft EPBC Act Policy Statement 3.21 (DEWHA 2009aj) provides guidelines for determining the impacts of proposed actions on migratory shorebirds. The policy statement also provides mitigation strategies to reduce the level and extent of those impacts.

Species Profile References

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