

Where do shorebirds live?

- Coastal wetlands.
- Sandy beaches and rocky shorelines.
- Braided riverbeds.
- Estuaries.
- Farmland.
- Lakes.
- High-country tussocklands.



What threats do they face?

- **Tides and storm surges**
Nests above the high-tide mark are easily lost to strong storms and very high spring tides.
- **Habitat destruction and degradation**
Breeding habitats can be lost to land development or subsequent erosion.
- **Predation**
Eggs and chicks can be easy prey for cats, dogs, mustelids (stoats, weasels and ferrets) and hedgehogs, as well as black-backed gulls and harrier hawks. Cats and mustelids also kill adult birds, especially when sitting on their nests.
- **Disturbance**
Nests are easily trampled or disturbed by dogs and vehicles.



Want to find out more?

For further information on shorebirds and how you can help, visit:

- DOC: doc.govt.nz/sea-shore-birds
- New Zealand Birds Online: nzbirdsonline.org.nz
- Miranda Shorebird Centre: miranda-shorebird.org.nz



Cover: Tūturīwhatu/banded dotterels. Photo: Leon Berard
Back: Kāruhiruhi/pied shag. Photo: Shellie Evans

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New Zealand Government

What's that shorebird?

A guide to the shorebirds of Aotearoa/New Zealand



How can you help?



Walk and ride your horse below the high-tide mark on beaches where shorebirds are breeding.



Stay outside fenced-off areas with 'birds nesting' signs.



Keep vehicles off beaches.



Keep your dog on a leash at all times and remember that some beaches are only open for dog walking at certain times – check with your local council for details.



Join a local Coast Care group.

How to be a birdwatcher

New Zealand is a land of birds and there are so many to see! You can spot birds in forests and parks, by lakes and rivers, at home in your garden and, of course, at the beach. To become a birdwatcher, all you need are your eyes or ears.



Top tips for birdwatching

1. **Train your eyes** to recognise the key features of birds. Look for colouring, special marks, beak shape and body size.
2. **Train your ears** to recognise bird calls. Often you will hear a bird before you can see it and sometimes you may not see the bird at all, so knowing the calls of different types of birds can be a very handy skill. To learn different bird calls, visit www.nzbirdsonline.org.
3. **Keep a notebook** and write down what you see. What bird is it? Where did you spot it? What time of day was it? What time of year was it? What was it doing? It's exciting to come back to a place and notice any changes in bird life.
4. **Enter your observations** into eBird or use the eBird app on your phone. This app is a very handy substitute for a notebook, and your phone can capture the location, date and time of the recording. The information is also accessible for others to see and can help with research.
5. **Draw what you see** or take photos – drawing is more fun than writing lots of notes.

Birds with bands

We encourage you to report banded birds (dead or alive) to DOC by emailing the Banding Office at bandingoffice@doc.govt.nz with the following details.

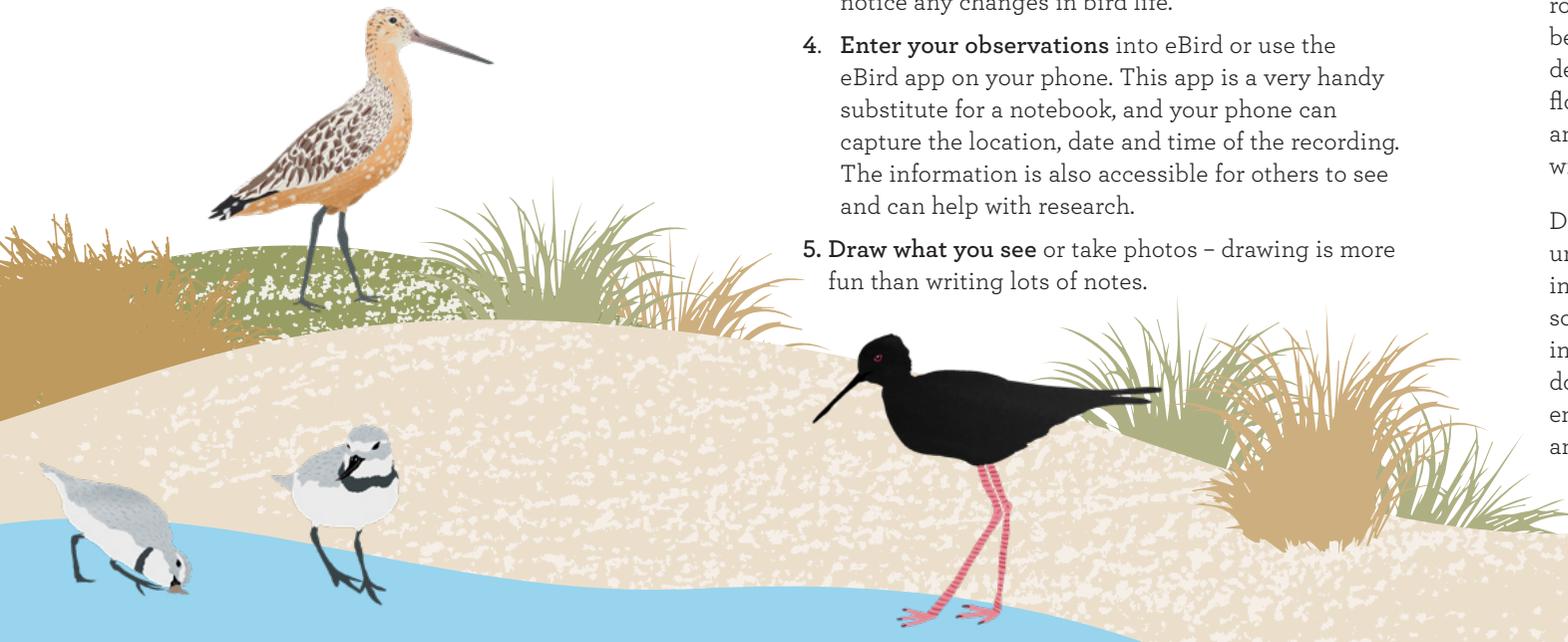
- Band number and any other text written on the band(s).
- Colour combinations in the order of left leg from top to bottom and right leg from top to bottom. Be aware that in some species bands may be on the tibia and/or the tarsus.
- How the band was obtained (eg bird found dead, killed by cat, washed up on beach, captured alive).
- Bird species (if known).
- Bird condition (dead, alive, injured, etc).
- Date found.
- Detailed locality information.
- Your contact details.



Why are dunes so important?

Natural sand dunes play a vital role in protecting our coastline, beaches and coastal developments from erosion, flooding and storm damage and provide shelter from the wind and sea spray.

Dunes are home to a number of unique native plant communities, invertebrates, lizards and birds, some of which (eg pīngao and several species of invertebrates and birds, such as katipō spiders and dotterel) are under threat from changes to their environment as a result of introduced species and human activity.



Tara iti/fairy tern

Sternula nereis/davisae

Nationally Critical



Photo: Glenda Rees

A small tern with pale grey upperparts and white underparts, a white rump and forked white tail. The wings have a dark grey web on the outer primary feathers and the legs are bright orange. Breeding adults have a bright yellow-orange bill and a black cap covering the crown and nape.



Length: 25 cm

Ruddy turnstone

Arenaria interpres

Migrant



Photo: Les Feasey

A distinctive stocky bird with a short, black-brown, slightly upturned bill, a short neck and short orange-red legs. The back and upper wings are reddish-brown with blackish-brown patches, which contrasts with the white underparts. The head, neck and breast are pied black and white.



Length: 21 cm

Tūturiwhatu/New Zealand dotterel

Charadrius obscurus aquilonius

Charadrius obscurus obscurus

**Recovering
Nationally Critical**



Photo: Rod Hay

A heavily built plover with a stout black bill and mid-grey legs. The brown underparts become off-white in autumn/early winter and orange-red from May onwards. Males are generally darker than females.



Length: 25 cm

Kuaka/bar-tailed godwit

Limosa lapponica/baueri

Declining



Photo: Glenda Rees

This large, long-legged bird is mostly brown above and pale below with a long, upturned pink and black bill. During the breeding season, males become bright rufous (reddish-brown) on the head, neck, breast and belly, while the less colourful females become strongly streaked, sometimes with a pale rufous wash.



Length: 39 cm

Huahou/lesser or red knot

Calidris canutus rogersi

Nationally Vulnerable



Photo: Neil Fitzgerald

This bird has a dark, medium-length bill and legs that range from yellowish as juveniles to dark grey as adults. The rump is slightly barred white. The non-breeding plumage is plain grey above and white below, with the belly, breast and face becoming reddish during the breeding season.



Length: 24 cm

Karoro/black-backed gull

Larus dominicanus dominicanus

Not Threatened



Photo: Oscar Thomas

A familiar gull with a white head and underparts, a black back, a yellow bill with a red spot near the tip of the lower mandible, and pale green legs. Juveniles are dark mottled brown with a black bill and legs.



Length: 60 cm

Red-necked stint

Calidris ruficollis

Migrant



Photo: Phil Battley

A tiny, delicate bird that is pale grey-brown above and off-white below and has dark legs and a short, straight, black bill. During the breeding season, adults have a rufous 'balaclava'.



Length: 15 cm

Tūturiwhatu/banded dotterel

Charadrius bicinctus bicinctus

Nationally Vulnerable



Photo: Jonathan Astin

A small, compact plover that is plain brown above and mainly white below. Males and females have a dark collar and a chestnut-coloured chest band, which is broader, especially in males, during the breeding season.



Length: 20 cm

Tarāpunga/red-billed gull

Larus novaehollandiae scopulinus

Declining



Photo: Shellie Evans

This bird is almost completely white but has a pale grey mantle, back and wing coverts, and black main flight feathers with white tips. The iris is white and the bill, eyelids and feet are scarlet, being particularly bright in the breeding season.



Length: 37 cm

Poaka/pied stilt

Himantopus himantopus leucocephalus

Not Threatened



Photo: Andrew Walmsley

This medium-large bird has very long, pink legs and a long, fine, black bill. The body is mainly white with a black back and wings, and black on the back of the head and neck.



Length: 38 cm

Kakī/black stilt

Himantopus himantopus

Nationally Critical



Photo: Sabine Bernert

A compact bird that is similar in appearance to the pied stilt but has entirely black plumage, shorter legs and a thicker bill.



Length: 40 cm

