

Watola, G. 2011. The Discovery of New Zealand's Birds. (3rd Edition in prep.)
Based on: Watola, G. 2009. The Discovery of New Zealand's Birds. (2nd Edition)
Arun Books, Orewa, New Zealand.
Updated and amended text supplied by George Watola, October, 2011.
Page numbers follow Watola, G. 2009 (2nd Edition)
Bar-tailed godwit: pp 137-138.

Eastern Bar-tailed Godwit (Kuaka) *Limosa lapponica baueri* Naumann 1836, Migrant
1835 Bay of Islands, Northland
1850 Norfolk Island

The "curlew" Cook recorded in 1769 at Mercury Bay was probably this species. First Officer G. Labe on de Surville's expedition recorded "Long-billed Curlew" at Doubtless Bay in December 1769 (Andrews 1987), but it was also more likely (?) to have been a godwit. Yate (1835) recorded it, although Oliver (1955) thought his description more closely resembled the Banded Rail.

"Katatai – This bird answers nearest to the god-wit, of any I am acquainted with. It feeds upon the sea-shore, and in sandy grounds. It is about sixteen inches long, from the point of the beak to the end of the tail. Its plumage is much variegated, striped with black, and edged with a primrose colour. Its legs are very slender, for the size of the body. It is doubtless a bird of the plover kind, and its habits are similar to those of that bird. It is much sought after by the natives; but is most difficult to procure, being roused by the slightest noise, and very swift of wing". (Yate 1835).

Percy Earl collected specimens at Waikouaiti in Otago in 1840, where he noted their abundance. Dieffenbach also recorded "curlew" on Chatham Island about June 1840. They were shot by McCormick on 19/10/1841 at the Bay of Islands. G.R. Gray proposed the name *Limosa novaezelandiae* for New Zealand godwits in 1845. On one of the syntypes, the label states that it was collected in July 1841 by P. Earl (British Museum Nat. Hist). *L. novaezelandiae* was used regularly until 1873, and occasionally until 1909 (Miskelly 2000).

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica menzbieri* Portenko 1936.

This subspecies from north-east Siberia also visits New Zealand, judging by New Zealand colour-flagged godwits that have returned to their Siberian breeding grounds. The first mention is by Yuri Gerasimov in a Birding-NZ email on 24/08/2004 referring to New Zealand banded godwits seen at Moroscechnaya. It is not known exactly where these were banded. One was seen at Farewell Spit in December 2005.

