SNIPES, SANDPIPERS, GODWITS AND CURLEWS

About 79 species, of which 2 breed in New Zealand (transantarctic snipe and 32 in North America as migrants for the northern winter.

Apart from stints (known as plovers in North America), these waders have a slender bill that is as long as or longer than the head. In curlews and godwits, the bill is massive and flexible at the tip, and the mandibles open when performing a softswoop or shallow water. All have long, pointed wings, rapid flight, a long neck, long legs and, for frigate, a short tail. Their eyes are smaller than those of plovers and dotterels, as suits their more tacit, visual feeding, Geographical or not breeding.

Their food has not been studied in detail in New Zealand. They take a variety of mid-sized burrowing crabs, small amphipods and oystercatchers, polychaete worms and small gastropods and bristle mussels. Their diet includes insect larvae and pupae of crampfis (Tritipedia), midges (Chirono-
midas), beetles and flies; they may also take spiders and ephrines. They swallow grass, seeds and rubbish, but whether by accident or design is not known for certain. The various species probe to different depths according to the length of their bill. Most of the rapid, curlews and godwits, as well as the frigate

Curlews and godwits are highly gregarious species. They breed in large colonies on the beach or in the intertidal zone. During the day, they may congregate in large groups, sometimes in the hundreds or even thousands, to forage in the mudflats. At night, they roost in the same areas, often in larger flocks. This behavior helps them to find food and to deter predators. Curlews and godwits are known for their characteristic calls, which are used to communicate with each other in the flock. They also use these calls to mark their territory and to warn other birds of potential threats.

The life cycle of curlews and godwits is similar to other shorebirds, with adult birds breeding in the summer and raising a single brood of chicks. The chicks are downy and have a black and white plumage. They are often found in small groups, either with their parents or with other adult birds. Curlews and godwits are known for their ability to fly long distances, often migrating to and from breeding grounds in different parts of the world. This behavior is thought to be an adaptation to the changing food availability and climate conditions in different parts of the world. Overall, curlews and godwits are important components of the shorebird community and play a crucial role in the ecological dynamics of their habitats.

Bibliography:

For more information, visit: https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds/shorebirds/courlews-godwits/

Review of the literature and the ecological role of curlews and godwits.