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Birds of New Zealand - Locality Guide. 3rd edn.

Arun Books, Orewa, New Zealand.

Whimbrel: pp 174-175.



WHIMBREL

Family Scolopacidae

Species *Numenius phaeopus*

Common name Whimbrel

Status Migrant

Abundance Rare

Size 430 mm (cf sparrow 145 mm, Bar-tailed Godwit 390 mm)

Habitat Found in estuaries and harbours.

Worldwide range Breeds across northern North America, Europe and Asia. It migrates south in the northern winter and the Asiatic race (*N. p. variegatus*)

winters around the western Pacific rim and in particular in northern Australia. The American race (*N. p. hudsonicus*) winters on central Pacific islands. Both arrive in New Zealand in estuaries and harbours from time to time.

New Zealand range Can be expected in small numbers from the northern harbours to Southland.

Description

Head Brown, with a white centre-stripe on crown and with white eyebrows.

Upperparts Brown, streaked with buff. **Underparts** Light brown, streaked longitudinally with buff. **Rump** Whitish (Asiatic), warm brown (Hudsonian). **Tail** Grey and black barred. **Bill** Dark brown and curved downwards. **Legs** Bluish-grey.

Conspicuous features

- White head striping.
- Looks like a smaller curlew.
- Down-curved bill.

Conspicuous characteristics

- When resting at high tide keeps to the edge of the godwit flocks.
- Remains alert with heads up at roost.

Call A rippling trill of seven “ti ti ti ti ti ti” notes. Birds call throughout the night.

Where to find – North Island

South Auckland – Miranda at high tide roosts. P. 302.

Bay of Plenty – Matata at the lagoons. P. 320.

Manawatu – At the estuary. P. 336.

Where to find – South Island

Marlborough – Nelson near Tic Toc Road and Rabbit Island Bridge. P. 344.

Marlborough – Motueka Sandspit. P. 344.

Southland – Waituna Lagoon and Awarua Bay. P. 364.