

A FURTHER RECORD OF THE BLACK-TAILED GODWIT (*Limosa limosa*) IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA

By HOWARD JARMAN

In company with Mr. Jack Jones, of Melbourne, the writer visited the fresh-water lake at Buckland Park, near Port Gawler, on February 6, 1949.

The water having receded considerably, there were large areas of mud exposed. While viewing an assemblage of Banded Stilts (*Cladorhynchus leucocephalus*), White-headed Stilts (*Himantopus leucocephalus*) and Avocets (*Recurvirostra novae-hollandiae*), Jones noted a strange, large Wader. A plain-coloured bird with very long bill and legs, it permitted of fairly close observation before it flew off. Once on the wing it revealed a prominent white rump and wing-stripe, while the legs extended beyond the tail. These features confirmed our first impression—the stranger was a Godwit. In flight, the Godwit behaved in a most erratic manner. First flying swiftly just above water level, then mounting up into the air, only to swoop down again, it circled, climbed and dived over the lake for about a minute before finally settling behind a distant clump of lignum.

On February 8, the writer was once more at the lake in the hope of seeing the Black-tailed Godwit. At the site of the observation of two days earlier, a flock of Stilts rose and circled restlessly. Against the compact white flock could be seen a single brown bird of about the same size, and a white wing-stripe was easily discernable.

The Godwit settled with the Stilts, and careful scrutiny revealed ten birds of this species in two groups of six and four respectively. They were a little apart from the mixed flock of Stilts and Avocets. A few Sharp-tailed Sandpipers (*Erolia acuminata*) were also present. Most of the Godwits made no movement, but one probed deeply with the long, slender bill.

There were two sizes in the Godwits (? male and female), but no obvious differences in the plumage, either in flight or at rest, were observed. The larger birds were of about the same proportions as a Stilt but the legs were not as long.

While the Stilts and Avocets rose several times, the Godwits only fluttered a few feet and seemed very complacent, except one which flew off in the same erratic manner as the bird seen two days earlier; it did not return.

Resting birds were brownish above (not mottled or barred). The neck and breast were light-brown and the abdomen whitish. Frontal areas seemed to be lighter in colour than the crown. The legs were dark. With the distal half dark and the remainder lighter (reddish-brown), the bill was straight and very long, and not upturned as often quoted.

In flight the legs projected well beyond the tail, wing-bar, rump and axilla showed white, and the tail was black. A rather weak cry of "keck-keck" was uttered a few times.

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