

Flyway path



The Avon-Heathcote Estuary/Ihutai Trust was formed in 2002 after 3 years of public workshops where the importance and value of the estuary were discussed. The Trust represents Christchurch residents and works for the protection and enhancement of this valuable area for wildlife and people to share and enjoy.

For more information on the Estuary Trust visit;
www.estuary.org.nz
or email us at info@estuary.org.nz

What we can do to help the Godwits

Godwits must be well rested and well fed in order to survive their journey back to the breeding grounds in Alaska. If not, they will die from exhaustion at sea.

Godwits often flock and rest on the edge of Southshore Spit. If you are there and see them;

- WHEN WALKING; Stay well away from flocks of birds. Give them a wide berth. Walk between the birds and sand dunes.
- DOG OWNERS; Have your dog on a leash at all times. Running dogs, chasing birds "for fun" can be extremely stressful to the birds and prevent them from feeding and resting.
- If you see a dog chasing birds you could talk to the owner and explain why dogs should be on a leash.
- KAYAKERS/WINDSURFERS; Avoid going near flocks of birds to prevent disturbance.
- Litter can harm the Godwits. Take your own rubbish home and if you see other rubbish, please pick it up and dispose of it properly at home.

Avon-Heathcote Estuary/Ihutai

'A Wetland of International Significance'



Original Godwit photo by Andrew Cossland



Avon-Heathcote
Estuary Ihutai Trust



Our Estuary

The Avon-Heathcote Estuary/Ihutai measures round 880 hectares and is the largest semi enclosed shallow estuary in Canterbury and is one of New Zealand's most important coastal wetlands. Sheltered from open ocean swells, fresh water from the Avon River/Otākaro and Heathcote River/Ōpāwaho mixes with seawater from the incoming tides.

Extensive mudflats host nearly 200 different species of invertebrate, 37 fish species and as many as 141 different bird species including its most famous bird, the Godwits. But the estuary hosts many other unique birds such as Oystercatchers, Banded Dotterel, Spoonbills and Grey Teal.



East Asian-Australasian Flyway

The East Asian-Australasian Flyway (EAAF), is one of nine flyways that circle our world. The EAAF extends from Awarua Bay in the south of New Zealand to the North Slope in Alaska, and from as far west as Myanmar to Alaska in the east. It is one of the most significant biological features of planet Earth.

East Asian-Australian Flyways Partnership (EAAFP)

New Zealand is one of 22 members of the East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership. This is the key body seeking to guide governmental and non-governmental action to ensure that declines of migratory water bird populations are reduced. They want to ensure that key habitat along the flyway are protected, and where possible enhanced, for the migratory birds. A total of 138 sites now hold Flyway status, only 4 are in NZ: Firth of Thames (Waikato), Farewell Spit (Tasman), Awarua Bay (Southland) and the Avon-Heathcote Estuary/Ihutai (EAAFP 137).