



a million  
voices for  
nature

# Black-Tailed Godwit



Gordon Langsbury (rsfb-

A large flock of black-tailed godwits is captured in flight over a wetland landscape. The birds are scattered across the sky, with some appearing closer and larger, while others are smaller and more distant. The background shows a body of water in the foreground, a line of green vegetation, and a hazy, overcast sky. The overall scene is a naturalistic depiction of the birds in their habitat.

# Learning Objectives

- To be able:
  - To identify a black-tailed godwit
  - To recall some facts about the black-tailed godwit

# Summer plumage

Overall large  
sized wader

Long, straight  
bill with  
orange base

Mottled grey-brown  
back

Orange-red  
breast

Black and white  
tail

Barred white belly

Very long  
legs



Winter plumage



In flight





# Black-tailed godwit

- Is a wading bird
- Its scientific name *Limosa limosa* is derived from the Latin word for mud - *Limus*.
- They breed in damp areas with tussocky vegetation and bare, muddy areas (may be found in other wet habitats in winter e.g coast)
- Very rare breeder (50 pairs in UK - almost all on RSPB reserves)
- Once widespread, became extinct in the UK in the 19th century, probably because of
  - drainage,
  - shooting
  - egg collecting.



# Dee Estuary and Black-tailed godwits

- The estuary is internationally important for these birds.
- We got roughly 6000 last year on the estuary
- These numbers have been increasing
- The birds here in Summer are non-breeders and have come all the way from Iceland!

**Summer  
plumage**

Large  
sized  
wader

Long, straight  
bill  
with orange  
base

Mottled grey-  
brown  
back

Orange-red  
breast

Black and  
white  
tail

Barred white  
belly

Very long  
black





# Test Time!

Are the following birds black-tailed godwits or are they something else?



Danny Green (rsfb-



Danny Green (rsfb-  
images.com)



Chris Knights (rspb-images.com)



Steve Knell (rspb-images.com)





David Tipling (rspb-images.com)

