

# International Destination

Migratory shorebirds can best be seen here between August and April.  
Here are some of the birds you may see ....



## Eastern Curlew

*Numenius madagascariensis*

The world's largest shorebirds, they are listed as rare due to habitat destruction and hunting on their migratory routes through Asia. During migration, they travel a 20 000 km round trip with each leg of the journey up to 5-7000 km.

They are the first shorebird to arrive in Western Port in late July. Adults leave in early March arriving on the breeding areas in eastern Russia and northeast China by early May. Normally weighing 8-900 gm, they increase to about 1.3 kg before migration. They use their incredible beaks to probe the mud for crabs and ghost shrimps.



## Bar-tailed Godwit

*Limosa lapponica*

Research suggests that godwits make a direct, non-stop flight of over 10 000 km across the Pacific from southwest Alaska to Australia and northern New Zealand on their southward migration. This is the world's longest known single migratory flight distance.

Arriving in Western Port in late September/October, breeding birds depart at the end of March. Almost all Bar-tailed Godwits use the Yellow Sea area of northern China and Korea as their main stopover on their northward migration. Some non-breeding birds (less than four years) remain in Western Port all year. They probe the mud for food and need about 245 kcal per day to survive.



## Whimbrel

*Numenius phaeropus*

Whimbrels are spread all around the Australian coast with most staying in the mangrove habitat in Australia's far north. They arrive in Western Port in September and leave in April. Little is known about their migration to and from their eastern Siberian breeding grounds.

About 80% of Whimbrels in Western Port roost at Observation Point. The Point is at the southern limit of their non-breeding range and is also the southern limit of the growth of mangroves in Australia. Whimbrels look like a small Eastern Curlew with shorter bill and legs and research shows that they love to eat crabs!



Breeding plumage



Non-breeding plumage

## Red Knot

*Calidris canutus*

Observation Point is often visited by flocks of Red Knot. The population here is thought to breed in the Chukhotsk region of northeast Siberia. The only known stopover on migration is the Yellow Sea in northern China and Korea.

Many young knots spend their first year in Australia, moving to New Zealand feeding grounds in their second year before migrating north at three years. You may see them rapidly 'drilling' along the shoreline. They probe the mud 'feeling' rather than looking for food. Red Knots undergo an amazing transformation from non-breeding to breeding plumage. The grey body feathers are moulted and replaced by a gorgeous rust red plumage!

