

has even been stated that they all depart in one huge flock from Spirits Bay in the far north of New Zealand. The facts are, however, that flocks from all over New Zealand begin to move north in March and leave when they are ready. Probably the largest flocks take their final departure from the Parengarenga Harbour, but Farewell Spit, in the South Island, is also a jumping-off place.

There is a restless energy shown by these birds ready to leave, and the slightest alarm or a loud cry from one of them will send the whole flock into the air with a roar of wings and chorus of wild cries. After several false alarms they finally string out into a trailing wedge and disappear in a northerly direction. There is still much speculation and theorising about how these migrating flocks keep a course for their destination, but so far the only fact that has been proved by experiment is that all migratory birds possess a "homing sense" enabling them to head consistently for a point indefinitely distant. It should be added that a few non-breeding birds remain in New Zealand throughout the year.

Not very much is known about the nesting habits of the Pacific godwit. Its haunts are the tundra slopes of Arctic lands beyond the limits of human habitation, and the nests may be seen by only a few Eskimo and an occasional naturalist. In recent years American naturalists have described the nests, mere depressions lined with grass, the four pear-shaped mottled eggs, and the downy young that grow so fast that within a few weeks they can go with their parents on the long return flight to the feeding grounds of the South.

There is still left in this subject of bird migration across the Equator much of the mystery that was sensed by the ancient Maori, with his limited knowledge of overseas geography, when he asked: "Who has seen the nest of the kuaka?" Our godwits perform one of the longest regular migrations known, and may well be ranked amongst the more remarkable of New Zealand birds. Fortunately their northern breeding grounds are undisturbed and likely to remain so. Their feeding grounds here, except for occasional reclamation and pollution, are also unchanged, and there is no reason to fear reduction in their numbers from these causes. A short open season for the shooting of godwit is permitted at present, but with the increase of settlement and rapid transport by launch and car it will undoubtedly be necessary to prohibit strictly any shooting of this species if visiting godwits are to have a sporting chance of returning each year to the Arctic to breed.