



Firth of Thames – Wetland of International Importance



Thousands of wading birds at Access Bay, Miranda, Firth of Thames. Photo: Brian Chudleigh

FEW COASTAL AREAS in New Zealand offer a better habitat for wading and migratory birds than the Firth of Thames.

In recognition of its importance for such species as the sharp tailed sandpiper, the eastern bar-tailed godwit, grey and ringed plover, Mongolian dotterel, Terek and broad-billed sandpiper, and New Zealand's own unique wrybill, the Firth of Thames was recently gazetted as a Wetland of International Importance. It is New Zealand's fifth.

Much credit for gaining this recognition must go to Forest and Bird's former northern field officer Jan Riddick, who prepared the main part of the nomination. The Department of Conservation assisted.

It is estimated that the 8500 ha area of intertidal feeding grounds on the Firth of Thames is an internationally important feeding ground for about 30,000 birds. 🐦

