



*Farewell Spit stretches 25 kilometres into Golden Bay. The sand and pebbles which form the spit originate from the turbulent West Coast rivers and are carried northwards up the coast. At the tip of the South Island the current patterns abruptly change and the sediment settles. The grains are then sorted southward by the wind into a series of constantly changing dunes up to 25 metres high. The spit is visited by tens of thousands of wading birds each summer and was designated a "wetland of international importance" in 1976.*

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north opens to the sea allowing the cold air from the mountains to flow out at night. The forests are therefore more influenced by the warm, moist coastal climate and are richer and more diverse. They contain dense stands of rimu, miro, matai, beech, rata, nikau and, most sig-

nificantly, pukatea. This mighty buttress-trunked tree reaches its southern limit as a conspicuous component of the forest only a little further south. Birds such as South Island kaka and yellow-crowned parakeets abound in these Heaphy and Oparara forests. In the evening a blue

duck may whistle upstream, while deeper into the night a great spotted kiwi may call. Long ago, moas collected limestone pebbles here as gizzard stones then deposited them further inland in non-limestone areas, inadvertently providing evidence of their passage.