

The Karaka Bird Hide

Just a little north of the Goldfields Shopping Centre at the carpark on Brown Street is Thames' best kept little secret that will make anyone's walk or bike trek a little more interesting. The Karaka Bird Hide.

This enticing little Hobbit hut is reached by walking through shrub 'tunnel', clomping over a wooden boardwalk, and *voila!*...a mangrove shoreline hugging the Firth, and well above the estuary muck, and shorebirds

galore, all viewable from the inside windows of the protective hide. An "urban spyhole for shorebird watching" as one GPS website put it. Best times to view shorebirds? 2 hours before and after high tide.

Adding to the interest is that this hide was built from compensation funds from the Greenpeace *Rainbow Warrior* bombing in Auckland in July, 1985. The current *Rainbow Warrior* visited Auckland this July for a commemorative open house.

View our story at www.coromandelife.co.nz/fliplview/autumn_winter_2014/index.html#13.



Photos by Alan Duff www.crep.co.nz



BIRDS OF THE FIRTH

The Firth is one of the major stopping points for thousands of shore and migratory wader birds. "One of the three most important coastal areas for shorebirds in New Zealand."

In spring, see godwits and knots arriving from Siberia and Alaska; in the autumn they head north again. Pied oystercatchers and wrybills are native birds traveling from other parts of New Zealand.

These illustrations of shore birds are from the 'Miranda Shorebird Teaching Resource' from the Dept. of Conservation's list of pdf materials. (Search for the term to find the DOC page which lists many pdf documents.)

COMMON WADERS ALONG THE SHORES OF THE FIRTH

1. Spur-winged plover
2. White-faced heron
3. Variable oystercatcher
4. South Island pied oystercatcher
5. Bar-tailed godwit
6. Pied stilt
7. New Zealand dotterel
8. Red knot
9. Turnstones
10. Banded dotterel
11. Wrybill plover

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2015: Year of the Godwit



Image from
'Tracking Alaska's Godwits'
by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology.
View the video at
www.vimeo.com/26239601

Local bar-tailed godwit is world record holder!

In March 2007 a female bar-tailed godwit, known from her leg flag as E7, took off from the Firth of Thames and flew into the record books. When she returned to the Firth six months later, she had flown nearly 30,000km on her migration to breeding grounds in Alaska, via the Yellow Sea along the coast of China. She returned to NZ in one nonstop flight of 11,680km in just over 8 days – a record for any non-seabird. The implanted satellite tags used to track E7 and other godwits were attached at the Miranda Shorebird Centre in association with an international network of researchers.

October 5th, John Drummond sent an email to notify many of us in Tairua that the godwits were back and flying over Tairua Harbour. Thanks John!

Pukorokoro Miranda Shorebird Centre

Gleaming white banks of shells, cheniers, line the Miranda coast, part of a system which has built up the coastal plain over the last 4500 years. The abundance of food found here is what attracts tens of thousands of shorebirds.

Birding information, environmental education, downloadable teaching guides and handouts, accommodation and a comprehensive natural history bookshop can be found at the Miranda Shorebird Centre, open 7 days a week. Visit www.miranda-shorebird.org.nz