

Changes in the non-breeding distribution of Continental Black-tailed Godwits *Limosa limosa limosa* over 50 years: a synthesis of surveys

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Over the years a large body of information has been gathered regarding the migratory and wintering distribution of Black-tailed Godwits *Limosa limosa*. Much of this information is only available in the so-called “grey” literature. Here we present a summary of non-breeding count data for the continental race *L. l. limosa* covering the last fifty years. We suggest that there have been important changes in the winter and spring-staging distribution and numbers of this now threatened population. The winter distribution covers a wide area from Senegal and Guinea-Bissau in the west, through Mali and Chad and extends into the Middle East as far as Iran. During spring, the most important staging sites are around the Mediterranean basin, with key areas in Iberia and France. Throughout the range, numbers have changed over time. Today, areas in West Africa, like Senegal, Morocco and, to some extent, Guinea-Bissau have much lower numbers of godwits than 20 years ago, whereas in Mali, Chad and north Cameroon numbers have remained more or less stable. Larger numbers of godwits now occur in southern Europe, Portugal and Spain; but the French wetlands have lost some of their past importance.