

# RANDOM HOUSE TEACHERS' RESOURCE KIT

## E3 Call Home

Janet Hunt

Every year in March thousands of godwits leave New Zealand and fly almost 17,000 kilometres to Alaska, where they mate and raise new godwits, and then turn around and fly all the way back to New Zealand.

This is the story of two godwits whose flight in 2007 was tracked using transmitters. Millions of people watched their progress on the internet. A male bird named E3 mysteriously turned back when he reached Papua New Guinea and then he ceased to transmit altogether. What had happened to him?

A female named E7, however, showed that godwits can fly from Alaska to New Zealand – right across the Pacific – a distance of 11,200 non-stop kilometres.

Packed with wonderful photos, fascinating information about godwits and other wading birds, this is an enchanting story, a brilliant book for any child. A true tale to spark the imaginations of children and adults.



Janet Hunt is an award-winning writer for both children and adults – she won the NZ Post Book of the Year for *A Bird in the Hand* and the Montana Medal for Non-fiction for *Wetlands of New Zealand: A bittersweet story*.



### SPECIFICATIONS:

Imprint: Random House NZ  
Classification: Children's Non-Fiction  
Publication: September 2009  
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Format: Paperback  
Extent: 40pp  
Readership: 7-12

### RESOURCE KIT CONTAINS:

- Before reading
- Comprehension
- Language
- Definitions
- Science
- Ethics
- Art and design
- Writing
- Further reading

*Note on reading aloud:* with younger students it may be better to read through the story of E3 (the main text) before reading the strip of facts along the bottom of the pages.

## Before reading

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1. Look at the cover: what kind of bird is this? Who or what is E3? Look closely at the bird.
2. Why do you think the cover words were chosen?
3. How does the cover let you know if the story is made up or real?
4. What do the words 'migration' and 'misadventure' mean?

## Comprehension

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1. What does a wading bird do? (p4)
2. What is so 'extraordinary' about the distance E3 is flying? (p5)
3. Where are godwits found in New Zealand? (p6)
4. What do they eat? (p7)
5. Why do godwits have long bills? Why are male and female bills different? (p7)
6. Why did E3 need to eat as much as he could? (p8 and 20)
7. What does 'in tune with the tide' mean? (p12)
8. What is the most important rule when bird-watching?
9. What is the Miranda Shorebird Centre? (p15)
10. What had puzzled the scientists for so long? (p15)
11. How were the birds tracked? (p16–17)
12. What was the total weight of the transmitter and battery on E3? (p17)
13. How do the scientists tell one bird from another? (p18–19)
14. How much of their body is fat? Why? (p20) Find something that weighs 500 grams.
15. How many years have godwits been protected?
16. Why did the birds seem excited? (p21)
17. What are three facts about godwit feathers?
18. Why do you think the godwits couldn't stop and rest on the water? (p23)
19. Why do birds fly in a V pattern?
20. How long did it take E7 to get to the first rest stop? (p28)
21. What are humans doing to wading birds' habitats? (p28–29) Why?
22. What was E7's total flying time from Miranda to Alaska? (p28, 30)

23. What things do the parent birds do to care for their eggs and chicks? (p30–31)

24. What is one of the great bird mysteries? (p31)

25. What was amazing about the flight back home? (p32, 33)

26. What can you do if you see a banded bird? (p38)

## Language

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There is some clever language in the story part of the book.

1. Alliteration: the same consonant sound is repeated. For example, 'scoffing skinny worms', 'crunchy crabs', 'feast of flying'. This adds interest to words when you read aloud. Make up some alliteration to describe these actions: swimming, sleeping, running, sweating, singing.
2. Similes: A simile compares one thing to something else, using the words 'like' or 'as'. For example, 'Sam's feet were like lead'.

Illustrate one of these similes from the book: 'watching like hungry cats', 'eating like a pig', 'net like a spider web', 'excited as children at a party', 'birds turning like a scarf flung in the wind'.

3. Onomatopoeia: this means using words that imitate the sound they describe. For example, water sounds in the book: 'swished and sloshed'. Find some more sound-alike words in the book.

## Definitions

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Define these words from the book:

- |                     |                |
|---------------------|----------------|
| a) breeding plumage | d) transmitter |
| b) flight feathers  | e) saltie      |
| c) hide             |                |

## Science

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1. Research some more facts about the godwit. Use the list of internet sites and books on page 39.
2. Draw an accurate, life-sized picture of a godwit. Use the measurements on page 5. Colour it with the bright breeding

plumage (p9). Write the three names for the godwit under your picture.

3. Wading birds: find out about other wading birds in New Zealand. Make a poster showing the birds (see page 10 and 11). Under each bird include a fact

box with this information: scientific name, special markings, where they live, nesting, threats to the bird.

4. Animal migration: choose another migratory wild creature to research, and look especially at how, where, when and why it travels. Present your findings in a large poster using diagrams and illustrations.
5. Marine worms (p6): New Zealand beaches have about 50,000 marine worms per square metre! Find out more about these weird creatures.

6. Make a 'life list' (p13) of all the birds you know.
7. Bird feet: Find out the differences between godwit feet, duck feet and pukeko feet. Research and sketch the feet belonging to these birds, listing how each type can be useful (hunting, swimming, eating, etc).

## Ethics

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What humans do can affect native birds' habitats, food supplies, breeding and travelling, and make the bird population bigger or smaller. (See p28–29 of *E3 Call Home*.) Sometimes people can change the way they do things so that there is less harm to birds. For instance, Auckland International Airport has had to think about the flight paths of godwits – not just the flight paths of planes – in its planning and decisions.

([www.doc.govt.nz/conservation/native-animals/birds/sea-and-shore-birds/mirandas-migratory-birds/](http://www.doc.govt.nz/conservation/native-animals/birds/sea-and-shore-birds/mirandas-migratory-birds/))

As a class, discuss one or more of the following questions. Support your opinions with examples and any facts you have learned.

1. Should people change their lives so that endangered native animals can thrive? Why or why not?
2. How much should human beings be prepared to change their behaviour for an endangered native animal:
  - a) as individuals or households?
  - b) as businesses?
  - c) as cities?
  - d) as a country?
  - e) internationally?

What are some examples of how human beings might be able to make a difference in each level?

3. The following may not always be the same:
  - a) *working to affect birds' populations less*
  - b) *doing more to protect birds*

What might some of the differences be? As a class, come up with examples of activities that could fall into category a), and then think of some activities that could be described as category b).

## Art and design

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1. Paint a picture of a godwit. Instead of a realistic image, try to create an 'impression' of a godwit. Experiment with some art effects such as: mixing colours, showing movement in the wings, different brush effects, and contrast colour in the background.
2. Draw your own map of E3's and E7's journey based on the many different maps in the book. Illustrate the map with drawings of some incidents that may happen to godwits.
3. People talk about a 'bird's eye view': a view from high up in the air is different from the way people on the ground see the world. Try to create a scene from a godwit's point of view – looking down on the sea or land below. Look at aerial photos to get some clues.

## Writing

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1. Anthropomorphism: Imagination is helpful in understanding the natural world. When we give human qualities to nature it's called 'anthropomorphism' (say it slowly; an-thro-po-morph-ism). It's as if we 'morph' animals into humans by giving them feelings and thoughts like ours. It has some basis in real life: studies have shown that animals do have feelings and personalities. Use the story of E3 as a model to write the story of another New Zealand animal that travels a long way.  
For example, the monarch butterfly, the eel, or salmon. Imagine the animal as a character and describe its feelings and reactions to threats on the journey.
2. Character: Follow the activities of the small white cartoon character on the bottom of the pages. Give the character a name and invent a story about him or her. It might be a story about saving the godwits. Draw a four-frame comic strip using the same character.

## Further reading

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- *Elwyn's Dream* by Ali Foster – about saving the rare takahe.
- *A Bird in the Hand* by Janet Hunt – the author of *E3 Call Home* has written an award-winning book about conservation in New Zealand.
- *Atoms, Dinosaurs and DNA* by Veronika Meduna and Rebecca Priestley – an award-winning book about some famous New Zealand scientists, including ornithologist (bird scientist) Sir Walter Buller.