Black-tailed Godwit

Regno: fauna
Birds
pittimareale.jpg [1]

Black-tailed Godwit - *Limosa limosa*

Slim wader with strikingly long legs and straight bill, pink-orange at the base but with black tip.

Scarce sexual dimorphism, but livery differs considerably from season to season: in summer the plumage becomes a beautiful brick red (more marked in males), the flanks are barred with black, and lower belly white; in winter it is a uniform grey, with evident pink-based bill.

The important identification characteristic in flight in all seasons is the white band on the upper wing parts, which distinguishes it from the similar Bar tailed Godwit (*Limosa lapponica*), a far rarer species.

It nests in central east Europe, without reaching far north (except for a sub-species which breeds in Iceland and the Lofoten and Shetland Isles).

In its breeding grounds, it shows a marked preference for wet meadows and boggy marshes, whilst during migration is frequent estuaries, marshlands and aquipratas.

It fiercely defends its nests and chicks, flying low over any intruders and giving penetrating calls. Sometimes the adults pretend to be wounded to divert the attention of any predators looking for their nest.

The Black-tailed Godwit migrates twice a year in Italy and over-winters in some southern regions.

Some pairs have recently started to breed in Piedmont and other areas in the north. In the wetlands of northern Tuscany the species can most frequently be seen in March and April.

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