About 79 species, of which 3 breed in New Zealand from migratory snipe and 32 which New Zealand as migrants for the northern winter.

Apart from stints (known as peeps in North America), these waders have a slender bill that is as long as or longer than the head. In carinids and godwits, the bill is sensitive and flexible at the tip, and the mandibles open during pecking to neutral or shallow angles.

All have long, pointed wings, rapid flight, a long, neck, long legs, and, for birds, a short tail. Their eyes are smaller than those of plovers and dotterels, as suits their more tacit, less visible feeding. Cormorants when not breeding.

Their feet have not been studied in detail in New Zealand. They take a variety of mudda-burrowing crabs, small amphibians and ostracod crustaceans, polychaete worms and small gastropods from beneath the mud, and, as they forage, they upturn the fine sand or silt, then turn and filter out the material; if chitons, mussels, clams, and barnacles; and the buried leaves and branches. Their bill is mainly black with pink tips. They cannot move or display their beautiful plumage, but by breaking up the mud or by the impacts of the waves, their color may be seen. They have a long, straight neck and a long, slender body. They are found in the New Zealand.