

What Hope for Shorebirds?

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Part 1. Feeding

When the tide is out, the mudflat shows,
And then that is where our shorebird goes.
It seeks out its prey with probe and prod,
Finds a small crab underneath its clod
Of earth, dismembers it with a shake.
Of such small morsels, its meal does make.

Its footprints stand starkly in the mud,
They'll wash away in a tidal flood.
A walker comes by, with dog off leash.
"It is my right to be on this beach."
The bird is wary and flies away
Its meal must wait for another day.

Part 2. Roosting

When the tide's high they gather in flocks,
To quietly roost on sand or rocks.
With their heads tucked in, they rest or sleep.
They cannot hunt when the water's deep.
They'll rest here until the water drops
It's the only time their feeding stops.

The roost site is near their feeding ground.
They don't fly far to be safe and sound.
Peace is short, a fishing boat comes by.
It approaches close, and they have to fly.
They settle elsewhere, not where they'd like.
At risk now from a predator's strike.

Part 3. Migrating

The breeding ground lies so far away.
Though the summer's short, it has long days.
They fly for weeks, their trip's without peer.
There, and back, each and every year.
Along the way they will rest and feed
At staging sites, when they have the need.

But land is scarce all along their route
So the mudflats are "reclaimed" to suit.
And because they have no voice, these birds,
The politicians don't hear their words.
So they can't feed, and thus they perish,
From loss of land, these birds we cherish.