

WHIMBREL

Numenius phaeopus

Other: Hudsonian Curlew

N.p. hudsonicus

N.p. variegatus

non-breeding visitor, occasional winterer

The Whimbrel is a Holarctic breeding species that winters to continental lands well S of the Equator around the globe (Dement'ev and Gladkov 1951c, Cramp and Simmons 1983, Higgins and Davies 1996, AOU 1998). Three subspecies have been recognized, two of which have occurred in the Pacific: *N.p. variegatus* of Asia and *N.p. hudsonicus* of North America. Presumed *variegatus* (can be difficult to separate from nominate *phaeopus* of Europe) is a common migrant and winter visitor to Micronesia E to the Marshalls and Wake Atoll (Schipper 1985, Clapp 1990, Wiles 2005, Rauzon et al. 2008), whereas *hudsonicus* has occurred several times in New Zealand (Higgins and Davies 1996). Both forms have reached the Hawaiian Islands where, interestingly, there seems to be no geographic separation to the occurrence pattern as in other Asian and N American counterpart taxa. Several individuals have apparently returned repeatedly to the same locations in fall or winter, indicating successful migrations to and from Arctic breeding grounds.

Records of 11 Whimbrels occur from the *Northwestern Hawaiian Islands*. The first record for the Hawaiian Islands was of a *variegatus* Whimbrel observed at **Midway** on 2 Nov 1940 (*E* 14:21). Other dates for individuals at Midway include 6 Jan-1 Apr 1957 (*variegatus*; *E* 18:03); 2 Oct 1982 (*hudsonicus*; P. Pyle 1984); 31 Jan-Feb 1996 (*hudsonicus*; [HRBP](#) 1089-1090, 1103-1104, 1439-1440) returning 18 Nov 1996-12 May 1997 ([HRBP](#) 1121-1122) and 4-15 Oct 1997; and 29 Apr 1999 (*variegatus*) returning 12 Mar-8 May 2000 and 3 Dec 2000-26 Mar 2001. On **Laysan** there is an unconfirmed sight record for Sep 1961 (Ely and Clapp 1973), one observed 22 Mar-20 Apr 1986 (*variegatus*), and one 11-29 Sep 1990 which was found dead on the latter date (BPBM 178355, *variegatus*). One found on a ship with a broken wing was delivered to Laysan 26 Aug 1988 (*hudsonicus*; [HRBP](#) 0866) was banded, and remained there (at home with the Bristle-thighed Curlews that become flightless when molting) for nearly seven years, being last recorded on 14 Jul 1995. Another of unknown subspecies was reported on Laysan in Dec 2004. At **French Frigate** a first-fall bird was photographed on 12 Sep 1987 (*variegatus*; *E* 48:22, [HRBP](#) 0696-0705) and 1 was observed on 7 Nov 1991 (*variegatus*).

In the *Southeastern Hawaiian Islands*, a [minimum](#) of 22 Whimbrels have been recorded: from **O'ahu** (16 individuals, 1971-2008; BYUH 856; *E* 38:103, 41:74; [HRBP](#) 0547-0551, 5202-5204, published NAB 59:346), **Moloka'i** (1, 25 Oct 2007- 4 May 2008, returning 5 Aug 2008-29 Apr 2009 and 7 Sep 2009 through the year), **Maui** (2, 1986-2004, *E* 47:42; also an unconfirmed report of 2 collected in 1894; Henshaw 1900a), and **Hawai'i I** (3, 1988-1991; e.g., [HRBP](#) 0811). Of these, 8 have been of *variegates* (including BYUH 856 collected 21 Dec 1971 at Kahuku), 8 have been of *hudsonicus*, and 6 were not identified to subspecies; 8 have been recorded only in fall, 11 have over-wintered, and 3 were apparent spring transients; at least one over-summered, at Ki'i Unit of JCNWR, O'ahu, in 2005. The earliest fall arrival date was 7 Jul (2000, returning adult *hudsonicus* near Kahuku, O'ahu) and the latest spring date was 23 May (1981, spring

transient *variegatus* near Kahuku). An individual (*variegatus*) returned to Kealia NWR, Maui, each fall of 1986-1991 and another individual (*hudsonicus*) returned each winter to the Ki'i Unit of JCNWR, near Kahuku, from fall 1997 to spring 2003

[Acronyms and Abbreviations](#)

[Literature cited](#)

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<http://hbs.bishopmuseum.org/birds/rlp-monograph/>