

BAR-TAILED GODWIT

Limosa lapponica

non-breeding visitor, occasional migrant

L.l. baueri (migrant)

L.l. lapponica/menzbieri (vagrant)

Bar-tailed Godwits breed from w. Alaska across n. Asia and winter throughout Europe, Africa, s. Asia, Australia, and casually along the Pacific N American coast (Dement'ev and Gladkov 1951c, Cramp and Simmons 1983, AOU 1998, CBRC 2007). In the w. Pacific, the subspecies *L.l. baueri* (formerly "*novae-zealandiae*") of the e. Palearctic is a regular migrant and winterer in small numbers throughout Micronesia and Fiji E to Niue, Samoa, and the Phoenix Is (Stickney 1943, AOU 1957, Clapp and Sibley 1967, Clapp 1968a, Schipper 1985, Pratt et al. 1987, Higgins and Davies 1996, Wiles 2005), where observations in fall may represent grounded birds of non-stop flights from Alaska to New Zealand and Australia (Gill et al. 2005, 2014). The Hawaiian Islands appear to be on the e. edge of this subspecies' migratory range, and very small numbers winter regularly, especially in the Northwestern Islands. There is also one specimen record of a subspecies from continental Eurasia (see below).

Schauinsland (1899) collected "several" Bar-tailed Godwits on *Laysan* 5-11 Nov 1896 (Rothschild 1900; AMNH 738526, Bremen Museum, Tring Museum). Most ornithologists visiting Laysan during the fall and winter period through the 1990s have since noted 1-3 individuals in the lagoon (e.g., Ely and Clapp 1973, *E* 41:48, Rutt in press), and observations of molting adults in fall, oversummering first-year birds, and birds in consecutive winters (e.g., 2-3 during most winters between 1979 and 1989), indicate successful over-wintering and round trips between Laysan and arctic breeding colonies. In the other *Northwestern Hawaiian Islands*, Bar-tailed Godwit is primarily a fall and spring transient; unlike on Laysan fewer birds winter, apparently due to lack of suitable habitat. Records occur from *Kure* (11 individuals including 1 wintering, 1966-2013; e.g., Clapp and Woodward 1968, *E* 39:13, *E* 41:48, P. Pyle 1984; USNM 496599, BPBM 178068; [HRBP](#) 0267-0268, 1453-1454, 6452; published *AB* 38:250 and *E* 44:109); *Midway* (7 including 2 wintering, 1959-2016; e.g., Fisher 1960, *E* 11:71); *Lisianski* (4, 1964-1993; e.g., Clapp and Woodward 1968, *E* 41:48; USNM 493478; [HRBP](#) 1452); and *French Frigate* (3, 1990-2005; e.g., BPBM 184965, [HRBP](#) 1019-1020, 5331). An interesting at-sea report and the high count for the Hawaiian Islands was of a flock of 9 flying S on 12 Oct 2002, about 212 km NNE of Necker (Rowlett 2002; [HICEAS data](#)). Excluding apparent oversummering first-year birds, the earliest fall arrival occurred on 4 Aug (1993, Laysan) and the latest spring record is for 15 May (1998, Kure). This last-mentioned individual was found freshly dead on this date (BPBM 178068).

The Bar-tailed Godwit occurs less frequently among the *Southeastern Hawaiian Islands*, as expected of a species breeding primarily in Asia. A [minimum](#) of 24 individuals have been recorded, two of which appear to involve the same bird returning for multiple years. Records exist from *Kaua'i* (3 individuals, <1901-2013; Bryan 1901a, 1901b; Henshaw 1902a; *E* 36:116; [HRBP](#) 0090-0092, 6450-6451); *O'ahu* (10, 1962-2012; e.g., *E* 23:31, 27:56, 28:70, 29:87; [HRBP](#) 0063-0065, 0532, 5006-5007, 5214, 5365-5367, 6446-6447; published *NAB* 60:160, 62:175); *Moloka'i* (1, 20 Oct 2015); *Mau'i* (4, <1901-2010; e.g., Bryan 1901b, *E* 26:89; BPBM 2229; [HRBP](#) 6448-6449;

published *NAB* 64:342); and *Hawai'i I* (6, 1935-2001; e.g., *E* 7:11, 40:16, 45:74). Three birds together were at Waipi'o, O'ahu 23-26 Oct 1978 (*E* 40:16) and 2 together were at Cyanotech Pond near Keahole Point, Hawai'i I 3 Nov 1998 and at Ki'i Unit of JCNWR, O'ahu 28 Sep-17 Nov 2007; the remaining records involved single individuals. On O'ahu, individuals apparently wintered during consecutive years from 1966-1969 (Pearl Harbor area) and 1978-1983 (Waipi'o Peninsula). There are 4 other records of wintering individuals for the Southeastern Islands, 20 observed in fall only, 2 apparent spring transients (7 May 1981 and 12-19 Jun 2001, both at Hilo, Hawai'i), and no records of overwintering birds. The earliest fall arrival was 1 Aug (1980, adult at Waipi'o) and the latest spring record is from 19 Jun, as mentioned above.

The specimen from Kure (BPBM 178068) shows characters of *L.l. lapponica* or *menzbieri* from Europe or c. Asia (PP examination); all other specimens, photographs (e.g., [HRBP](#) 0267-0268, 5365-5367), and described birds from the Hawaiian Islands show characters of the expected *baueri*.

[Acronyms and Abbreviations](#)

[Literature cited](#)

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