The Marbled Godwit is an American species which breeds in Alaska and in the prairie region of Canada and the nc. U.S., and winters primarily along the Pacific North American coast, occasionally to S America (AOU 1998). Substantiated records of three individuals in the Hawaiian Islands are the only ones from the Pacific (Pratt et al. 1987).

The first record of a Marbled Godwit for Hawaii was of a first-year male collected on Laysan, Northwestern Hawaiian Islands, 21 Oct 1966 (Clapp and Woodward 1968; USNM 496790). A second bird was reportedly present at the time (Ely and Clapp 1973), but without description we consider it unsubstantiated. Likewise, an individual reported from Kure Feb-May 1979 (E 39:14) is not substantiated. The similar Bar-tailed Godwit is much more likely in the Northwestern Islands. In the Southeastern Hawaiian Islands, a large first-fall bird, presumably female, was at Maʻili Beach Park, Oʻahu 10-20 Oct 2004 (HRBP 5163-5166); presumably the same individual was found at Kealia Pond NWR, Maui 17 Nov 2004-4 Apr 2005 (HRBP 5233, 6453-6454), and then back at the Kii Unit of JCNWR, Oʻahu 9 May 2005-5 Feb 2006 (HRBP 5286, 5833). Another was photographed near Waiakea Pond, Hilo, Hawaiʻi 1 2-3 Oct 1988 (HRBP 0796-0799, published AB 43:173). A specimen from unknown locality, present in the St. Louis College collection and donated to BPBM in 1942 (152365, mounted specimen photographed and skeletonized), may also have been taken in Hawaii, but we consider this unconfirmed.

Gibson and Kessel (1989) recently described a subspecies of Marbled Godwit, L.f. beringiae, which breeds at the base of the Aleutian Is, Alaska, and winters in n. California. Based on range this would be the most likely subspecies to reach the Hawaiian Islands and, indeed, the specimen from Laysan is probably of this subspecies (Gibson and Kessel 1989), and the large size of the individual on Oʻahu and Maui suggests this subspecies as well.

Acronyms and Abbreviations

Literature cited

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