

Photo of Bristle-thighed
curlew

Migratory Birds

Kioea or Bristle-thighed Curlew

Numenius tahitiensis

SPECIES STATUS:

State recognized as indigenous
IUCN Red List Ranking-Vulnerable

SPECIES INFORMATION: Winters in Hawai'i. Highly opportunistic feeders during the winter season, this species feeds on a variety of prey such as intertidal and terrestrial invertebrates, seabird eggs and hatchlings, carrion, lizards, rodents, and fruit.

DISTRIBUTION: Historically found on all the main Hawaiian Islands year-round until the arrival of Polynesians, currently found mainly in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands, with small visitor populations on the main Hawaiian Islands of Hawai'i, O'ahu, Maui, and Kaua'i.

Map of Bristle-thighed Curlew

ABUNDANCE: The largest numbers are found in the NWHI on Laysan, Lisianski, and Midway Atoll. Population estimates for Hawai'i are ?

LOCATION AND CONDITION OF KEY HABITAT: Found on a wide variety of habitats including open grassy areas, vegetated dunes, wetlands on main Hawaiian Islands and on beaches, coral ledges at shoreline, grass and forb-dominated interiors of the NWHI. On Laysan and Lisianski Islands, preferred foraging habitat includes beach morning glory and stands of native bunchgrass and introduced sandbur; on Midway they forage on lawns and antenna fields consisting of introduced grasses.

THREATS: Historically hunted, current threats are being examined. Likely threats are lead contaminated soils on Midway, ingestion of plastics and other marine debris, and predation by

mammalian predators. Predation by mammalian predators is particularly a threat since this species is flightless during its molting which occurs during winter.

CONSERVATION ACTIONS: The goals of conservation actions are to not only protect current populations, but to also establish further populations to reduce the risk of extinction. In addition to common state-wide and island conservation actions, specific actions include:

- Maintain current habitat and restore potential habitat through eradication of mammalian predators and other measures;

MONITORING:

- Continue surveys of population and distribution in known and likely habitats, particularly with a focus on population trends and assessing mortality from predators and human encroachment;
- Record impact of mammalian predators;

RESEARCH PRIORITIES:

- Identification of high concentrations of wintering birds;
- Better understanding of habitat needs and preferences, including foraging and population limiting factors;
- Increased understanding of movements of individuals that overfly the Hawaiian Islands

References:

Engilis, Jr., A. and Naughton, M. 2004. U.S. Pacific Island Regional Shorebird Conservation Plan. U.S. Shorebird Conservation Plan. U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service. Portland, Oregon.

IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. <http://www.redlist.org/search/details.php?species=14915>

Marks, Jeffrey S., et al. 2002. Bristle-thighed Curlew (*Numenius tahitiensis*). In the Birds of North America, No. 705 (A. Poole and F. Gill, eds). The Academy of Natural Sciences, Philadelphia, PA and The American Ornithologists' Union, Washington, D.C.