

# Threatened Birds of Asia:

## The BirdLife International Red Data Book

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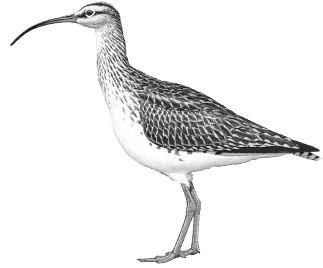
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## BRISTLE-THIGHED CURLEW

### *Numenius tahitiensis*

Critical  —  
Endangered  —  
Vulnerable  C1; C2b



*The population of this species is now small and inferred to be declining largely as a result of predation on the wintering grounds. This combination qualifies it as Vulnerable.*

**DISTRIBUTION AND POPULATION** The Bristle-thighed Curlew breeds on the lower Yukon river and central Seward peninsula in western Alaska, USA; suggestions that it breeds in Russia are unsupported by recent work (R. Gill *in litt.* 1999). It winters on oceanic islands including the North-western and main Hawaiian Islands (USA), **Federated States of Micronesia, Marshall Islands, Kiribati, Tuvalu, Tokelau (to New Zealand), Fiji, Tonga, Niue (to New Zealand), Samoa, American Samoa, Cook Islands, and French Polynesia** (where it is a migrant in the Society and Marquesas Islands, and winters in the Tuamotu Archipelago), also reaching the **Solomon Islands, Norfolk Island (to Australia), Kermadec Islands (New Zealand), Pitcairn Islands (to UK)** (notably Oeno) and Easter Island (**Chile**) (Vilina *et al.* 1992, Brooke 1995, Y. Vilina *in litt.* 1999, Dutson *in press*). There have been records in Asia from **Japan**, fewer than 15 times up to c.1990 (Brazil 1991), the **Philippines**, once on Balabac, 1982 (Dickinson *et al.* 1991), and **Indonesia**, on Buton off Sulawesi in 1996 (Catterall undated), and this slight evidence suggests that the region may host a small number of birds on a regular basis. The breeding population is c.7,000 birds, but c.3,000 subadults oversummer on Pacific islands (P. Donaldson *in litt.* 1999, SPREP 1999).

**ECOLOGY** It breeds in dwarf-shrub tundra at 100–350 m, and migrates south, mostly bypassing the North-western Hawaiian islands, to make landfall after 6,000 km or more (Marks and Redmond 1994a, Gill 1999). In winter, it inhabits coral reefs, sandy beaches, sandy-gravel intertidal flats, rocky shores, palm forests and dense vegetated understorey (Gill 1999, R. Gill *in litt.* 1999). It is highly faithful to breeding and wintering sites (Gill 1999). During autumn moult, perhaps more than 50% of adults are flightless (Marks 1993).

**THREATS** Introduced cats, dogs and possibly pigs heavily predate flightless birds on wintering ground, while hunting for food is a localised threat, particularly previously in the Tuamotus prior to the imposition of firearm regulations (Marks and Redmond 1994a).

**MEASURES TAKEN** Most breeding and autumn staging grounds are well protected (Gill 1999). The Hawaiian Islands National Wildlife Refuge protects several wintering and stopover sites, while protection and management of habitat at Kahuku on O'ahu has apparently facilitated an increase in the local wintering population (P. Donaldson *in litt.* 1999).

**MEASURES PROPOSED** • Survey key historical sites (Marks and Redmond 1994a, SPREP 1999). • Conduct country assessments (Marks and Redmond 1994a, SPREP 1999). • Monitor population trends (Marks and Redmond 1994a, P. Donaldson *in litt.* 1999). • Assess harvesting rate (SPREP 1999). • Identify sites with high concentrations of wintering birds (Marks and Redmond 1994a, SPREP 1999). Identify migratory stop-over sites (Marks and Redmond 1994a, SPREP 1999). • Protect and manage key islands, atolls and other wintering sites (Marks and Redmond 1994a, P. Donaldson *in litt.* 1999). • Increase public awareness especially in its winter range (SPREP 1999).