

## FIRST OCCURRENCE OF BAR-TAILED GODWIT IN SOUTH AMERICA AND STATUS OF THE MARBLED GODWIT IN NORTHEASTERN VENEZUELA

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Abstract.—A Bar-tailed Godwit (*Limosa lapponica*), sighted and photographed at Chacopata Lagoon in northeastern Venezuela, represents the first and only record of the species for South America. The Marbled Godwit (*Limosa fedoa*) is considered to occur regularly in northeastern Venezuela.

### PRIMER REPORTE DE *LIMOSA LAPPONICA* EN AMÉRICA DEL SUR Y ESTATUTO DE *LIMOSA FEDOA* EN EL NORDESTE DE VENEZUELA

Sinopsis.—Un individuo de *Limosa lapponica*, observado y fotografiado en la Laguna de Chacopata en el Nordeste de Venezuela, representa la primera y única mención de la especie para América del Sur. Se debe considerar *Limosa fedoa* como ocurriendo regularmente en el Nordeste de Venezuela.

On 17 November 1985, a Bar-tailed Godwit (*Limosa lapponica*) was sighted and photographed on a mud flat of the Chacopata Lagoon complex on the north side of the Araya Peninsula (10°41'N, 63°46'W), state of Sucre, in northeastern Venezuela (for more details concerning the area, see McNeil et al. 1985b). Starting on 1 December 1985, other sightings, presumably of the same bird, were obtained and its presence was continuous until the beginning of April 1986; by that time, the bird was undergoing the prenuptial molt. On several occasions, the individual accompanied a group of Willets (*Catoptrophorus semipalmatus*) and Marbled Godwits (*Limosa fedoa*). The tail-barring, the most distinctive characteristic of the species, was observed through a 22× telescope, and is conspicuous in Figure 1.

According to the A.O.U. check-list (1983:188), *L. lapponica* breeds in North America, in Alaska and in Eurasia. The species occurs only casually in North America outside of the breeding season, along the Pacific coast from south-coastal Alaska and British Columbia south to southern California, and in the Atlantic coastal region (recorded in Newfoundland, Maine, Massachusetts, New York, New Jersey, Virginia, North Carolina and Florida). The Bar-tailed Godwit is not listed from Venezuela



FIGURE 1. Bar-tailed Godwit photographed at the Chacopata Lagoon, Northeastern Venezuela, on 17 November 1985.

or elsewhere in South America (Meyer de Schauensee 1982, Meyer de Schauensee and Phelps 1978).

As far as we know, the present photographic evidence and sightings represent the first and only record of the Bar-tailed Godwit for South America. Copies of color photographs have been deposited in the Colección Ornitológica Phelps in Caracas, and in the Ornithological Collection, Department of Biological Sciences, University of Montreal.

McNeil et al. (1985a) reported an eastward expansion of the winter range of the Marbled Godwit in South America and considered its occurrence only as casual in northeastern Venezuela. This species must now be considered to occur regularly in the Chacopata Lagoon area since its presence there (2–9 individuals) was continuous (except for a short period during the boreal spring–summer) between 21 July 1984 and February 1986. More importantly, a Marbled Godwit from Chacopata Lagoon, which was banded and given a unique color-code on 9 December 1984, left the area in March 1985. The same individual was subsequently resighted regularly within a group of six Marbled Godwits between 11 November 1985 and February 1986, and again on 30 August 1986.

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