

MERLIN

Falco columbarius

non-breeding visitor, vagrant

F.c. columbarius

The Merlin is a highly migratory species that breeds throughout Holarctic regions and winters south to Venezuela and Peru in the Americas and s. Japan in Asia (Dement'ev and Gladkov 1951b, Cramp and Simmons 1980, AOU 1998). The first record for the Hawaiian Islands was of a well-described first-year female, first reported in Nov 1991 on *Midway*, *Northwestern Hawaiian Islands*, and subsequently documented by multiple observers 17 Dec 1991-12 Mar 1992. In the *Southeastern Hawaiian Islands*, Merlins have been adequately described on *Kaua'i* from Kilauea Point NWR 4 Mar 1993 (*E* 53:36); on *O'ahu* at Nu'upia Ponds 22 Dec 2001 and a first-year female chasing shorebirds at Honouliuli Unit of PHNWR 15 Nov 2009 (and possibly again near Kunia 4 Dec 2009); and on *Hawai'i I* at Puuanahulu 30 Oct 1995. The [HBRC](#) accepted this species to the Hawaiian Island Checklist based on the above five records, despite no photographic or specimen evidence from the islands. The [HBRC](#) did not accept a sixth report of a bird on Midway, 21-28 Oct 2001, due to lack of a description, and we have no information regarding Merlin in the Hawaiian Islands reported during 1960-1966 by HAS (1967-1971).

The Merlin is a polytypic species, with many subspecies recognized around the world. Although one observer suggested that the 1991 Midway bird might be *F.c. suckleyi*, a dark subspecies occurring in nw. N America, the description favors the expected *columbarius*, which breeds in arctic Asia and N America and is the most widespread and migratory subspecies. The 2009 O'ahu bird was also identified critically as *columbarius* by observers experienced with Merlin subspecies; descriptions for the other records are inadequate for subspecific analysis.

[Acronyms and Abbreviations](#)

[Literature cited](#)

Citation: Pyle, R.L., and P. Pyle. 2017. The Birds of the Hawaiian Islands: Occurrence, History, Distribution, and Status. B.P. Bishop Museum, Honolulu, HI, U.S.A. Version 2 (1 January 2017) <http://hbs.bishopmuseum.org/birds/rlp-monograph/>