

First record of the Eurasian Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus* for Rio Grande do Sul state and Brazilian mainland

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RESUMO. Primeiro registro do maçarico-galego *Numenius phaeopus* para o estado do Rio Grande do Sul e o continente brasileiro.

Atualmente, existem duas espécies de maçaricos do gênero *Numenius* com ocorrência no território brasileiro. O maçarico-de-bico-torto (*N. hudsonicus*), de origem neártica, é um visitante regular da costa atlântica. Por outro lado, o maçarico-galego (*N. phaeopus*), de origem paleártica, raramente chega ao país, até agora com indivíduos encontrados tão somente no Arquipélago de Fernando de Noronha. Nós registramos um indivíduo de *N. phaeopus* no Parque Nacional da Lagoa do Peixe (PNLP), Rio Grande do Sul, em 15 de dezembro de 2015. Através de fotografias, a ave foi identificada pela plumagem branca diagnóstica do uropígio, coberteiras superiores da cauda e inferiores das asas. Embora este seja o primeiro registro continental da espécie para o país, há diversos registros de outras espécies que também corroboram o fenômeno da vagância transatlântica, alguns deles também no PNL. É importante prestar atenção às características de identificação de *N. phaeopus*, já que a espécie pode ocorrer ao longo de toda a costa do país e ser confundida com o maçarico-de-bico-torto, estando subnotificada.

PALAVRA-CHAVE: Maçarico-galego; Migração; Parque Nacional da Lagoa do Peixe; Scolopacidae; Vagância transatlântica.

The Whimbrel (*Numenius phaeopus* Linnaeus, 1758) is a polytypic shorebird with a breeding range lying in the tundra and northern taiga zone above 60° N (CRAMP & SIMMONS 1983, MESSAGE & TAYLOR 2005). Taxonomists recognize three to seven subspecies. The nominate complex *N. p. phaeopus* (Eurasian Whimbrel) can include *N. p. islandicus*, *N. p. rogachevae* and *N. p. alboaxillaris*. *Numenius p. variegatus* is consistently treated as a single subspecies, and *N. p. hudsonicus* (American Whimbrel) can include *N. p. rufiventris* (ALLPORT 2017, VAN GILS *et al.*, 2017). The Eurasian Whimbrel can be distinguished from the American Whimbrel by plumage, with rump, uppertail and underwings coverts in white, instead of darker colors (MESSAGE & TAYLOR 2005, ALDERFER 2006, SIBLEY 2014). But as some morphometrics and vocalizations are very similar, not all authors recognize their distinction as full species (REMSSEN *et al.* 2017; VAN GILS *et al.*, 2017). PIACENTINI *et al.* (2015) listed the American and the Eurasian Whimbrels as separated species in the last Brazilian list of birds, as both have been recorded in the country. From now on, we treat them as separated species.

Numenius hudsonicus is a Nearctic species, which winters on coasts from south USA and Caribbean to south South America (MESSAGE & TAYLOR 2005, VAN GILS *et al.* 2017), and it is the whimbrel species that regularly occurs in the Brazilian coast (SICK 1997, RODRIGUES 2007, VALENTE *et al.* 2011, FEDRIZZI *et al.* 2016). Among the subspecies of the *N. phaeopus* complex, the ones expected to wander to the Atlantic coast are

the nominate and *islandicus* forms, as both winter in the Atlantic coast of Africa (MESSAGE & TAYLOR 2005, ALDERFER 2006, VAN GILS *et al.*, 2017). *Numenius p. phaeopus* is a Palearctic species that breeds in east Scandinavia to Yenisei River, wintering from extreme southwest Europe and Africa through Middle East to west India, Sri Lanka and Andaman and Nicobar Islands; the subspecies *islandicus* breeds in south Iceland to north Scotland, with small numbers in northeast Greenland, wintering in west Africa (VAN GILS *et al.* 2017). In Brazil, *N. phaeopus* is a rare species that has been recorded only in Fernando de Noronha Archipelago (SILVA E SILVA & OLMOS 2006); the subspecies mentioned for the country is the nominate form (OLSON 1981, PIACENTINI *et al.* 2015).

On December 15, 2015 we observed a whimbrel at the Lagoa do Peixe National Park, near a place known as “Barra da Lagoa” (31°21’S, 51°03’W; Fig. 1). The bird was too distant to access species identification, but pictures taken at that occasion revealed diagnostic features, as the white rump, upper tail and underwings coverts, with a mostly white background and contrasting dark bars and dots (Fig. 2). These diagnostic features confirm the identification as *N. phaeopus*, probably nominate or *islandicus*. This is the first record for the state of Rio Grande do Sul and Brazilian mainland as well (FRANZ *et al.* 2018).

Lagoa do Peixe National Park, with an area of 34,400 ha, is situated on the coastal plain of Rio Grande do Sul, in a long and narrow sand ridge, separating the Patos Lagoon

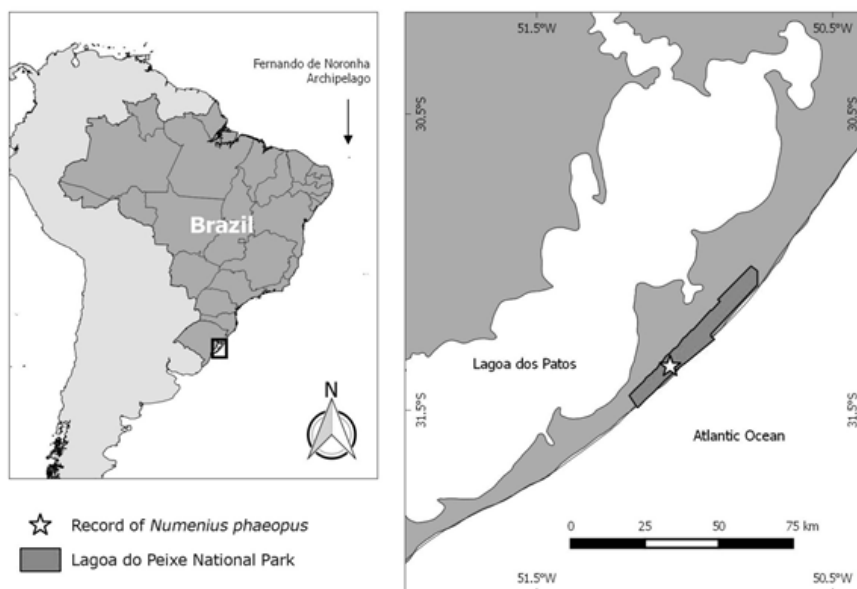


Figure 1. Location of Lagoa do Peixe National Park, Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil. The star indicates where the Eurasian Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus* was photographed.



Figure 2. Eurasian Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus* photographed at Lagoa do Peixe National Park, Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil, on December 2015. Note the diagnostic white rump, upper tail and underwing coverts. Photos: Paulo Buchabqui Rodrigues.

from the Atlantic Ocean (Fig. 1). This park is one of the most important areas for migratory shorebirds in South America (BENCKE *et al.* 2006, GRIMM 2013). More than 230 bird species have been recorded in the area, with species even from the Old World reported, including *Calidris pugnax* (Linnaeus, 1758) and *Chlidonias leucopterus* (Temminck, 1815) (ALDABE *et al.* 2010, BENCKE *et al.* 2010, PEREIRA & POERSCHKE 2010, FRANZ *et al.* 2018).

Even though there are many forms of vagrancy and many theories to explain them, the presence of Old World shorebirds in the Atlantic coast is probably explained by a vagrancy phenomenon caused by crosswinds that may take migratory birds to places off their regular routes (GILROY & LEES 2003, NEWTON 2008). In Fernando de Noronha Archipelago, the occurrence of Palearctic species, such as the Eurasian Whimbrel, is considered a prime example of transatlantic vagrancy (SILVA & SILVA & OLMOS 2006). Also in São Pedro e São Paulo Archipelago the occurrence of Old World birds has been reported and it is attributed to the atmospheric conditions of easterly winds (BENCKE *et al.* 2005, FEDRIZZI *et al.* 2007, NUNES *et al.* 2015). Unlike Fernando de Noronha, the rock islets of the latter are devoid of beaches, so waders such as the Eurasian Whimbrel could not feed there, although they could use the place for resting, which was already observed for *Arenaria interpres* (Linnaeus, 1758) (BOTH & FREITAS 2004).

It is most likely that the Eurasian Whimbrel recorded at Lagoa do Peixe National Park came to Brazil by the Equator region and went south by stopovers in the coast. We consider the resemblance to the American Whimbrel as the main reason why the Eurasian Whimbrel had not been recorded in the Brazilian mainland before and encourage birdwatchers and ornithologists to be aware and look for such differences and make their records available in citizen-science platforms.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank Alexander Lees for making us aware of the identification of the bird and Carlos Eduardo Agne for its confirmation. We would also like to thank Flávio Ronaldo for guiding us into Lagoa do Peixe National Park and to the birders of Ave Missões Group that shared the observation, especially Paulo Buchabqui Rodrigues for providing diagnostic pictures of the Eurasian Whimbrel. We also would like to thank Adalberto Cristiano Zorzan for the English language review and two anonymous reviewers for important suggestions.

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