



Dedicated to the preservation, education and history of our incredible national treasure - Midway Island

NEWSLETTER UPDATE

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DID YOU KNOW?

Midway Islands have become the most famous locality in the north-western part of the Hawaiian archipelago. This atoll crowns the summit of one of the last peaks in this huge mountain chain. It is 1150 nautical miles (1300 statute miles) northwest of Honolulu, 90 miles beyond Pearl and Hermes Reef, and 50 miles east of Kure, the final island of the chain.

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A VOLUNTEER'S BIRDS-EYE VIEW

by Jill McIntire

Well, I am at Midway. We came in 24 hours late, as the winds at Midway were high and the pilots decided not to take off. When we left Honolulu the next day, we did so on a twin prop 18 seat plane. First we hopped over to Kauai where we landed at Barking Sands Missile Facility to gas up for the hop to Midway. I understand the cost of gas is cheaper there... sort of like an aeronautic Costco. Anyway, eventually we flew into a different Midway from one we remember from years past.

How to start? First, the Foreign Nationals employed by Midway



Albatross



Bonin Petrel

Phoenix are gone.

The new company that runs the infrastructure is a Native Alaskan company-Chugach. They have an agent in Thailand, so the employees (about 35) are either Americans or Thai. We no longer eat in the Galley, but take our meals at the old "French Restaurant" The Clipper House, on the beach. The meals are self

serve, still quite tasty, and, yes, the soft ice cream machine has made the move from the galley to the restaurant.

What else is new? Well, the petrel burrows are EVERYWHERE!!! Today we joked that for every two albatross we counted as we covered our plots, we fell into a new petrel burrow. When that happens, you have to stop, get onto your knees and dig out the burrow in all tunnel directions. If you find a bird (a not infrequent occurrence) the trick is



White Tern

to hold the bird, keep digging, and then put the bird back and quickly cover the entrance with your hand so the bird will calm down and not try to fly away. They are not yet laying eggs, but are clearing out the tunnels and



Bonin Petrel Chick

making nests. The difficult thing is to handle TWO birds, which happened to our group of 5 counters twice today. Anyway, we are having high winds, with a balmy 70 degrees. We don't know when we might make it over to Eastern Island to do the counting there, since the waves in the lagoon are so far making it too dangerous to try. We are doing all of the main Sand Island in groups of 4 to 5 people. We total 4 groups, so the counting can progress well, although it feels like we are in the middle of no where in our group, as we see no one else the entire counting day. I understand though, that there are enough returning counters so that the quality and the speed of the counting is going quite well. Tonight after I send this out I will go over to the Fish and Wildlife office to see the map showing what we have done. It is always a thrill to see the map of the island getting inked in with completed plots. Our group is mainly comprised of Fish and Wildlife employees for around the western USA who are volunteering their vacation time to be out here. A few of us are "lay" people who are excited about the chance to come out and get so exhausted by day that we are in bed by 8 pm...OK, enough of this for now. I'll send this off, and I hope it makes it out to you. Note- Jill used to lead National Outings service trips with the Sierra Club to Midway and is from the Bay Area.



UPDATE - VISITOR PROGRAM AT MIDWAY

Unfortunately, Mother Nature didn't cooperate for Midway's fourth cruise ship visit of 2004, this one by the [Radisson Seven Seas' Mariner](#). Though we could have dealt with the cloudy weather, and we even had a few albatross back on island to greet the visitors, the seas were too rough. The cruise ship was having a difficult time staying in position, let alone disembarking its passengers onto their tenders, so we waved from afar and watched them sail off to Honolulu.

We have two scheduled visits by cruise ships in 2005: [P&O Cruises' Aurora](#) in March (part of a "Grand Voyage" from Southampton in the United Kingdom around South America to Australia, China, Japan, Midway, Hawaii, Mexico, the Caribbean, and home!), and another visit by the [Pacific Princess](#) in June as part of their tour of World War II Pacific battlefields.

In September, the Fish and Wildlife Service awarded a contract to Pandion Systems of Gainesville, Florida, to conduct a visitor market analysis and feasibility study for Midway. Our purpose was to provide a sound basis for planning a visitor services program at Midway for the upcoming 5 years or so. The market analysis will briefly review the previous visitor program, and identify and analyze similar visitor programs and their potential applicability to Midway. The feasibility analysis will review and analyze the current visitor program, key logistical constraints, visitor package opportunities (particularly related to wildlife-dependent recreation and historic resources), and potential visitor program models.

Two staff from Pandion Systems and the Service's Chief of Visitor Services and Communication for the Pacific Region visited Midway in October to start the study. Pandion will provide their report to the Fish and Wildlife Service this spring.

CLIMATE Midway has a sub-tropical climate that is moderated by prevailing easterly winds. There are two distinguishable seasons at Midway: summer and winter. Temperatures in the summer, approximately May to October, are typically warm, with sunny days and cooler nights. Air temperatures at this time of year usually range between 70 to 85 degrees. During winter months, November to April, temperatures average in the 60s and can sometimes dip into the 50s. Winter days are more likely to bring rain and wind also, making it cold enough to require a warm sweater or jacket. The lowest and highest temperatures recorded at Midway are 54 and 92 degrees. Water temperatures at Midway range from the mid-60s in winter to the high-70s during summer months. Average annual rainfall is 42 inches. Although rainfall is generally heavier during winter months, it can rain at any time of the year on Midway.

INTRODUCING THE NEW MIDWAY MANAGER

BY DARLENE MOEGERLE

On February 20, Barrett (Barry) Christenson will officially assume his new role as the Refuge Manager for Midway Atoll National Wildlife Refuge. After spending several days in Honolulu at the Hawaiian and Pacific Islands NWR Complex office, Barry will arrive on Midway on March 3. He joins us from Minneapolis, Minnesota, where he has been the Refuge Supervisor for refuges and wetland management districts in Wisconsin, Michigan, Ohio, and Indiana for the past 2 years.

Barry says his “overdeveloped sense of adventure” is what attracts him from America’s heartland to the midst of the Pacific. “I look forward to the challenge of learning and enjoying a new environment,” he says. “I haven’t had the opportunity to work with the marine and bird resources of the Pacific in the past, and of course Midway’s historical significance adds another level of interest.”



Prior to his Refuge Supervisor position, Barry served as the Project Leader for the Litchfield Wetland Management District in Minnesota from 2000-2003.

He managed an active land acquisition and management office working with wetlands on the Minnesota prairie. He and his staff worked with a variety of partners such as Ducks Unlimited and Pheasants Forever to restore both uplands and wetlands in the area.

From 1992-2000, Barry was the Project Leader for Union Slough National Wildlife Refuge and the Iowa Wetland Management District in northern Iowa. From 1984 to 1992, he served as the Assistant Refuge Manager at Montezuma NWR in New York, Seedskafee NWR in Wyoming, and Great Meadows NWR in Massachusetts.

He started his career in the Service as a cooperative education student while working on his masters degree at the University of Maine (MS, Wildlife Management), and his first full time position was at the Annapolis Field Office working on Chesapeake Bay. He spent two years as a wildlife biologist at Po National Park in Burkina Faso in west Africa with the Peace Corps after earning his Bachelor of Science in Wildlife from Humboldt State University in 1974.

Barry and his wife Elise, will celebrate their 24th anniversary this year. They have two wonderful daughters, Andrea and Erin. Andrea graduated from Stanford with a degree in Earth Systems last spring and is now working in Palo Alto with a private company. Erin is majoring in economics at University of Minnesota Morris campus and is in her sophomore year. Both girls are anxious to have a chance to visit Midway. Elise is a teachers aid for kindergarten classes here in Litchfield and really enjoys working with the kids. She has a degree in wildlife management from the University of Maine and has work experience as a naturalist. Elise will come to Midway this summer and also looks forward to learning about the islands natural and human histories.

While anxiously awaiting Barry’s arrival, we send our best wishes and appreciation for a job well done to previous Refuge Manager Tim Bodeen and his family, who are now happily ensconced in Washington State. Tim is the Refuge Manager at Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge, and has traded his albatross and coral reefs for dusky Canada geese and lesser sandhill cranes, and his Battle of Midway history for a historic Cathlapotle townsite visited by the Lewis and Clark expedition in 1806.

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2005 ANNUAL MEETING AGENDA

- Establish a quorum
- Call to Order
- Acceptance of 2004 minutes
- Report of Nominating Committee
- Election of Directors
- Presentation of 2004-2005 Budget
- Other business - lawfully to be considered
- Adjournment



According the FOMA Bylaws, Article IV Sec. 1, "The annual meeting of the Members shall be held at a date, time and place as designated by the Board of Directors for the purpose of transacting any such business as may come before the meeting, including the election of Directors." This year the annual meeting will be held by conference call on Monday, February 21, 2005, beginning at 3:30 p.m. EST. This is an unusual manner in which to hold a meeting of the membership and one that none of the Directors are completely happy with. However, under the circumstances, this seems to be the only way to meet the requirements of the By-laws. The original plans were to hold our annual meeting in Washington, D.C. in early February 2005. This meeting would be held in conjunction with the conference of the National Wildlife Refuge Association. As we began to finalize the plans, it became apparent that several of our board members could not attend this gathering due to health constraints and employment responsibilities. It was clear that we would not have a quorum of Directors present. The possibility of holding the annual meeting at another location at a different time was considered. This plan was discarded as the brevity of the agenda did not seem to warrant the expense of transportation and lodging by the members and Directors. Thus, after much discussion, it was a consensus of the Directors to hold the annual meeting via conference call. This is certainly not the optimal solution but under the circumstances the only viable one that fulfills the By-laws' requirement. As of this writing, I do not have the telephone number for the conference call.

In order for you to participate, you will need to call me for the number. I will be available the week prior to the meeting (February 14 - 19) to receive your call. My number is (765) 935-4747.

In order to be fair to all members, I will not give out the conference call number via email. A complete and detailed report of the meeting will be published in the next newsletter. It is our hope that you will understand the circumstances that makes this decision necessary. Hopefully, in the upcoming years we can always hold our annual meetings on Midway!
Thank you for your kind understanding.

Darlene Moegerle, President,
Friends of Midway Atoll National Wildlife Refuge, Inc.

YOUR DUES AT WORK

Checks were mailed to each volunteer for their meals during the Albatross count. The total amount reimbursed was \$3,294.00 plus \$6.35 for postage.

**SHOP & SUPPORT
MIDWAY ATOLL**

Send those you love wearable art, a Midway T-shirt! Shirts features a front pocket with FOMA logo.

Posters and note cards are available also. Looking for the unique gift?

Choose a genuine glass float that was collected on the pristine Midway white coral beach.

Visit the FOMA website at: www.friendsofmidway.org
Or contact Ellen Cashman at ellcash@comcast.net or 849 Dale Street, North Andover, MA 01845.