



# MIDWAY ATOLL National Wildlife Refuge

# Gooney Gazette II



*Dedicated to the preservation, education and history of our national treasure- Midway Atoll*

Friends of Midway Atoll Newsletter

Spring 2010

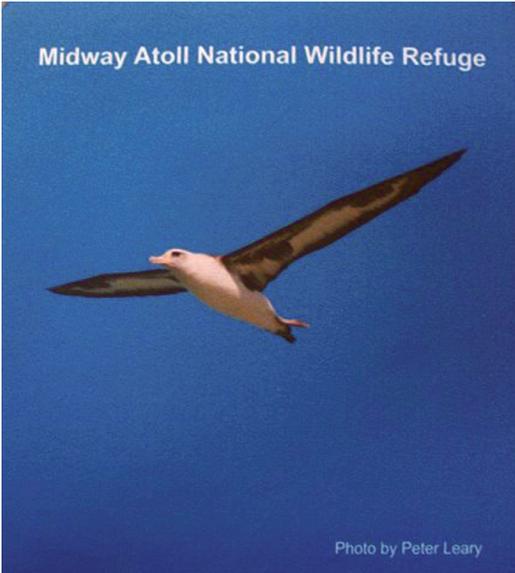
## AMAZING PHOTO GALLERY OF MIDWAY.....

Pete Leary spent a year on Midway as a Fish and Wildlife employee during 2007 and 2008. During that time, Pete took over 50,000 amazing photos of Midway and its wildlife. Pete generously agreed to allow

FOMA to use 12 of his photos to make this postcard pack.

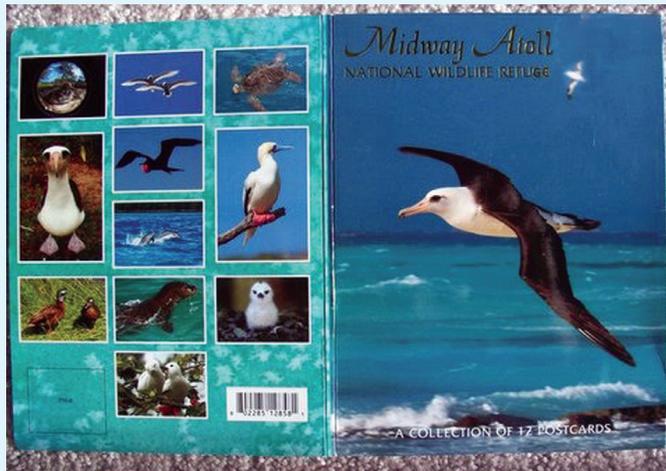
The packet costs \$5 plus shipping and will soon be available at the FOMA store on our website. [www.FriendsofMidway.org](http://www.FriendsofMidway.org).

If you are interested in viewing more of Pete's work, go to [www.PeteatMidway.blogspot.com](http://www.PeteatMidway.blogspot.com). It's worth the trip!



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## Annual Spring 2010 Meeting

The Friends of Midway Atoll's annual meeting will be held by telephone conference on April 20, 2010. For meeting information contact Darlene Moegerle via email at: [darlenemo@parallax.ws](mailto:darlenemo@parallax.ws).



## Support Midway Atoll

What will your legacy be? Here is a way to let it say something about what you valued during your life.

Midway Atoll welcomes gifts of funds or bequests. Any amount would be wonderful. Any gift or bequests will benefit biodiversity and wildlife habitat. All gifts are tax-deductible.

Please mail check to payable to Friends of Midway Atoll. Attention, FOMA Treasurer Robert Fields at: 1030 N.W. 176th Avenue Beaverton, OR 97006 or contact him at [bandjfields@comcast.net](mailto:bandjfields@comcast.net) with any questions you may have.

By Louann Speulda-Drews

### What is your favorite historic resource on Midway?

In October Laura Baker and I traveled to Midway for a week to update Midway's Historic Preservation Plan. This seemed like a fairly easy directive – develop a management plan that addresses three things: the refuge's needs, building safety, and historical significance.

The title of this article is not rhetorical, we are seeking your opinion, what do you think is/are Midway's most important building(s)/structure(s) to preserve or maintain?

Is it the Cable Station? Obviously, the oldest and most unique architecture on Midway; the station served as a relay point – literally connecting the world by a thread from 1903 to the 1950s. Unfortunately, the buildings are falling apart; except one, which still has a bit of life left. We will continue to advocate for resuscitating this gracious grand dame.



Or, what about the Albert Kahn designed Naval buildings? Constructed in 1940-41, the Officers' housing, shop buildings, seaplane hangar, and theater all reflect the Kahn style. The awesome seaplane hangar is closely tied to the Battle of Midway and the brave men who flew in the outdated seaplanes. Perhaps we should take a page from the battle plan – and make do with what we've got.

Then there are the high profile structures that have been designated National Historic Landmarks, the nation's highest honor. These include: ARMCO huts, concrete bunker pillboxes, and the batteries – all of which were occupied by men poised for action to defend the Atoll against a landing force. Or, perhaps the old power plant where George Cannon gave his life?



The questions we need to answer for the Historic Preservation Plan update include: Which building or structure do you think we can do without? What would you miss seeing if it were gone? What story means the most to you? And, which building is important to illustrate that story? Essentially, what is important to save?



ARMCO Hut.

You may be asking yourself, why do we need to make these decisions? Well, money is always the limiting factor on Midway. Repairing roofs, patching concrete, treating termites, and painting rusting metal are the unromantic reality of aging buildings. We try to make a little progress each year, but at times it feels like we are walking in quick sand. The officers' houses are being rehabilitated and that is wonderful...but, the theater roof is leaking badly, the Cable Station building structural columns need to be repaired or replaced, and then there is the seaplane hangar...



Concrete Pillbox on South Beach.

Can the Friends of Midway help? Yes, you can help us set priorities, help with hands-on repair projects, help us to find more resources, and make sure we use our resources wisely.

I'd love to hear from you! Email or call me at: [Louann\\_Speulda-Drews@fws.gov](mailto:Louann_Speulda-Drews@fws.gov) or 775-861-6335.

Monday, January 4, 2010

## **Bonin bonanza reignites love for Midway wildlife**

by Susan Scott of Honolulu Star Bulletin

Last week in Honolulu when I boarded the airplane to Midway, the pilot announced that strong head winds were going to make the usual five-hour trip a 6 1/2 -hour trip and that it would likely be bumpy. I sighed. I'd only been home from Mexico for three weeks, would spend the next seven days counting albatrosses, and six days after that I'd be traveling with a medical team to Bangladesh.

What was I thinking, I wondered as the hours on the plane crawled by, when I volunteered to work during the holidays on Midway?

Later, as I disembarked on the atoll's Sand Island, I remembered what I was thinking: Midway is a wildlife wonder of the world.

Midway Atoll lies 1,260 miles northwest of Honolulu in the Papahānaumokuākea National Monument. The atoll has only three islands with a total land mass of 2.3 square miles, yet it's the breeding grounds to an astonishing 3 million seabirds.

Since the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service eradicated rats from the islands in 1996, the birds have been thriving, bonin petrels in particular. Without rats eating their eggs, these charming little seabirds made an amazing comeback. From about 60,000 in 1995, the bonins now number more than 900,000.

If you can't picture a bonin petrel, don't feel bad. When not breeding, bonins spend their time at sea, west of Hawaii toward Japan.



These seabirds nest in colonies in Japan's Volcano (Kazan Retto) and Bonin (Ogasawara-gunto) islands. The term "bonin" is an English corruption of the Japanese word "mujin," meaning "uninhabited."

Before humans arrived in the main Hawaiian Islands, bonins nested there, too, but they've been gone for centuries because of introduced predators. Ancient Polynesians ate bonin petrels, as did the rats and pigs the settlers brought with them.

Bonins continued, however, to nest on most of the islands in Hawaii's northwest chain.

Here on Midway we live in the midst of hundreds of thousands of these adorable black-and-white birds (that look like they're smiling), yet it's hard to get a good look at one. The foot-long seabirds are active at night and nest in deep burrows.

*Photo credits: Susan Scott* continued next page



The arrival of bonin petrels at Midway each evening is a marvel of nature. At late dusk, just before the last light of day fades away, the sky comes alive with masses of petrels returning to their nests, a dark cloud reminiscent of bats but with the fluttery appeal of butterflies.

It's hard to see bonins here but easy to hear them. Their soft chitters, whistles and sighs rise from the ground after dark. Often these sounds occur in poignant duets as couples, which mate for life, court or reunite.

Sometimes on an evening walk, Midway's residents feel a bonin. Even though the birds have exceptional night vision, moving people confuse them and collisions occur.

Bonins dig their burrows with white webbed feet edged in black, giving the impression they're wearing bedroom slippers. Many of the burrows are beneath the albatross nests we're counting, making the island a sort of avian apartment complex.

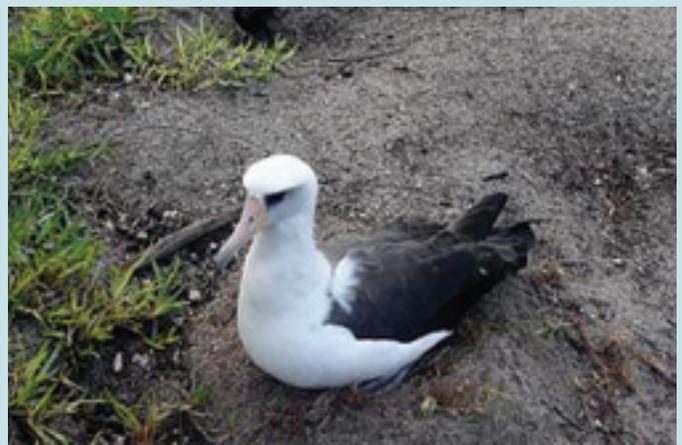
The bonin petrels of Midway are a true conservation success story. We might not see the little petrels while we're working during the day, but knowing they're

down there on eggs warms the heart.

I initially turned down the invitation to help count albatrosses this year. I thought I was too busy.

"You have to go!" Craig said, when I told him that. "It's Midway."

Of course I had to go. What was I thinking? Marine biologist Susan Scott writes the newspaper column, "Ocean Watch", for the Honolulu Star-Bulletin, [www.starbulletin.com](http://www.starbulletin.com)





November 22, 2009

## Midway Journey - Plastic Beach

Written by: Manuel Maqueda

In the Greek mythology, Sisyphus was a king who was cursed to roll a huge boulder up a hill, only to watch it roll back down, and to repeat this throughout eternity.

A beach cleanup on Midway Atoll made us feel just like Sisyphus.

There are millions of tons of plastics present in our oceans, and these are constantly fragmenting into smaller and smaller pieces which are scattered throughout the water column and present, in different densities, throughout all the worlds oceans.

Contrary to what many people believe, there are no visible islands of trash anywhere --even if some areas, the gyres, accumulate higher densities of plastic pollution. In actuality, what is happening is much more complex and scary: our oceans are becoming a planetary soup laced with plastic.

To make thing worse, these tiny pieces of plastic are extremely powerful chemical accumulators for organic persistent pollutants present in ambient sea water such as DDE's and PCB's. The whole food chain, from filtering invertebrates to marine mammals are eating plastic and /or other animals who have plastic in them. This means that we are. Like the albatrosses on Midway, we carry the garbage patch inside of us.

Cleaning up this mess is not feasible, technically or

economically. Even if all the boats in the world were put to the task somehow, the cleanup would not only remove the plastics but also the plankton, which is the base of the food chain, and is responsible for capturing half of the CO2 of our atmosphere and generating half of the oxygen we need to breathe.

But even if this problem was solved too somehow, the amount of plastic that we could capture, at an immense cost, would be a drop in the bucket as compared to the amount that flows into the ocean every day.

No matter how hard we push, in terms of technology or money, the boulder will be rolling back down the hill, throughout eternity, unless we stop putting more plastics into our environment.

The good news is that we can do this. We can do this now. We need to start a social movement that spreads virally and creates a critical mass of concerned citizens who pledge to move away from our disposable habits, and who raise their voice to reject and reverse a throwaway culture that might be profitable, but whose consequences are intolerable.

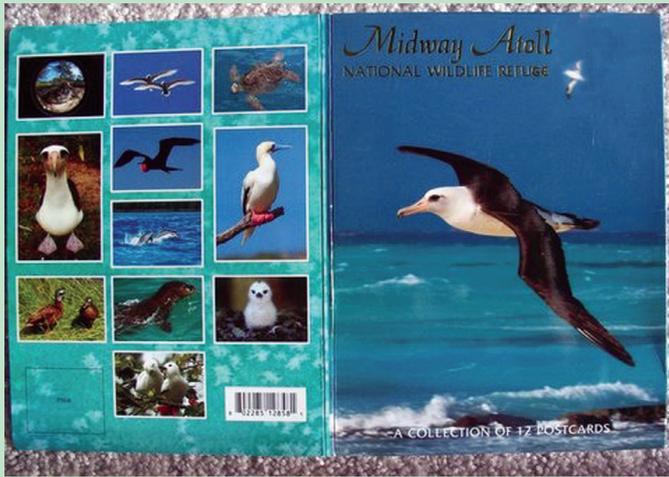
Video by Jan Vozenilek  
Written and narrated by: Manuel Maqueda  
Music by Christen Lien [www.itsnotaviolin.com](http://www.itsnotaviolin.com)

View the You Tube on their site:  
<http://www.midwayjourney.com/>

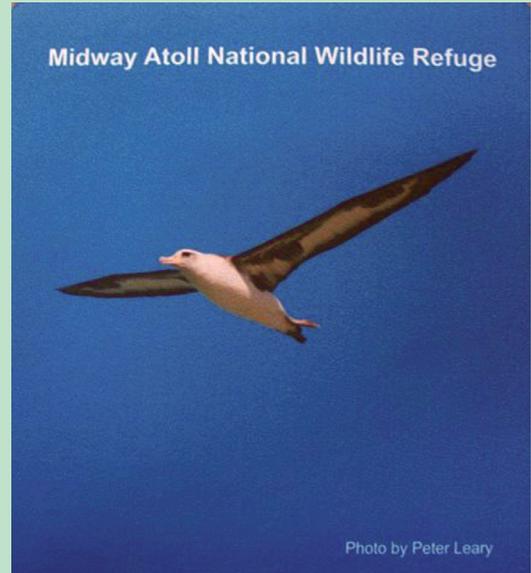
### Another Good Link

If you are interested in some recent photos of Midway you can click thru some amazing photography and learn more about the artist.  
[www.chrisjordan.com](http://www.chrisjordan.com)

Chris Jordan  
Chris Jordan Photographic Arts  
6711 10th Ave NW, Seattle, WA 98117



Post Card Pack \$5



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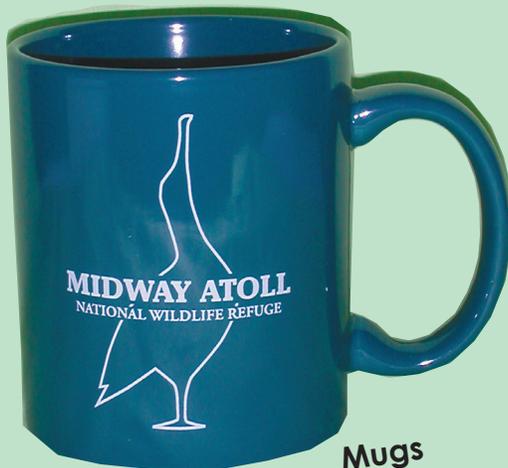
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