



Friends of Midway Atoll Annual Report

2022–2023





The Vision that Guides What We Can Do Together

FOMA plays a pivotal role in conserving and restoring the natural ecosystem, cultural significance and historic resources through:

financial and volunteer support;
dynamic outreach and education;
effective advocacy to support
Refuge programs;
assistance developing an
inspirational visitor program,
and productive collaboration
with diverse partners.



Top to bottom: Background with brown noddies, Jon Brack. Red-tailed tropicbird, Rob Shallenberger. Aerial view of Midway Atoll, Jon Brack. White tern chick, Jon Brack.



Letter from the President

As we reflect on the past year, I am elated to see the continued growth in Friends of Midway Atoll's (FOMA) ability to share important stories from Midway with our audiences. Our sustained commitment to helping Midway Atoll National Wildlife Refuge/Battle of Midway National Memorial has become more visible to our members and continues to blossom. That capability ensures that all who care about Kuaihelani (Midway Atoll) see the progress that is being made there, and importantly, their role in it. All of us remaining connected to Kuaihelani nurtures the bond that holds our community together, and makes sure that FOMA consistently has the support needed that allows us to stay true to our core mission "supporting efforts to preserve, protect and restore the biological diversity and historic and cultural significance of Midway Atoll National Wildlife Refuge."

Throughout the year we have made a special effort to highlight the amazing volunteers who serve as the current on-the-ground stewards, providing the continuity to, and progress on, the legacy of conservation efforts having been carried out on Kuaihelani over the last 3 decades. These volunteers come from all over, committing to 6-month stays, and working tirelessly each day there. Collectively, today's volunteers sustain gains to the work carried out before them. Their lives forever changed by their experiences on, and connections to, Kuaihelani.

We extend deep gratitude to our many steadfast supporters. United we are a strong global community that advocates for the continued protection and preservation of Kuaihelani. Our perseverance is a testament to the capacity of collective action to protect the places we love and hold dear.



WAYNE SENTMAN
PRESIDENT, FRIENDS OF MIDWAY ATOLL

A current (2023) view of Sand Island from the air

© Jon Brack



About Us

Administrative control of Midway Atoll was transferred from the U.S. Navy to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in 1997. In June 1999, a group of volunteers visiting the atoll began to explore how they could help support the Refuge. From the vision of those four individuals, the nonprofit organization Friends of Midway Atoll (FOMA) National Wildlife Refuge took shape. Over the years, FOMA has grown to a dedicated group of supporters with an impressive list of accomplishments.

Midway Atoll National Wildlife Refuge / Battle of Midway National Memorial is part of the much larger ecosystem immersed in an extraordinary cultural sea and landscape within Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument. Inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, the Atoll's Hawaiian name is Kuaihelani meaning the "backbone of the heavens." Before the recent discovery of Kuaihelani it was given the place name Pihemanu meaning "a loud din of birds." Kuaihelani is a magical place of stunning natural beauty, abundant wildlife, and monumental history — a place to be cared for (mālama) and preserved into perpetuity. It's also home to a small community of U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service staff, volunteers, and contractors.





Seabird Protection Project Team Members Conducting Environmental Monitoring Under the Cargo Pier

© Jon Brack

A mōlī (albatross) chick supervises the removal of Pōpolo or glossy nightshade seeds (*Solanum americanum*), a favorite mouse treat.
© Jon Brack



FOMA Board

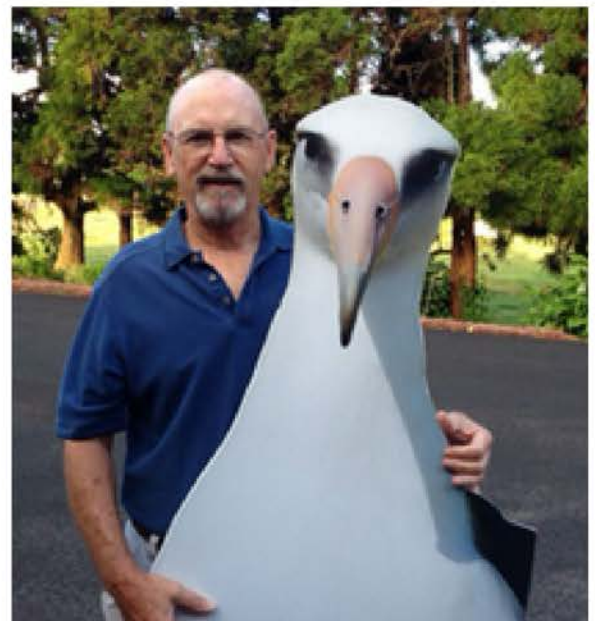
In FY23, FOMA experienced the loss of two of our longest serving board members.

In January we lost Mike Logan. Mike had a deep personal connection and passion for Midway and that prompted him to join the Friends of Midway Board of Directors in 2000. Having served in the US Navy, Mike was passionate both about Midway's military history as well as the amazing wildlife thriving there today.

A few months later, in March, we lost Dr. Rob Shallenberger, who was integral to the founding of FOMA. He joined the Board in 2011, and was serving more recently as an Emeritus Board Member. Having worked for USFWS for 25 years, Rob ended his career as Midway Atoll Refuge Manager serving from 1997 - 2000. Rob was an amazing resource of knowledge about seabirds and a staunch advocate for the preservation of Hawaii's natural resources. Rob carried a deep connection to Kuaihelani and like all on our Board, was an advocate for the re-establishment of its public visitation program.



Mike with his wife Cyndi at Midway



Rob was definitely “seabirdphilic”

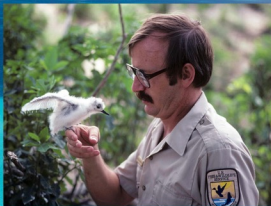
Dr. Robert J. Shallenberger

The Friends of Midway Atoll (FOMA) Board of Directors mourns the passing of Dr. Rob Shallenberger. Rob was integral to the founding of FOMA, joined as a Board Member in 2011 and was an Emeritus Board Member until his passing on 15 March 2023. Today's exhibit features images he captured during his last visit to Midway Atoll—now known as Kualihelani—the backbone of heaven.

Rob's polestar was the conservation of the native ecosystems of Hawai'i. He received his doctorate at UCLA researching Hawaiian seabirds, and then worked for the US Fish and Wildlife Service for 25 years, managing National Wildlife Refuges in the Pacific, and eventually became Chief of the Refuge Division in Washington DC. Rob ended his career as Midway Atoll Refuge Manager 1997-2000. After retirement, Rob served as the Hawaiian Island Conservation Director for the Nature Conservancy. He was also instrumental in several other conservation organizations including Friends of Hakalau Forest and Hawai'i Wildlife Center.

Rob was an experienced wildlife photographer; his photos have appeared in many notable books and magazines including his highly acclaimed book, *Hawaiian Birds of the Sea: Na Manu Kai*. Rob was also a contributor to numerous published scientific papers, proceedings, newsletters, and reflections. Much of the pioneering research on 'ua'u kani (wedge-tailed shearwater) was completed by Rob in the early 1970s.

Rob was a fount of wisdom and experience in Hawaiian Island conservation and seabirds. He had a deep passion for Kualihelani and was a staunch supporter for re-establishment of its public visitation program. As a friend of the 'aina and esteemed member of FOMA, he will be missed.



Top to bottom:
Aerial view outside atoll, Jon Brack.
Rob with white tern, USFWS.
Bonin's petrel, Jon Brack.
Short-tailed albatrosses, Rob Shallenberger.

2022-2023 Accomplishments

The Friends of Midway Atoll National Wildlife Refuge and Battle of Midway Memorial (FOMA) had another productive year. We invested just over \$36,000 into Refuge projects and equipment needs this year. We used our growing communications capacity to successfully fund-raise over 50% of those expenditures. The transition into a post pandemic world allowed for the twice postponed Seabird Protection Project (SPP) to finally begin. This was an effort to eradicate mice within the refuge. Unfortunately, while this effort ultimately failed the increased amount of volunteers on island for multiple months meant that our store sales temporarily returned to levels not seen since the last public visitation program. Dedicated efforts to engage people on our social media has continued to result in a growing following. A following that has a great interest in the stories we are able to highlight in real time from Midway. To do this, FOMA relies heavily on the support of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Refuge staff, the Refuge manager , and a rotating cast of dedicated volunteers who sustain that ability. We would sincerely like to acknowledge the assistance this past year of former Refuge manager Pam Repp, Interim Refuge Manager Stewart Cogswell, and Refuge Biologist Jon Plissner. Over the past year. all repeatedly supported FOMA's efforts and shared their time and knowledge with the Board.

FOMA supplied \$8600 in support of the annual Albatross Counters - support for the counters is one of the organizations longest running efforts.

FOMA funds in the amount of \$4000 were used to purchase an Aviary that was installed on Eastern Island and used to house shorebirds during the SPP.

\$10,000 was made available to contract professional photographer and longtime FOMA collaborator, Jon Brack. He was out on Midway during the bulk of the SPP efforts and documented all aspects of the project. Many of the images he captured are part of this report. And we are in the process of compiling more of his footage to share over the coming year.



Accomplishments Continued

One of the more rewarding successes over the past year was FOMA being able to raise the funds needed to support Invasive Plant Bio-Technician Rachel Santulli. That allowed the continuation of efforts directed at the eradication of Verbesina, a project that has been ongoing for over 20 years and was in jeopardy of being put on hold due to lack of funds during the SPP. Rachel, began working on Midway as a 10-month KUPU in October 2021.

As all available funds were being focused on efforts toward eradicating mice, FOMA did not want to see a loss of ground, possibly irrevocably, toward a goal of eradicating another invasive species that threatens the albatross population of Midway, especially as that goal appears more achievable than ever. FOMA was able to raise over \$12,000 to support Rachel being able to stay on for an additional 6 months as team leader for the eradication effort.



The support we received from our members and followers on social media for this fundraising effort was robust, reminding all of us on the Board of how valuable developing our communications outreach over the last 4 years has been.



Eastern Island before Verbesina control (left) and after (right)

Project Support

by the numbers

506 Meals purchased for 12 Albatross census counters over 28-55 days.

1113 Followers on Instagram

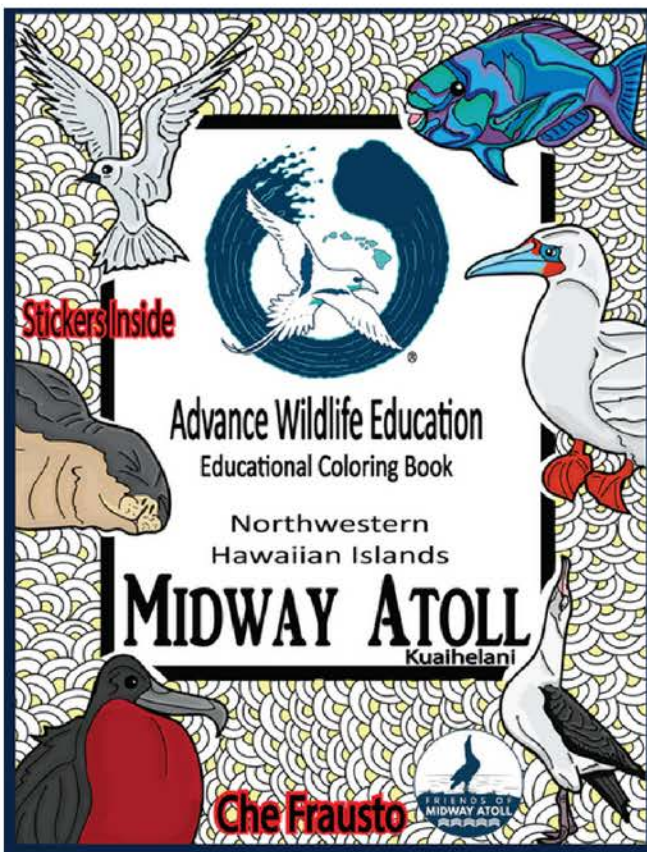
\$1,000 Provided spray paint for albatross counts

\$4000 Aviary purchased for the Seabird Protection Project

10 Weeks Jon Brack on Midway photographing FOMA & SPP projects

130 Stories posted on FOMA Facebook page

1 New Albatross Aloha Shirt Designed for the FOMA Store by David Shepard



8,600+ Followers on Facebook

\$11,000 Support for Communications projects

300 Coloring books of Midway Wildlife commissioned from Che Frausto for education outreach delivered.

\$46,000 Funds raised this year from Donations & Memberships

FOMA NEWS

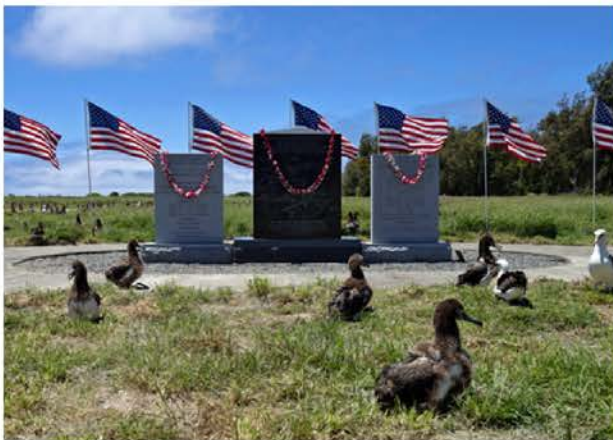
During the 2022-2023 year two of FOMA's dedicated board members, Wieteke Holthuijzen and Jean Harrison, ended their service with the Board. We are forever grateful for their time and efforts spent contributing to FOMA's growth while they were Board members. Wieteke and Jean both greatly contributed to FOMA growing its outreach capacity. Each made major contributions, and both devoted many extra hours of their time to make FOMA a capable organization.

In April, long standing Board member (and former Midway Atoll Refuge Manager), Barry Christenson, transitioned to Emeritus status on the board. We look forward to having him continue to provide support to FOMA in the coming years.

In January, FOMA recognized the need for administrative support. Thankfully, we were able to bring on Krystal Winn, she has been a great addition to our team. We look forward to continuing to work with her in the coming year.

We also would like to thank Board member Jennifer Barrett-Fajardo, for her dedication in creating our new FOMA website, and acting as its current administrator.

Communications Director, Ann Bell, who spent multiple months out on Midway Atoll NWR this past year, worked in partnership with USFWS and helped to make it possible for a LIVE broadcast from the refuge. This was done on June 7, 2023 in honor of the 81st Anniversary of the battle of Midway. The LIVE broadcast allowed for a virtual gathering of Battle of Midway Veterans and included Navel History and Curator Director Samuel J. Cox, with the Naval History Heritage Command.



Each year we also highlight individuals that have been especially dedicated in their efforts to make FOMA successful. For 2022-2023 our Volunteers of the Year are Jon Plissner and Helen Dunlap.

Jon is the Refuge Biologist out on Midway and over the last few years has been very helpful in making sure the Board is always up to date on the biological activities going on at Midway. That knowledge is critical to our ability to coordinate our actions inline with Refuge priorities. This past year Jon's support and extra time he made available to FOMA had great value as there was a series of Interim Refuge Managers during part of the year. During that time Jon consistently made sure we could communicate effectively from Midway and played an essential role in informing us about on-the-ground needs.

Helen is our Board Vice President, a consistently dedicated member of our team. This year she has worked tirelessly to make sure that FOMA develops the organizational mechanics we need to function effectively. While not a "project" that we highlight, making sure that the Board develops, has pathways for all its members to function as a collective team, and weathers transitions like we experienced this year, is invaluable to our durability and success.



FY23 Financials

Friends of Midway Atoll NWR

Functional P&L

	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>2023</u>
Revenue Sources					
Memberships & Donations	4,872	7,167	6,703	8,952	13,707
Major gifts	10,550	11,750	11,219	25,229	32,361
Sales Gross Profit	5,124	7,950	8,305	8,564	6,722
Other	125	49	2,505	5	536
Events (net)	<u>0</u>	<u>73</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>(1,330)</u>
Total Revenue	20,671	26,988	28,732	42,750	51,996
Uses					
Operating Expenses	1,850	1,611	2,370	7,455	4,531
Available for Programs	18,821	25,378	26,362	35,295	47,465
Program & Projects Activity	<u>40,700</u>	<u>37,507</u>	<u>13,312</u>	<u>49,042</u>	<u>36,768</u>
Surplus/(deficit)	(21,879)	(12,129)	13,050	(13,747)	10,697
Memo: Restricted Funds (Multi-year)					
Restricted donations	0	10,000	0	0	12,458
Expense	0	0	(1,558)	(1,949)	(9,939)
Net	0	10,000	(1,558)	(1,949)	2,519
Net Unrestricted	(21,879)	(2,129)	14,608	(11,798)	8,289

Statement of Condition September 30

	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>2023</u>
Assets					
Cash	67,557	62,939	78,058	61,097	73,084
Inventory (at cost)	4,081	10,098	5,228	8,745	6,329
Total Assets	71,638	73,037	83,286	69,842	79,413
Liabilities					
Accounts Payable	0	3,600	3,600	0	0
Unrestricted assets	71,638	59,437	71,244	63,349	70,401
Restricted Assets	0	10,000	8,442	6,493	9,012
Net Assets	71,638	69,437	79,686	69,842	79,413

Memo:

Program & Projects Activity

Refuge Discretionary Fund	249	155	91	221	412
Donations	500	500	513	1,000	500
Verbinesa Removal	0	0	0	0	8,704
Videography of Midway/Dec 7	0	0	0	8,471	0
Battle of Midway	77	0	0	12,695	0
Bird Counters Support	8,365	6,205	4,410	8,966	8,602
KUPU Intern Support	5,475	4,590	0	5,389	0
Communications Support	4,241	3,518	7,374	900	1,005
Aviaries & Equipment	21,793	22,032	0	10,900	4,027
Volunteer Expense	0	507	0	0	0
Coloring Book	0	0	0	500	3,018
Jon Brack Photography	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>10,500</u>
Total Program Expense	40,700	37,507	13,312	49,042	36,768

Our Team

Board of Directors

OFFICERS

Wayne Sentman | Board Chair

Helen Dunlap | Board Vice Chair | Current Acting Secretary

Jon d'Alessio | Treasurer

Ann Bell | Communications

Jennifer Barrett-Fajardo | Secretary (interim)

DIRECTORS

Heidi Auman

Barry Christenson - Emeritus Member

Scott Edwards

Bill Levin

Chris Marvin

Alyssa Miller

Shantha Thangiah



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