

# PAPAĀNAUMOKUĀKEA

## MARINE NATIONAL MONUMENT

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U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Update



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### Wildlife and Habitat Management

#### Hawaiian Islands NWR - Tern Island:

March was truly the beginning of spring with new life on the island. Grey-backed terns and greater frigatebirds were laying eggs, while sooty terns returned from their winter at sea. Staff will be needing those earplugs soon!

#### Hawaiian Islands NWR - Laysan Island:

A wayward peregrine falcon has been feasting on Laysan Island birds. As of March 28, the peregrine has taken at least 70 individuals, including 65 finches, 4 Bonin petrels, and 1 Tristram's storm petrel. The peregrine has not yet developed a taste for Laysan duck, as did the falcon that visited Midway Atoll this past November.

#### Midway Atoll NWR:

The next step toward obtaining a more precise number of Laysan ducks on Midway was achieved with the banding of 25 new individuals. Despite a few very windy days, with the aid of Refuge volunteers, Dr. Michelle Reynolds completed the banding within a week. This effort will enable the establishment of a true population model, assisting the future management of this highly endangered species.

Visitor Services Manager, Tracy Ammerman, escorted visitors to Eastern Island where they had an experience of a lifetime. Thirteen visitors witnessed ballet on webbed feet, as a mature and an immature short-tailed albatross performed a courtship dance.

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### Maintenance

#### Hawaiian Islands NWR - Tern Island:

Once again, Tern Island illustrated the challenges of remote outposts and the "ups and downs" that permeate daily living. The installation of a new water system has received rave reviews to date. It is working wonderfully ("...water smells and tastes great") and should lessen maintenance needs. On the other hand, a clogged toilet necessitated that Refuge Manager Dave Zabriskie crawl under the bunkhouse to demonstrate his plumbing aptitude. Thankfully for island residents, Dave is a handy guy.

Contractors also upgraded Tern's computer electrical and software systems. Critical data entry and communications will now go more quickly and smoothly.

#### Midway Atoll NWR:

Through the partnership work of Midway Atoll NWR, Chugach Industries, Schnitzer Steel Hawaii Corporation, and the assistance of Chris Woolaway, Marine Transportation & Pollution Specialist, twenty pallets of lead acid batteries and three containers of amber glass bottles, plastic bottles, and aluminum drink cans were shipped to Honolulu for recycling via the M/V Kahana's return sail. The final tally came to 6072 lbs. of glass, 1409 lbs. of aluminum, and 820 lbs. of plastic that all were given a second life. Although there is much more industrial and household waste to be recycled, this was an outstanding step forward toward mitigating human impacts on such a fragile and beautiful place.

# Papahānaumokuākea

## Administration

Major efforts to re-supply Tern Island, Laysan Island and Midway Atoll with food, fuel, equipment and supplies took the skilled coordination of several staff members. Cindy Rehkemper, Biological Science Technician, Ty Benally, Wildlife Refuge Specialist and Dave Zabriskie, Refuge Manager, logged in many hours of planning, shopping and packing to ensure safe and effective operations within the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands units. The M/V Kahana departed Honolulu on March 19 for a two-week deployment, which delivered contractors to install the new water system on Tern, as well as supplies and volunteers for the up-coming season. The ship also delivered the change-out crew and supplies to Laysan for their six-month deployment. Lastly, the ship delivered a replacement generator, supplies and fuel to Midway.

The radionuclide monitor (a “sniffer” for radioactive particles) for the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, which was installed on Midway Atoll last year, was inspected by international CNTBT representatives, and is now a certified component of the global array. The request to install an infrasound monitor is still under review regarding potential wildlife impacts.

The Hawaiian Islands NWR received a 2009 Preservation Honor Award from the Historic Hawaii Foundation in recognition of its 100th anniversary. The Preservation Honor Awards are the highest recognition of projects, individuals or organizations active in the preservation, rehabilitation, restoration or interpretation of the state’s historic, cultural or archeological heritage.

## Visitor Services

Work progresses on planning and preparing for the first Monument educators’ workshop, Papahānaumokuākea ‘Ahahui Alaka‘i (PA’A) - scheduled for June 2009 in Honolulu and Midway. This in-depth Monument experience will enable twelve carefully selected educators to share their inspiration and stewardship ethic with countless community members in Hawaii, as well as across the country.

A volunteer’s experience in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands created a lasting impression. Junichi Sugashita, Midway Atoll NWR volunteer and Japanese citizen, was deeply impressed by the impacts of marine debris on the wildlife of such a remote outpost. When his volunteer appointment ended, Junichi returned to Japan to attend the international Pacific Seabird Conference. While there, he conducted an interview for The Daily Yomiuri, which is printed in both Japanese and English, detailing the devastating effects that marine plastics have on wildlife, especially on young albatross.



Midway NWR Volunteer, Liz Donadio, displaying debris found on the atoll’s beaches.

For more information, contact U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 808/792-9540