

NEWS RELEASE
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World's Oldest Known Wild Bird Returns to Midway Atoll Refuge and Memorial

Honolulu, Hawaii — Wisdom, the world's oldest known breeding bird in the wild, has returned to her home, Midway Atoll National Wildlife Refuge and Battle of Midway National Memorial in the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument. At approximately 66 years old, she is also expecting! Wisdom was spotted on December 3, incubating an egg at the same nesting her and her mate use each year.

Albatross and many other seabirds exhibit high nest site fidelity, returning to the same nesting site each year, and relying on protected nesting sites like the Refuge and Memorial to raise their young.

"Millions of seabirds depend on the Refuge and Memorial as a safe place to rest and raise their young. But Wisdom is our oldest resident – she has returned home to Midway Atoll for over six decades, raising numerous chicks to successfully fledge," said Bob Peyton, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Project Leader for Midway Atoll Refuge and Memorial. "Thanks to the hard work of our biologists and volunteers, we have been able to keep records that have allowed us to keep track of her and her chicks over the years."

Wisdom has successfully raised and fledged at least nine chicks since 2006 and has traveled an estimated three million miles in her lifetime. Because Laysan albatross don't lay eggs every year and when they do, they raise only one chick at a time, the contribution of even one bird to the population makes a difference.

Midway Atoll is home to the world's largest colony of albatross. Nearly 70% of the world's Laysan Albatross (*Phoebastria immutabilis*) and almost 40% of Black-footed Albatross (*Phoebastria nigripes*), as well as endangered Short-tailed Albatross (*Phoebastria albatrus*) all rely on the Refuge and Memorial. Albatross start to arrive to return from sea to breed in late October and by the end of November nearly every available nesting space on the atoll is claimed by a breeding pair.

There are 20 different birds species that rely on Midway Atoll, in addition to the over one million albatross. In total, over three million individual birds call the Refuge and Memorial home



For photos and video, please visit: <http://bit.ly/WisdomPhotos>

**For more details and shareable social media about Wisdom:
<http://bit.ly/WisdomReturns2016>**

Located on the far northern end of the Hawaiian archipelago, Midway Atoll Refuge and Memorial is managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and located within the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument. It is one the oldest atoll formations in the world, it provides nesting habitat for millions of seabirds, and it is a touchstone for one of the most significant naval battles of World War II, and in history, the Battle of Midway. To learn more about the Midway Atoll: https://www.fws.gov/refuge/midway_atoll/

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Papahānaumokuākea is cooperatively managed to ensure ecological integrity and achieve strong, long-term protection and perpetuation of Northwestern Hawaiian Island ecosystems, Native Hawaiian culture, and heritage resources for current and future generations. Three co-trustees - the Department of Commerce, Department of the Interior, and State of Hawai'i - joined by the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, protect this special place. Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument was inscribed as the first mixed (natural and cultural) UNESCO World Heritage Site in the United States in July 2010. For more information, please visit www.papahanaumokuakea.gov.

