



**Transcript for *Wisdom, the Midway Albatross* written by Darcy Pattison (Mims House)**

**Introduction (approximately 0:00 – 4:29)**

Hi everyone! It's Colleen from the KU Natural History Museum, and I'm so glad that you could join me today for Story Book Science. I will be reading *Wisdom, the Midway Albatross* which is about one of my favorite birds; but I'm going to wait for more people to join us.

And while we wait, one of the things that I want to do is talk a little bit about Wisdom and where Wisdom nests. So Wisdom is a Laysan albatross, and Laysan albatrosses, they spend a lot of their time out on the open ocean where they're soaring, and they're foraging for food. But Laysan albatross do return to land, and they return to land to nest. And one of the main places that they nest is an atoll: Midway Atoll; and it's very far away in the Pacific Ocean. So I wanted to show you a map of just how far away Midway Atoll is from where I am in Kansas. So this is a map. If you look right here, that is where Kansas is, that's where Lawrence, Kansas is; and all the way over here is where Midway Atoll is in the middle of the Pacific Ocean. That's a distance of 4600 miles or approximately 7400 kilometers.

So Midway Atoll is very far away. And if you were to take a satellite image. That is what Midway Atoll looks like. So atolls are these unique land areas in the middle of oceans that are unique because of this ring like structure. That ring like structure is made up of coral; and atolls not only can have this ring like structure, but they can also have islands and some other structures as well. Midway Atoll has three islands also made up of coral, and you have Eastern Island, Spit Island, and Sand Island. And those are the islands where the Laysan albatross lay their nets. So I'm going to put this down as well.

One of the things you probably noticed from that satellite image of Midway Atoll and also the map is that it is surrounded by water. So it is surrounded by the ocean, and Laysan albatrosses like Wisdom, they rely and depend on the ocean. And so do I even though I live in a landlocked state. I live in Kansas which is right in the middle of the North American continent. So I want you to think about where you live in relation to oceans. Are you far away from an ocean? Are you near an ocean? And I want you to think about how you depend on oceans, even if you live very far away from them. So I want you to think about that.

Alright. So I'm going to go ahead and get started. The first thing I want to do is I want to, uh, just go over our guidelines for Story Book Science. Even though we're not in the museum, we are still going to follow museum rules. That means that we are going to be kind, and we're going to be considerate. Not just to ourselves but to others. So if you have any questions or comments, and you write those down, I want to – I want you to make sure that you're being kind and considerate to everyone. We want this to be a welcoming environment. The other thing I want to do is remind you all that if you need a partial transcript of this reading it will be available on our website after the reading, so later today.

Now this is the book we're gonna read it's called *Wisdom, the Midway Albatross*. It's written by Darcy Pattison and illustrated by Kitty Harvill, and we're reading it with permission from Mims House. So I want to thank Mims House for the permission to read this text. I really like this book. Wisdom is probably my favorite bird, and also it provides a lot of hope in regards to oceans and all of the organisms that rely on oceans: ourselves included!

So let's get started.

*Wisdom, the Midway Albatross.*

### **Reading from *Wisdom, the Midway Albatross* (approximately 4:30 – 12:37)**

*Wisdom, the Midway Albatross includes copyrighted materials, and we do not have permission to include the written text of the book in this transcript.*

### **Conclusion (approximately 12:38 – 20:55)**

The end.

Now that is such an amazing story. Like I've said previously Wisdom is one of my favorite birds, and her story is fascinating.

So what I want to do is I want to talk a little bit more about Wisdom and other Laysan albatrosses like her. So we know from the story that Laysan albatrosses, they are seabirds. So they spend a lot of their time soaring over the ocean, looking for food, foraging for their food, and eating their food. When they do return to land, they come to islands in the Pacific Ocean. Um, so that includes Laysan Island, Midway Atoll, which we talked about in the story. Uh, other Laysan albatrosses nest elsewhere on islands in the Hawaiian archipelago, so the chain of Hawaiian Islands. Some also nest in Japan and off the coast of Mexico, but most of them nest on Midway Atoll or Laysan Island.

When they are not nesting, like I said previously, they soar over the open ocean, and they have adaptations. And we know that adaptations are features that have changed over time that allow the Laysan albatrosses to survive their environment. So they have these adaptations that allow them to survive their environment, which is the open ocean; and we're going to talk about the long, narrow wings of the Laysan albatross. So albatross, they have these very long, narrow wings, and these wings are an adaptation related to their diet and their foraging behavior. So they need these long, narrow wings in order to soar over the open ocean. They soar, so that means that they hold their wings in place, and they don't flap their wings a lot. They use these long, narrow wings, and they need them in order to soar and glide using the wind currents over the open ocean. So what that means is they have their wings outstretched, and they keep them in place. Using the wind, they glide very, very long distances; and then they only have to flap their wings a couple times on their very long journeys. Now I don't know about you but having my arms out like this pretending to be a Laysan albatross is very difficult. It – it's very hard, and Laysan albatross do this for days on end. And just to show you how far they travel, how long they travel using this gliding, soaring method, I want to just show you a map. So this blue area: that represents the Hawaiian chain of islands, and specifically the islands where albatross are known to nest; and then there's all of this orange bit that looks like it should cover the Pacific Ocean, because it does, and that represents the distances that Laysan albatross have traveled to forage for food. So those are the Hawaiian chain of islands. All the way up here, those – that's Alaska and, uh, island chains in Alaska. So they travel a really great distance. In fact, albatross are known to travel up to 17 days, or 1600 miles, which is approximately 2750 kilometers. So they need to be able to have these long narrow wings that allow them to use the wind over the ocean to soar those long distances to find food.

Now just to give you an idea of how long the Laysan albatross wingspan is, which means from one tip of one wing all the way to the tip of the other, I have a blue strip of paper on my wall. That blue strip of paper, you can see where it starts, and then it goes all the way down to the floor. That is six feet and four inches or about

195 centimeters. That is how long the wingspan of a Laysan albatross is. Now I wanted to give you some comparison, because that's a really big distance. So I have my height on the board, and my height is this green strip of paper. I am five feet nine inches, which is approximately 175 centimeters. I'm still not as tall as the wingspan of a Laysan albatross, because Laysan albatross have such long, narrow wings. And I also wanted to compare the wingspan of a Laysan albatross to a bird that I'm very familiar with in Kansas, the house sparrow. So I have an orange sheet of paper. That orange sheet of paper is 7.5 inches or 19 centimeters. That represents the wingspan of the house sparrow; and like yesterday I have a house sparrow specimen. This is the female, and the female when she's – she's small, but for many of the birds that I see in Kansas, especially at bird feeders, this is, I think an average size. And its wingspan is only 7.5 inches or 19 centimeters, which is extremely small compared to the Laysan albatross.

Now as we know, Laysan albatross, they depend on the ocean. Oceans are very important for them. And I asked you earlier to think about how you depend on oceans, even if you don't live near an ocean. Oceans are super important not just to seabirds like the Laysan albatross but also to you and me. Uh, oceans, they provide over 50 percent of the oxygen on Earth. They also regulate climate, and they regulate weather, even in places far away from oceans. We know that Laysan albatross find their food in the ocean, but some humans also find their food in the ocean as well. And oceans provide some of the things that are needed to make medicine that can make us healthy. So oceans are super important, and we depend on them even if we don't live near them.

And even if you don't live near an ocean you probably live near a river; and rivers, they flow into other rivers which flow into other rivers which then flow into the ocean. And to give you an example. So where I live in Kansas, there is the Kansas River which then flows into the Missouri River, and the Missouri River flows into the Mississippi River which flows all the way down into the Gulf of Mexico. So it goes into the ocean. So even if I don't live right by an ocean, I still live nearby water, and it's important to make sure that that water is healthy and clean, because it's going to flow into the ocean, and we all depend on the ocean.

So thank you so much for joining me for *Wisdom, the Midway Albatross*. I was so happy to share such a wonderful story with all of you. I hope that you join me next week for our Story Book Science where we will read *Grandmother Fish*. It is written by Jonathan Tweet and illustrated by Karen Lewis, and we'll be reading it with permission from Feiwel and Friends which is an imprint of Macmillan. So I hope to see you here on Facebook Live at 10am next week! Bye!