



Transcript for *Wisdom, the Midway Albatross* (Mims House) Preview Video

Preview (0:00 – 6:28)

Hi everyone! It's Colleen from the KU Natural History Museum, and I wanted to remind you all about tomorrow's Story Book Science here on Facebook Live at 10am. We are going to be reading a story about one of my favorite birds. Her name is Wisdom, and she is a Laysan albatross. Now this is the cover of the book. The book is called *Wisdom, the Midway Albatross*. It's written by Darcy Pattison, and it's illustrated by Kitty Harvill; and we'll be reading it with permission from Mims House. So thank you so much to Mims House for the permission to read the story.

Now I don't know about you, but I have been doing a lot of bird watching from my home; and when I look out my window, I have noticed a lot of house sparrows. They are the most common bird that I see. And I think house sparrows are really interesting, and I wanted to share some museum specimens with you of house sparrows. Now house sparrows: the males and the females, they look different. So they're dimorphic, and they're especially dimorphic in their plumage, or their feathers. So the first museum specimen I'm going to show you is a male house sparrow and just have to – had to grab it really quickly – but this is the male house sparrow; and one of the things you'll notice is that, right there, right below its head, it has this patch of black feathers. I think it kind of looks like a bib or a handkerchief, but that you notice on the male house sparrow. So I'm gonna put this down. This is a female house sparrow. Now similar size, but what you'll notice is below the head. There's no black plumage. There's no black feathers. There are kind of some speckles of dark gray, but it's very different from what we saw with the male house sparrow. And just for comparison, I'll put the male and the female right next to each other. So that's one thing that I find really interesting about house sparrows.

Another thing that I think is really neat is their nest building behavior. So house sparrows, they nest in places where there are holes or cavities: so in buildings, um, if you've ever been to a grocery store, and the grocery store has a sign of letters outside sometimes you notice that if those letters have holes, there are bird nests in them; very likely to be a house sparrow. And what they do is they take dry vegetation: so straw, um, also twigs; and they build their nest, and they build them in those holes. And then they line it, and they can line it with soft bits and soft materials. Sometimes they are found in nature. Other times they are things that maybe humans have dropped. And I have an example of a house sparrow nest. It is in a bag. It's very fragile. It could break very easily. So I'm going to keep it in the bag; and there's a little glare from the light so I do apologize, but you'll notice that there's that, um, dry vegetation. There's straw. Uh, there's also a twig. But you'll notice some of those soft materials, so soft bits; and right there – it's a little small – but you'll notice that there's a blue piece of string.

Now I've seen other birds outside my window other than house sparrows. I've seen cardinals. I've seen blue jays. But besides the birds that I can see where I live in Kansas, I've been thinking about birds that I can't see. So those birds include seabirds like the Laysan albatross, like Wisdom. And this is a photo of Wisdom. Again she is a Laysan albatross. And I, like I said before, I think albatross are super neat. They have a lot of adaptations, and those adaptations are related to their environment. So again they're seabirds. They spend a lot of their time out on the open ocean, soaring. And when they do come to land, they come to land to nest, and where they nest are islands in the Pacific Ocean.

Their nests look very different from the nest of the house sparrow I just showed you. This is an example. This is one of Wisdom's partners and one of the chicks that Wisdom laid; and the nest, you can see, is kind of just a little hole dug in the sand on the island. And what the Laysan albatross do is, they use their feet. They move the sand around to give it that shape, and that's the nest that they build.

We're going to talk about other adaptations of the Laysan albatross tomorrow, um, and specifically adaptations related to their diet and their foraging behavior. So remember adaptations are features that have changed over time that allow a living thing to survive its environment; and just to give you a hint, I don't want to spoil too much, but looking at the strips of paper on the wall. Those strips of paper, they have something to do with the adaptations that we'll be talking about. So I want you to think what you believe it could be: what it is that we'll be talking about, what adaptations in Laysan albatross related to their foraging behavior.

So I hope you join me tomorrow. Again that will be here on Facebook Live at 10am where we'll read *Wisdom, the Midway Albatross*. I'll see you then! Bye!