

The Plastic Times Lesson 3: Midway Birds



Soaring high above the Pacific, this *Laysan Albatross* makes its way back home to Midway Atoll, where his family is waiting. His crop is full of food ready to be regurgitated for his hungry chicks.

PLASTIC FACTFILE

Plastic Type: Polyethylene Terephthalate (PET)

Product: Bottle top

Brought: 02 June 2015

Used: 02 June 2015

Disposed: 02 June 2015

Eaten: 28 May 2016

Fed to chick: ?

However, inside the bird it is clear that this meal is not what his chicks need. There are pieces of bright, coloured plastic he has mistaken for squid. A plastic bottle top he thought was a fish.



A toothbrush regurgitated by an albatross.

Sadly, he is not the only bird to have made this mistake. In 2016, one third of albatross chicks on Midway Atoll died. Many of these deaths are due to plastic in their diets.



Known for their long distance flying abilities, albatross snap up the squid-like plastic from waters near Alaska and carry it a thousand miles or more back to Midway. There, the birds either regurgitate it for their young or else die of natural causes with the garbage still in their stomachs. This feeding behaviour brings over 10 thousand pounds of plastic to Midway every year.

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