

LAYSAN ALBATROSS

Phoebastria immutabilis

Description: White head, neck and underbody. Black mantle and under wings. Under wings have black margins. Dark eye patch. Bill varies in color from gray to yellow orange with darker gray tip.

Length: 78 – 81 cm with a wingspan from 195 – 203 cm.

Life Span: Life expectancy is 12 to 40 years.

Food: Laysan Albatross are primarily nocturnal feeders. Main foods include squid, fish, crustations and fish eggs.

Laysan Albatross stay offshore during their non-breeding months (July through October).

Range: Throughout the northwestern and northeastern range of the Pacific. During feeding flights, the birds will travel thousands of miles and can range as far north as Alaska



Mating and Breeding: Laysan Albatross are monogamous. Their nests consist of surrounding grasses and shrubs. These are piled into large mounds combined with dirt that forms the nest. Each nesting pair lays one egg, which is incubated for approximately sixty-five days. Incubation starts with the female who usually stays for just a few days. The males then take over for as long as three weeks. If the egg is infertile or breaks, relaying will not take place until the following year.

Chicks hatch during late January and early February. Both parents will feed the chicks by regurgitation. The parents will often leave the chick for a few days to feed in the open ocean. Fledging often occurs 5 – 6 months after hatching.

Young birds will go to sea and do not return to the nesting grounds for the next 3 – 4 years. Upon their return they try to find their lifelong mate. The birds are approximately eight years old when they produce an egg for the first time. If one of the pair vanishes for any reason, the surviving bird will seek a new mate.