

ALBATROSS RETURNS TO ISLAND IN JAPAN

(*The Washington Post*) A wild Short-tailed Albatross, or Steller's Albatross (*Phoebastria albatrus*) born to an artificially reared mother on the Ogasawara Islands was confirmed to have returned to the chain—the first time a wild member of the species has returned to the islands from migration in about 80 years.

The return of the wild albatross, a species designated by the government as a special national treasure, was announced by a group of organizations led by the Yamashina Institute for Ornithology on 24 March 2017. The last time wild Short-tailed Albatrosses inhabited the Ogasawara Islands was in the 1930s.

The wild albatross with an artificially reared mother is believed to have left its nest on Nakodjima, one of the islands in the Ogasawara chain, in 2014, and migrated to the North Pacific Ocean. The bird was then spotted on Mukojima, an island north of Nakodjima, on 1 March.



Phoebastria albatrus
Japan, 1975, Sc#1199

Breeding sites of Short-tailed Albatrosses in Japan are limited to Torishima, one of the Izu Islands, and the Senkaku Islands in the Okinawa Prefecture. The Izu Islands are home to about 4,200 birds.

From 2008 to 2012, the Environment Ministry and other entities relocated 70 chicks from Torishima to Mukojima to breed them artificially. Two to five years after leaving their nests, albatrosses return home to breed.



Phoebastria albatrus
Guinea-Bissau, 2012, Mi#6334



Phoebastria albatrus
Solomon Islands, 2015, Sc#1812a