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LAYSAN ALBATROSS AS CARRIER OF FLOATING DEBRIS TO LAND

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Upon reading Kenyon and Kridler's interesting note (Laysan albatrosses swallow indigestible matter, The Auk 86: 339-343, 1969), I found that my own observations on Laysan might modify the impression these authors gave about the carrying ability of albatrosses and the hydrography of that island.

During two expeditions to Laysan Island (see notes in Elepaio 20: 16, 1959; 22: 43, 1961, and in ARB 103: 1964) my own experience with juvenile and adult albatross skeletons was by and large similar to that of Kenyon and Kridler: the carcasses and skeletons we found were also lined with pumice, armoured fish, kukui nuts and other indigestibles though plastic artifacts were not observed by us.

Kenyon and Kridler note that the "Lagoon" of Laysan Island is not connected by any channel with the sea (i.e. it is, in reality, a lake) and therefore they conclude that the plastic and pumice they found deposited at high water line of the lagoon must have originated from contents of albatross carcasses. But this conjecture needs to be modified: some, but not *all*, the former floatsam on the perimeter of this lagoon originates with the albatrosses. An undeterminable portion of the debris--and certainly all large-sized pieces, too big for albatrosses to swallow--should rather be assumed to have been brought in by the huge waves of winter storms which break through the flat coral sand area that girdles the lagoon on the south and which is only at a few places reinforced by low ridges or patches of phosphate rock. This area is devoid of a protective beach crest and here and northward up to the edge of the lagoon we found in June 1959 dozens of Japanese fishnet floats: heavy glass balls of 80 and 90 mm, or even more, in diameter, certainly unfit for albatross consumption. It is safest to assume that these glass floats were brought in by wave action. Then, other floatsam is likely to enter the lagoon the same way and the albatrosses are not the only carriers to blame for all deposited foreign material.

MOROTIRI (BASS ROCKS) AUSTRAL ISLANDS

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Morotiri or Bass Rocks is a small cluster of 4 rugged volcanic rocks and a number of stacks that form the southeast extremity of the Austral Island Group, in French Polynesia. They are located about 46 miles east by south of Rapa, at about 28°S, 143°30'W. As nothing of a general nature seems to have been published on their natural history, it may be worthwhile to publish notes made on a short visit on July 22, 1934, when Harold St. John, Elwood C. Zimmerman and I landed on the largest of the rocks and collected what could be found and