Monday 3 August 1964

0900 AM Underway - Was below decks and never realized we were moving until I had finished stowing gear and came above. Found we were half out of the harbor.

10:30 Came off watch - Saw one Common Moby Dick. We are close of Harbour heading in a nearly SSW direction. The sea is a deep beautiful blue. The ship is taking about 10° rolls. Most things in drawers roll joyously about. There are 6 Swedes on board.

2345 In bed for the night. Sorta hot. Ship takes constant 20° rolls. Conditions fine. Have started seeing different birds. None shot today - Paul shot at a Weebill. Will read a little & go to sleep. No sea sickness yet.
Tuesday August 4 1944

Up at 6:00 because flock of Wedgetails was sighted. Paul + I were at the guns going in. I got 2, Paul got 3. 3 were retrieved 2 got away by the time we had turned about.

About midday the engine room reported loss in air pressure and we had to drift for a couple of hours. In the afternoon Paul + I shot 1 bird each. Both were retrieved.

During the day we took many 30° rolls and a couple over that. One smoke bomb was a dud today.

We had a Fire + Body Drill today. Now we know where to go in case we sink.

Observed phosphorescent fish tonight. Really interesting, the emin light when disturbed. The best place to see them is the bow.

Spent all day on port. Rocked us just about wore out with the saw.
Wednesday - August 5, 1964

Very few birds sighted today.

Shot once, Paul shot once. No collecting done. Engines slowed to 1/2 speed during mid-day to regain air pressure.

Sea relatively calm. Many flying fishers. Saw one small whale this morning.

Not much to record, because very little earth-shutter events occurred.
Began watch at 0500
No flocks - Very few birds today
Passed Johnston Is. Toll at 1030.
Shot 1 Red-footed Booby (imm) netted 1330. Spent rest of day putting it up. Only shot fired today.
After evening watch spent time in the bow waiting for waves to crash over. Real near. Bobbing every which way.
Many 30° rolls. Today crashing in the galley every time it rolls.
Friday August 7, 1964

Nothing earth shaking today.
Hardly any birds seen.
First day on the grid.
Shot 1 immature White-Necked Petrel.
Only bird shot today.
Made one leg and bottom of leg of grid today. Started up other leg at 1:30 AM Sat. Saw lots of birds on bottom leg while on 9-12 PM watch.
Saturday August 8, 1964

Tis naught to say about today, but mist and rain and gray all day.

no birds collected the shots were fired
and all we did was grow more tired of pitching, rolling, bumping, crashing.
and all day long the sea kept thrashing.

The worst by far is the constant rolling,
ever steady, always rolling.
No matter where, you can not hide from shifting winds and washing tide.

So I will end my poem tonight,
and hope I do not have to fight from out my top bunk as I sleep
and wind up on the deck - a heap.
R. W. Merrill
1964
Sunday - August 9, 1964

Nothing happened today worth mentioning. We saw less than 1 bird per half hour and didn't fire a shot. Beautiful day tho.
Too bad there wasn't a little more action. Oh well may be tomorrow.

Monday - August 10, 1964

Not a very exciting day. Not many birds were seen until 5:00 pm when a flock was sighted. But we were not able to catch them. One White-tail Hawk and a bird was shot by A. SHU was seen
We have hopes for tomorrow
Tuesday - August 11, 1964

Well, today we had a little more excitement than usual. Spotted a flock in the morning and we chased it we couldn't catch it.

In the evening or late afternoon (5:50 PM) we saw another flock. We chased and shot, but we fired and fired we only got 2 wedge-tail Shearwaters. Paul got them both and I none. For all my efforts all I got was a right arm that is black and blue off the shoulder. From now on I will not do the shooting and will let some of those who have been giving "expert" information on how to shoot do the shooting. After all, they sound like they should provide good entertainment.

We saw a tug pulling a large barge today.

I hope we are as fortunate tomorrow as we were today and have as much excitement. We'll see.
Wednesday - August 12, 1964

Nothing exciting happened today. Hardly a bird was seen. Paul shot at one - missed. We did have an abandon ship drill and that was about the only thing worth mentioning. Wrote a poem on watch: "One to so turn (or why is turn turns)

Thursday - August 13, 1964

Well, we're out of the grain area. And just after we were out Paul shot a tropic bird (white tailed) and he plunked! into the water. We all watched as we pulled the ship around and as we approached it she flew away. That's the breaks. This was the end of the all night watches. 3 in 4 days and we'll be at Pearl & Hermes Reef probably Monday. Time about 1 away. We're on the home end of the run.
Friday, August 14, 1964

Well today we had excitement. Ran into a big flock in the after noon (280) and shot it up till 5:00. Got 10 birds in all.
Paul got 2 sooty terns in the morning and I got a Bulwer’s Petrel about 2pm. Then all the rest were Wedgetails - I got 1 and 2 Paul about 4 and a sailor another.

Sound like a war of sorts.
I hope we get some good ones tomorrow.
I winged an Adult Brown Booby but he kept going. Guess I just ruffled him.

Tomorrow we must start and get ready for our Islands. Lots of stuff in the hold to look over.

Saturday, August 15, 1964

Today we went through a couple of flocks. Also scatterings.
Paul got some sooties, Wedgetails, and 1 frigate bird. Doug Whitman a frigate bird. He is a sooty Tern.
Since my arm is knotted up I’ve been doing all my shaving from the ship.
For the last 3-4 days. Dropped the sooty with 1 shot from the long gun.
Supposed to get to Pearl / Hermes tomorrow late.
Sunday August 16 1964

Arrived Pearl & Hermes Reef 17:30
Sighted about 3.50
The next 3 nights + 2 days will be spent ashore on southeast island.

Landing made at 5 pm and camp set up. Island survey was made.
A number of tagged seals were found. Notable animals include: Seals, Laysan Albatross, Red-footed Boobies, Brown Boobies, Blue-faced Boobies, Great Frigate Birds, Sooty Terns, Fairy Terns, Common Noddy Terns, Hawaiian Noddy Terns, Red-tailed Tropic Birds, Wedge-tail Shearwaters, Christmas I. Shearwaters, Bulwer's Petrels, Bristle-thigh Curlews, Ruddy Turnstones, Golden Plovers.

After the camp was set up, island survey done. We set out to band Sooty Terns and Wedge-tails.
During the morning I dug up the skeleton of a Hawaiian Monk Seal. It was an old or seemingly large seal, much of it was missing, but it will be sent back any way. The skull is still there and one of the rear flippers is somewhat all there and a tusk skeleton in between. Much of it was below the surface and I had to scrape meat (rotten) off the bones. I washed them in sea water and got them as clean as I could. Not much of a skeleton but maybe it will help someone.

The afternoon was spent banding the large birds on the Island and some immature Soody Terns. The others had banded large birds during the morning. The night was spent banding Soody Terns and Wedge Tailed Shearwaters.
Today we took the rubber raft
and visited: Bird Is, Sand Is., Grass Is.
Bird Seal Is. We observed Kittiwake
from the shore of Seal Is.
All of these Is. lie in southeast
from Southern Is.

Bird Is. and Sand Is. are only
small Sandy upcroppings which have
no vegetation. Both had Blue-footed Boobies
and Hawaiian Noddys. Boobies also probably
other occasional visitors at times. Both
had a few seals.

Grass Is. was of considerable size
after visiting the latter two. It had
good vegetation at one end and an abundance
of Frigate birds of which the chicks were
banded. There also were Red-footed boobies,
Blue-footed Boobies, Red Vail Tropic Birds, Common
Noddy Terns, Ruddy Turnstones, Fairy Terns,
wandering Yellies and a few others,
Wedge-tails, seals etc.

Seal Is. had dense vegetation in the
center at one end. containing Wedge-tail
burrows and Red Vail Tropic Birds. There
were also G. Frigate, Fairy Terns, Common Noddy
Terns and perhaps other wanderers.

When we got away westward we made
a radio check with the ship and they
came down to pick us up. We had dinner on the ship then steamed our little boat back to Southeast.
The evening was spent sanding wedge tails and Scotty plans.
Tomorrow we go to North Is.
Wednesday August 15, 1964

Up and loaded the raft today. Then ventured northerly across the reef to North Is. On the way Paul found a large fish ball floating in the water. We arrived first on what the map shows as just a sandy spits which at high water. Now however it has grown to be about 10 ft. above sea level and has meager vegetation - 4 species of plants.

Many seals here also, two of which put on quite a show near the raft. There were Fairy Terns flying overhead. Common Noddies and lots of Blue-footed Boobies present. One Blue-footed Chick also. No wedge-tails. Just a general survey was done and then we went on to North Is.

North was quite large and reminded us of Southeast because it had more area than the other little islands. North has; Wedge-tails, Fairy Terns, Common Noddies, Hawaiian Noddies, Caspian Terns, Albatross chick, Red-Tailed Tropic birds, Blue-footed Boobies and seals.

There were 2 mother seals with pups. First eight wedge-tails and Blue-footed Boobies were landed.
Thursday August 20, 1964

The morning was spent cleaning up any bailing and completing surveys. We left about 2 pm. The sea was very, very calm. Yesterday the shearmauer had sailed up outside the reef to find an opening for us to get out safely. Most of the area is surrounded with very high reef sticking out of the water much of the time.

We got aboard and prepared to land on Lilliwiski the following morning at 8 AM.
Friday August 21, 1961

8 Am arrived at Lisianski Is.
Most predominent sight seen is the Two Palm Trees on the Island.

Landed and set up camp. Immediately we noticed the flies were very thick. This was to be the only drawback on the whole Island.

A survey was made and 143 seals were found more than on any other island ever with a pen. Also 3 Hawk Bill Turtles were seen.
The vegetation was very very thick in the interior mostly consisting of Scouring Round the edges and Lepidium in the center. Also there were viney areas of Ipomea.

The island was loaded with birds and only an estimate was tried because there were so many that it was impossible to do any sort of counting. Those in greatest numbers were Soda Yerns, Fright Birds, Wedgebill shearwaters and Bonin T. Petrels. Others that were there were Blue-footed Boobies, Red-footed Boobies, Brown boobies, Fairy Terns, C. Noddy Yerns, Hawaiian Noddy Yerns, Laysan Albatross Chicks, Brizzie Thigh Curlews (groups of 10-12 or more were seen) Ruddy Turnstones, Golden Plovers.
That night we banded 309½ terns and it was quite a job trampling through waist high grass all the time. Also Fairly terns and Mountain Waders and Barns. It's were done.
Saturday, August 22, 1964

Finished birding just at 6:00 a.m. Good thing too because the souths were getting harder to catch as it became light.

Got a couple of hours' sleep but the flies became too bad by 8:30 so had to get up.

Had a good swimming area so when the flies got too bad we went for a swim.

After we got up we handled some South Tern chicks. Tried to rest for a while during the late afternoon.

At night we handled more south Terns, Wedge Tails and another 100 Bonin T. Polynesi.

The Bonins are in large numbers and at dusk are seen all over the place.

An albino South Tern was killed and several albino were collected alive on Hisianski and will be brought to the J.T.
Sunday August 23, 1964

Broke camp at 5 AM and returned to ship. Spent the rest of the day paying out gear and packing stuff in the hold. I spent the afternoon putting the lab in shape while the rest slept.

Monday August 24, 1964

While not on watch - slept

Tuesday August 25, 1964

While not on watch - slept.

Wednesday August 26, 1964

Same as above

Thursday August 27, 1964

Arrival Honolulu 4:30 PM
Landed on Laysan Is. About 9 a.m. While looking for a campsite without too many thers I found a wedge-tail Shornwater with an orange streamer on its leg. I was unable to catch the bird. Many Laysan Finches were found. Also Fairy Tern chicks were found on the way to the campsite.

Later on while looking for the streamered wedge-tail two tagged Sooty Terns were seen.

About 10:30 A.M. we split into 2 groups of 3. Ken, Allen and myself going around the pond in the interior and Paul, Alvin, Doug following the shore line.

In the interior we found innumerable Finches. Shorebirds were: Ruddy Turnstones about 1500 Golden Plovers about 600 and Wondering Tattlers about 85-50. Bristle-thigh curlews about 15.
Got up about 2:15m and went out hunting.

Did Transit Study Tours while others worked on
other species. Returned to camp at any break and rested
until 9 a.m. About 10 a.m. I walked around the
perimeter of the island. Returned at 3:30.

Found 1124 Gray backs (S) on trip around. Also
nesting Bulwers on Christmas Is. Skua bites. Lots of
young of these species. It was a rainy dark
afternoon. Found 16 stiff on my trip around.

Many fish balls and old .30 cal. cartridges. Blew
dry on the beach. Also a rather unusual
liquid gas containers had washed ashore. Had a
stainless steel nozzle on the top etched with:
14557 Rossy Spec-NAS-26673-1A.
Walked around the perimeter again today.

I saw an orange streamlined Common Noddy
tern in a flock on the shore but couldn't
catch it. There are lots of Laysan Albatross eggs
about and quite a large number of dead carcasses
of young. Evidently a rough time for the birds.

Laysan is terribly hot and there are a large number
of flies to bother us. Seals were numerous and 2
Green Turtles were found.

This evening I banded Fairy Terns and others taking
2 hand. I estimate about 500 Fairy Terns. About
100 Bulwer's petrels on Laysan. I found
a rather good spot with many Bulwer chicks
and probably there were more if I had only
gotten further down the beach but I had
run out of #2's and it was 5:30 AM when
I finished. Caught 5 Reddy Territorers
and a Wandering Tattler.
19 September 1964

Coast Guard Cutter was seen today and they sent ashore a party of 5. Bob Lang and Bob Fleet (SI) Gene Krieler (US Fish & Wildlife) and 2 Hawaii Fish & Game men. I took the shot gun and walked the perimeter again counting and seeing seals and looking for the streamlined Noddy to shoot. Needless to say the Noddy wasn't seen and the following is a breakdown on seals.

- Adult males 56
- Adult females 34
- Yearling males 35
- Yearling females 27
- Unidentified Adults 74
- Unidentified Yearlings 14
- Unidentified Unidentified 12
- Total 252

Later the census of Teal were taken and it was found there were 257 Teal (approx)

Went out after Frigate birds at night but the moon was so bright they were impossible to catch. We broke camp 4 AM (20th) and waited for the raft to take us aboard ship. Enough running around to say saw for me!