# *Japan's Ocean Borderlands*

Desert islands are the focus of intense geopolitical tensions in East Asia today, but they are also sites of nature conservation. In this global environmental history, Paul Kreitman shows how the politics of conservation have entangled with the politics of sovereignty since the emergence of the modern Japanese state in the mid-nineteenth century. Using case studies ranging from Hawai'i to the Bonin Islands to the Senkaku (Ch: Diaoyu) Isles to the South China Sea, he explores how bird islands on the distant margins of the Japanese archipelago and beyond transformed from sites of resource extraction to outposts of empire and from wartime battlegrounds to nature reserves. This study examines how interactions between birds, bird products, bureaucrats, speculators, sailors, soldiers, scientists and conservationists shaped ongoing claims to sovereignty over oceanic spaces. It considers what the history of desert islands shows us about imperial and post-imperial power, the web of political, economic and ecological connections between islands and oceans, and about the relationship between sovereignty, territory and environment in the modern world.

PAUL KREITMAN teaches modern Japanese history at Columbia University.

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# Japan's Ocean Borderlands

## Nature and Sovereignty

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# *Naming Conventions*

Many of the islands discussed in this book have been known by various names in different languages, and the choice of one name over others risks being construed as politically loaded. So I should say at the outset that this book does not seek to adjudicate territorial sovereignty claims. Instead, when choosing which names to use for islands or island groups I have generally tried to prioritise clarity over politics where possible.

This means I have not been entirely systematic. In some cases I have opted for names that sound more familiar to readers in English: so Iwo Jima over Iōtō, Marcus Island over Minami-torishima, Rasa Island over Okidaitōjima, Sakhalin over Karafuto, Guam over Guåhan, Sea of Japan over East Sea. In other cases I have echoed the names used by my sources, particularly when I am interested in recovering the particular historical perspectives of those sources. In Chapter 7, for instance, which is told largely from Okinawan and Japanese perspectives, I refer to the Senkaku Islands rather than the Diaoyu-tai, Diaoyu-dao or Pinnacle Islands. This by no means connotes support for the Japanese government's territorial claim to the islands. To avoid confusion I have generally tried to refer to islands by the same names throughout, even though their 'official' names may have changed multiple times. So I have stuck with Bonin over Ogasawara Islands even when discussing their time under Japanese rule.

Though sensitive to the cause of Indigenous rights, I have also avoided using anachronistic names where possible. So in referring to the Indigenous lands of the Ainu I use the settler colonial name Hokkaidō over the more recent coinage Ainu Mosir. Conversely in Chapter 7, I refer to Okinawans rather than Ryūkyūans because, notwithstanding the historical existence of an independent Ryūkyū Kingdom, I detected little evidence of sustained Ryūkyūan nationalist sentiment during the period of US colonial rule over the islands. Finally, when writing about the Northwest Hawaiian Islands I have used

Laysan, Lisianski and Midway rather than the Hawaiian-language names proposed by Kekuewa Kikiloi.[1] Though the names recovered by Kikiloi effectively articulate traditional Indigenous claims to the islands (and may well have been used prior to the nineteenth century), by the early twentieth century they appear to have fallen out of use even amongst Native Hawaiians (Kānaka Maoli or Kānaka ʻŌiwi. I have, however, listed Indigenous names for Hawaiian and other Pacific islands where they first appear in the text.

Japanese and Chinese names are written in the East Asian fashion – surname before given name – except when citing works published in English. I have added macrons to Japanese vowels where appropriate, but not for places such as Tokyo or Osaka that are well known to English-language readers. Chinese words and names are mainly written in pinyin. I have included ʻokina and kahakō in Hawaiian terms and names unless quoting primary sources that do not include them.

[1] Kekuewa Kikiloi, 'Rebirth of an Archipelago: Sustaining a Hawaiian Cultural Identity for People and Homeland', *Hūlili* 6 (2010): 73–115.