

# 悠久の時を超えた グアムの歴史と自然の宝庫

*Guam's Northern Treasure:  
Guam National Wildlife Refuge, Ritidian Unit*

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Additional images supplied from the author's private collection.

# Ritidian

リティディアン

1/The beautiful white sandy beaches and turquoise waters of Ritidian Beach. 2/Lush plant life is found throughout the Ritidian Unit. 3/An ayuyu, or coconut crab. 4/Hand prints like this one are found in the caves at Ritidian. 5/Butterflies flutter through the forests and along the beach.

1/リティディアンビーチ 2/葉草にもなると言われるハーフフラワー 3/コナッツクラブ(ヤシガニ) 4/洞窟内の壁画 5/青い斑点が美しい蝶 "ブルー バンディッド キング クロウ"



geography found at Ritidian as well as the variety of creatures that inhabit the area, both now and those that are extinct.

The purpose of the Nature Center is to educate visitors about what Ritidian has to offer and what Guam has lost. There are lifelike representations of Guam's bird population, decorating the murals and also in the tree that is the centerpiece of the Nature Center. Sadly, many of these species are now extinct or at least extinct in the wild, like the Guam Rail or Ko'ko'. This has happened due to the accidental introduction of the brown tree snake, boar, and feral cats.

There is a panel in front of the tree, with pictures of each bird and a corresponding button. If you push the buttons, you can hear the chirp or song that each bird species makes. For many local children of Guam, these recorded bird calls are the only opportunity they will ever have to hear how these birds sounded when they filled the local trees and skies of Guam. There is hope that one day the Guam National Wildlife Refuge will be declared safe from pests and that the Ko'ko' bird will be able to be reintroduced into the wild.

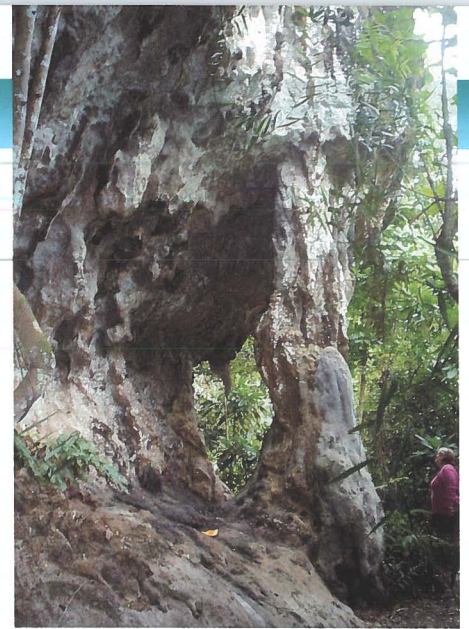
The Nature Center also functions as the visitor center and it is from here that the Haggan Watch program for Ritidian Beach is operated. Haggan is

the Chamorro word for sea turtle, which are known for using Guam's beaches to lay their eggs. The Haggan Watch is a group of volunteers who walk specific beaches every morning looking for the telltale signs of a turtle nest, specifically from the Green Sea or the Hawksbill Sea Turtles. Both endangered species are known to use Guam's shores as nesting grounds and if sighted, Haggan Watch volunteers will make note of the location before doing their best to protect the nest from discovery by beach goers and animals.

Just passed the Nature Center is a clearing where many people park their cars before embarking on a guided tour through the limestone forest. There are signs posted here that further describe the Ritidian habitat and the haggans who nest there. The signs also warn swimmers about the sometimes treacherous currents that run through the seemingly innocent waters of Ritidian Beach. The beach is simply gorgeous, by far one of the most beautiful on Guam, and it is easy to become enticed by its beauty, before you know it, you've swam too far from the shore and find yourself in trouble. Ritidian should be enjoyed to the fullest, but as with any water sport, safety must come first, more so at Ritidian as there are no lifeguards present.

The allure of the turquoise sea or chance of seeing a turtle nest are only the beginning of all there is to see and experience at the Guam National Wildlife Refuge. A visit to Ritidian must include a guided walk though the ancient limestone forest. Access to this part of the refuge is heavily restricted and can only be visited with a Park Ranger as a guide. Tours must be arranged through the Nature Center and it is best to do so in advance by calling their office at 355-5096.

As you enter the forest, the park ranger will point out indigenous plants that are highly prized on Guam for their medicinal uses, trees like the lada (also



The limestone cliffs have the unique shapes, nooks, and crannies.  
鍾乳石で出来た洞窟。人間と比べるとその大きさが分かる。

commonly known around the world as the noni tree) whose leaves are used to treat high blood pressure and a number of ailments. Once you reach the official entrance of the forest, the park ranger will explain and may even demonstrate an important part of Chamorro culture. The Chamorro people believe their ancestors still inhabit the jungles and before entering, it is customary to ask permission to enter from the ancestral spirits.

Once you officially enter the forest, it is apparent that you are somewhere very special. There is a quiet in the jungle that is only broken by the breeze through the trees and the occasional sound of birds or other forest creatures. If you're lucky, you may see a black monitor lizard with yellow speckles all over its body or small blue-tailed skinks.

The cliff itself is dominated by an amazing array of shapes, giant holes, and magnificent arches and the breathtaking architecture that only nature can create. Your guide will point out the incredibly long roots of banyan trees that trail down the cliff wall and the fossils of sea creatures, as millions of years ago; Ritidian was beneath the sea as was much of Guam.

Within minutes you come to the first of two caves on the tour, where lusongs dot the cliff ledges that mark the entrance. Lusongs are mortars that were carved in to the limestone by

These long vines with twisting bark are the hanging roots of banyan trees on the top of the cliff line.  
果てしない生命力を感じる。木々に絡み付くバンヤンツリーの根





# Ritidian

pestles, or lommoks, and were used by the ancient Chamorros to grind food for their meals. Inside the caves is more evidence of the people who once lived there. Pictographs, or cave drawings, that are 4,000 years old can be seen in both caves.

The refuge also faces another pest that is slowly defacing the pictographs. Mud daubers are a common yellow wasp that uses a pasty mixture of dirt to create small cells where they place their larvae. These muddy looking nests can be seen all over Guam, on buildings, trees, and nearly any surface the mixture will adhere to. Unfortunately, the mud daubers also make their messy nests on top of the pictographs, which are fragile. As a result, there is fear that scrubbing off the nest could further destroy the centuries old pictographs and park rangers have suspended huge nets over the cave entrances in hopes of slowing down the pesky wasp. Rangers are also in a losing battle with algae, which grows on the cave walls from rainwater that trickles through the porous limestone.

The Guam National Wildlife Refuge is dedicated to protecting the natural and cultural gifts that are found at the refuge, though there is not much that can be done to protect the site from nature. We encourage everyone to visit the refuge and see the caves, learn about how to protect the animal and plant life that live there, and how to enjoy what many call the most beautiful beach on Guam. Visitors should know that pets are strictly forbidden.

US Fish & Wildlife staff of the Guam National Wildlife Refuge, Ritidian Unit  
リティディアン自然の保護に努めるUSFWSのスタッフたち。



The Nature Center includes a description of Guam's birdlife and an interactive display of birdcalls.  
ネイチャーセンターではリティディアン自然の古代と現代が分かるように展示される。

グアム島最北端に位置するリティディアンビーチ。澄み切った美しいブルーの海とその背後にある生命力溢れる緑豊かなジャングルは、グアムで最も美しいビーチと言われています。アメリカ軍が島の3分の1に及ぶ広大な土地に基地を構え、1980年代リゾート開発によって自然が取り壊されるようになって、リティディアンに人の手が入ることはありませんでした。しかしチャモロ語でまだリクテヤン村と呼ばれていた頃にはそこには多くの人々の暮らしがあり、リティディアンや少し南へ下ったウルナオのジャングルで発見されたラッテストーン、ルソン（食物をすり潰す鉢）、人が暮らしていたと思われる洞窟などが古代リティディアン様子を物語っています。

22,500エーカーに及ぶリティディアンエリアは、USフィッシュ・アンド・ワイルドライフサービス（USFWS）が管轄するグアム野生動物保護区域リティディアンユニットとして保護されています。USFWSが運営するネイチャーセンター内にはリティディアン様々生き物が壁に描かれ、リティディアン自然が一目で分かるようになっています。しかしブラウンツリースネークや豚、猫により野生界では絶滅してしまったココバードのように、すでにジャングルでは見ることもできない絶滅生物も描かれており、美しい自然が残されているものの古代チャモロ人が見ていた自然と同じ姿では決していないことがこの壁画を見るとよくわかります。

また鳥の写真の下ボタンを押すとその鳥の鳴き声を聞くことができますが、これも今ではこの録音された鳴き声しか聞くことのできない鳥がほとんどです。ネイチャーセンターではこの地域に生息する生き物の保護に努めるとともに、リティディアンが、またグアムが失ってしまったものを来訪者に伝え、私たちが今しなければならぬことを静かに語りかけてきます。

実際にジャングルへ足を踏み入れてみると、木々を吹き抜ける風の音、時折聞こえる鳥や動物の鳴き声以外は静かな時間が流れます。チャモロ人は先祖の霊がジャングルの木々に宿っていると考え、ジャングルに入る前にその霊に許可を求めるお祈りを行います。リティディアンジャングルにはそのような神秘的な空気を感じることができます。

The notorious brown tree snake has decimated Guam's natural bird population.  
グアムの鳥の減少の原因となっているブラウンツリースネーク。

