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# ALBATROSS

One of the Rare and Loyal Birds

By Dr. Kashaf Salahuddin



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Albatrosses, of the biological family Diomedidae, are large seabirds related to the procelariids, storm petrels, and diving petrels in the order Procellariiformes (the tubenoses). They range widely in the Southern Ocean and the North Pacific. They are absent from the North Atlantic, although fossil remains show they once occurred there and occasional vagrants are found. Albatrosses are among the largest of flying birds, and species of the genus *Diomedea* (great albatrosses) have the longest wingspans of any extant birds, reaching up to 3.7m (12ft). The albatrosses are usually regarded as falling into four genera, but disagreement exists over the number of species.

The four genera are the great albatrosses (*Diomedea*), the mollymawks (*Thalassarche*), the North Pacific albatrosses (*Phoebastria*), and the sooty albatrosses or sooties (*Phoebetria*).



The black-browed albatross (*Thalassarche melanophris*), with a wingspread to about 230 cm (7.5 feet), wanders far offshore in the North Atlantic. A dark eye-streak gives it a frowning appearance.



The black-footed albatross (*Diomedea nigripes*), one of three North Pacific species, has a wingspread to about 200 cm (6.5 feet) and is largely sooty brown in color. It nests on tropical Pacific islands and wanders widely throughout the North Pacific.



The Laysan albatross (*Phoebastria immutabilis*), with a wingspread to about 200 cm, has a white body and dark upper wing surfaces. Its distribution is about the same as the black-footed albatross.



The royal albatross (*D. epomophora*), with a wingspread to about 315 cm (about 10 feet), is largely white with black outer wing surfaces. It breeds on islands near New Zealand and near the southern tip of South America.

The earliest albatross fossils date back to 32 million years ago. They are also known as NORMADS OF THE OCEAN. The IUCN Red List gives the total population size of the Short-tailed albatross as 2,200-2,500 individuals, equating roughly to 1,500-1,700 mature birds. According to IUCN's Red List, the Laysan albatross population size totals around 591,000 breeding pairs.

### **FACTS**

-They perform specialized gliding techniques in order to minimize the use of muscles and energy.

-Before taking off, an albatross needs a run up to allow enough air to move under the wings to provide lift. It is the most energy demanding part of a journey.

-Albatross uses their massive wingspan to travel long distances without using their muscles.

-These birds can fly for many days high in the sky and do not flap their wings once

-A very beautiful bird. He is one of the few male birds who only choose one partner and all his life he spends with his partner they flew together and move together.

-They can go years without landing. They fly 50 miles per hour. Predict the weather. And they are among the world's most endangered birds, capable of travelling 10,000 miles in a single journey and circumnavigating the globe in 46 days.

-They are so adapted to their oceanic existence that they spend the first six or more years of their long life (which lasts upwards of 50 years ) without ever touching land.



THE BIRD IS A LITERARY SYMBOL, A NATURAL WONDER--AND A HARBINGER OF OUR OWN FUTURE.

By Olivia Judson

Be an Albatross

Be a rare bird

Be an Albatross

Have largest wingspan

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