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Albatross

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Abstract

Albatross looks at the place of these iconic birds in a wide variety of human cultures, from early responses by north Atlantic mariners to modern encounters, examining in detail the role the bird plays in the lives of different peoples and societies. The albatross's remarkable ease in the air and its huge wingspan strikes all those who observe them, and the huge journeys they undertake across the oceans inspires awe. The bird has been celebrated through proverbs, folk stories, art, and ceremony. For many, the bird's cultural significance is still determined by Coleridge's *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*. People have engaged with the bird over the last two centuries, from those who sought to exploit them to those who devoted their lives to them. Writers, artists and documentary makers have all focused on the albatross and its place in the human imagination has been demonstrated throughout history. The book concludes with a consideration of the bird's changing significance in the modern world, as well as threats to its continued existence and its prospects for the future.

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