

The Albatross and the Fish: Linked Lives in the Open Seas (Mildred Wyatt-Wold Series in Ornithology)

Robin W. Doughty, Virginia Carmichael



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Breeding on remote ocean islands and spending much of its life foraging for food across vast stretches of seemingly empty seas, the albatross remains a legend for most people. And yet, humans are threatening the albatross family to such an extent that it is currently the most threatened bird group in the world. In this extensively researched, highly readable book, Robin W. Doughty and Virginia Carmichael tell the story of a potentially catastrophic extinction that has been interrupted by an unlikely alliance of governments, conservation groups, and fishermen.

Doughty and Carmichael authoritatively establish that the albatross's fate is linked to the fate of two of the highest-value table fish, Bluefin Tuna and Patagonian Toothfish, which are threatened by unregulated commercial harvesting. The authors tell us that commercial fishing techniques are annually killing tens of thousands of albatrosses. And the authors explain how the breeding biology of albatrosses makes them unable to replenish their numbers at the rate they are being depleted. Doughty and Carmichael set the albatross's fate in the larger context of threats facing the ocean commons, ranging from industrial overfishing to our habit of dumping chemicals, solid waste, and plastic trash into the open seas. They also highlight the efforts of dedicated individuals, environmental groups, fishery management bodies, and governments who are working for seabird and fish conservation and demonstrate that these efforts can lead to sustainable solutions for the iconic seabirds and the entire ocean ecosystem.

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