


[NEWS](#) [SPORT](#) [WEATHER](#) [WORLD SERVICE](#) [A-Z INDEX](#)
[SEARCH](#)
[Low Graphics version](#) | [Change edition](#)
[About BBC News](#) | [Feedback](#)

BBC NEWS WORLD EDITION

 [WATCH/LISTEN](#)
News Front Page


[Africa](#)
[Americas](#)
[Asia-Pacific](#)
[Europe](#)
[Middle East](#)
[South Asia](#)
[UK](#)
[Business](#)
[Health](#)
[Science/Nature](#)
[Technology](#)
[Entertainment](#)

[Have Your Say](#)
[Week at a Glance](#)
[Country Profiles](#)
[In Depth](#)
[Programmes](#)

[BBC SPORT](#)
[BBC WEATHER](#)
[BBC ON THIS DAY](#)

Last Updated: Thursday, 22 January, 2004, 11:29 GMT.

[E-mail this to a friend](#)
[Printable version](#)

Place your bets on the big birds

By Alex Kirby

BBC News Online environment correspondent

Efforts to help endangered albatrosses are being boosted through collaboration between birdlovers and a big bookmaker.

The scheme, the Ladbrokes.com Big Bird Race, invites punters to bet on a group of albatrosses on a 6,000-mile flight.



Only five months to go on one of the world's longest migrations

Money raised as the birds migrate from Tasmania to South Africa is going to help seabird conservation projects.

The UK's Conservation Foundation, which thought up the idea, is working with Tasmanian scientists to learn about the birds' migration route by tagging them.

The group consists of 18 juvenile Tasmanian shy albatrosses, a reclusive species which nests on three islands off Tasmania - Pedra Blanca, Albatross Island, and Mewstone.

The electronic tags will allow scientists to track their progress on the five-month flight, which is expected to start around the end of March.

Oceanic steepchase

Ladbrokes will be offering a variety of bets on the "race" between the birds, with punters able to follow their progress online via satellite.

The company says: "Any income generated from the bets will be fed directly back into seabird conservation."

It will make nothing from the event, but hopes the publicity will be enough of a reward.

The foundation asked Ladbrokes to back the event because it says the race is very like horse racing, especially the Grand National:

SEE ALSO:

[Albatross campaign](#)
 15 Jan 04 | [Science](#)
[Albatrosses to bene](#)
 17 Nov 03 | [Science](#)
[Albatrosses face gr](#)
 06 Sep 03 | [Science](#)

RELATED BBCi LINKS

[Save the Albatross](#)

RELATED INTERNET

[Ladbrokes](#)
[Conservation Founc](#)
[BirdLife Internation](#)

The BBC is not responsible for the content of external links

TOP SCIENCE/NATURE NOW

[Mars seen in unpre](#)
[Spirit rover faces lo](#)
['No cosmic ray clim](#)
['Last chance' for So](#)

- they are two of the world's longest steeplechases/migrations
- there are major hurdles to overcome (the albatrosses will risk hypothermia over the southern ocean)
- the horses have trainers, the birds have scientists monitoring them
- each albatross will have the equivalent of an owner, a high-profile backer (still to be announced)
- in place of jockeys, the birds will carry tags
- backers will be able to follow the action and bet on the outcome of both races.

The Red List of Threatened Species, published by IUCN-The World Conservation Union, says two species of albatross are critically endangered, seven are endangered and 10 are vulnerable.

According to BirdLife International pirate fishing in the southern ocean kills more than 100,000 seabirds - including tens of thousands of albatrosses - annually, with longline fishing in general estimated to kill 300,000 seabirds a year, including 100,000 albatrosses.



The race will raise money - and awareness

The Big Bird Race - otherwise known as The Ultimate Flutter - aims to highlight the albatrosses' plight, and the organisers want more countries, including the UK, to sign and ratify the international Agreement for the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels.

Professor David Bellamy, co-founder of the Conservation Foundation, said: "The albatross is the most beautiful and iconic bird in the world, but its existence is under extreme threat.

"Hundreds of thousands are facing a gruesome death from badly-executed longline fishing practices. The race is a fantastic way of highlighting the environmental disaster we are creating."

 [E-mail this to a friend](#)

 [Printable version](#)

LINKS TO MORE SCIENCE/NATURE STORIES

Select





[E-mail services](#) | [Desktop ticker](#) | [Mobiles/PDAs](#) |

[News Front Page](#) | [Africa](#) | [Americas](#) | [Asia-Pacific](#) | [Europe](#) | [Middle East](#) | [South Asia](#)
[UK](#) | [Business](#) | [Entertainment](#) | [Science/Nature](#) | [Technology](#) | [Health](#)
[Have Your Say](#) | [Week at a Glance](#) | [Country Profiles](#) | [In Depth](#) | [Programmes](#)

[BBCi Homepage >>](#) | [BBC Sport >>](#) | [BBC Weather >>](#) | [BBC World Service >>](#)

[About BBC News](#) | [Help](#) | [Feedback](#) | [News sources](#) | [Privacy](#) | [About the BBC](#)