

Scientists use satellites to count endangered birds from space

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Albatrosses, one of the most iconic but also one of the most threatened groups of birds on the planet, are difficult to study in part because they breed on some of the world's remotest and most inaccessible islands. Scientists have now shown that the highest resolution satellite imagery is capable of "seeing" these birds from space, allowing researchers to count their numbers on remote islands directly from satellite images without ever having to go there.

This is the first time that satellites have been used to count individual birds from space.

"The great albatross breed in some really remote places, so counting them by traditional methods can be difficult and expensive. Many important colonies of these endangered [birds](#) have not been surveyed for decades, so being able to use satellites, which are relatively inexpensive and can take images of anywhere on earth, will be a step-change in how we monitor albatrosses in the future," said Dr. Peter Fretwell, lead author of the *Ibis* study.

More information: *Ibis*, [DOI: 10.1111/ibi.12482](https://doi.org/10.1111/ibi.12482)

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