

Origins of Selkie Folklore in Scotland



Selkie stories developed from the mixing of Celtic and Scandinavian mythology and folklore. One origin of the selkie is that they were part of the finfolk and then became independent.

The Saami are an indigenous people of northern Scandinavia. They were known as powerful sorcerers who could control weather, travel while in magical trances, and shapeshift into sea animals or bears.

They and their stories traveled with the Norse people to the Shetland islands and then on to Orkney. The Saami people were known as Norse Finns in the Scottish islands.

The "Finn" part of their name became its own aquatic creature through shifts in storytelling. They were known as finfolk, and they had all the same powers as the Norse Finns did on land.

Over time their ability to shapeshift was isolated and given a shy and benign character as the selkie.