

Antarctic Krill



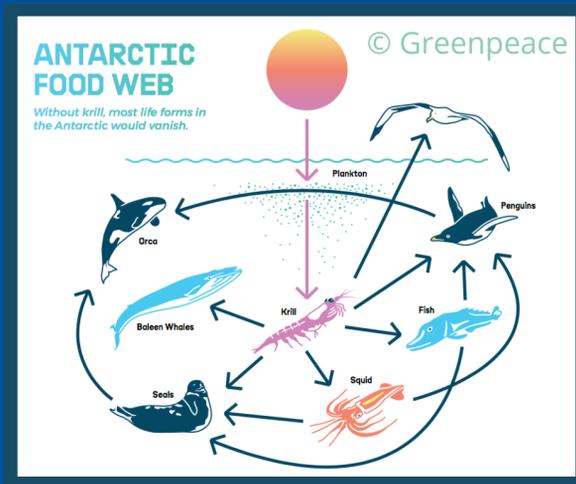
The first step in saving Antarctica is protecting its waters and source of life—the tiny, but critically essential, Antarctic Krill. Krill are the cornerstone of a healthy ecosystem. Without them, all is lost. Protecting Antarctic krill is crucial for current and future global biodiversity, food security, and planetary processes.



THE WESTERN ANTARCTIC PENINSULA NEEDS OUR HELP. HELP US RATIFY A MARINE PROTECTED AREA NOW!

Visit antarcticanow.org to learn how to protect the peninsula and its wildlife for the future.

Krill are small, shrimp-like crustaceans that form the basis of the entire Antarctic food web. Antarctic Krill are the keystone prey species for many species of whales, as well as Crab-eater Seals, Chinstrap, Gentoo, and Adelie penguins, which in turn are essential prey sources for higher predators such as Leopard Seals, Skuas, and Orcas. Due to the size of krill swarms (often visible from space), they provide the vital process of cycling and storing millions of tons of carbon dioxide every year. However, Krill are now the target for the largest commercial fishery in the Southern Ocean, threatening the planet as we know it.



Research shows that Antarctic Krill stocks may have dropped by 80% since the 1970's. Industrial krill fishing mainly occurs in the Western Antarctic Peninsula, which affects the entire Antarctic food web, and leads to impacts on climate change through the removal of vast swarms of krill. Roughly 8 million tons of Krill have been taken from Antarctica over the last 40 years, and since 2010, the catch for Antarctic Krill has significantly increased. In 2019, 400,000 tonnes were taken from the peninsula alone. At the same time, warming waters and a reduction in sea ice is reducing the breeding grounds of Krill. This threatens the species and all that rely on it, including the potential for future sustainable fishing.

Why are Krill being fished at such a large scale?

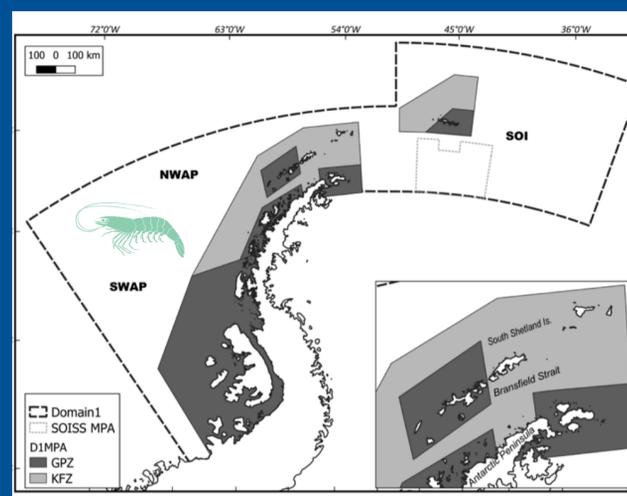
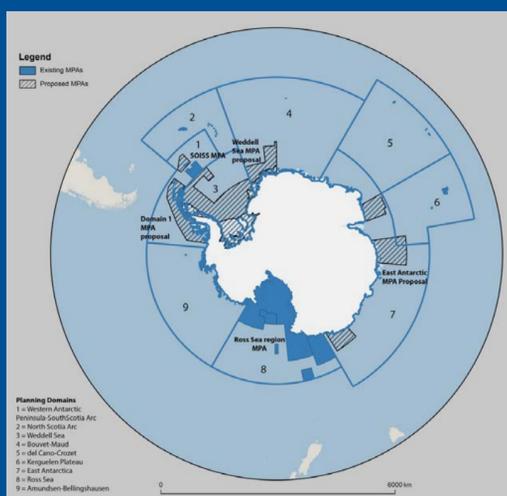
- There is a growing demand for krill oil, with a global value in 2015 of 204.4 Million USD.
- Dietary supplements containing ingredients such as omega-3 fatty acids and their metabolites form the largest part of the market, with revenues expected to double by 2021.
- Flaxseed oil and algae grown in controlled environments could both be sustainable substitutes for the Omega-3 found in Krill oil.



Importance of creating a Marine Protected Area

- Due to climate change and anthropogenic threats, the Antarctic Krill range has shifted more than 400 kilometers South since the 1970s.
- 70% of the total population of Antarctic Krill now lives in the waters surrounding the Western Antarctic Peninsula
- While we cannot control the effects of climate change here, we can protect the Western Antarctic Peninsula and main breeding grounds of Krill. This will safeguard the survival of Antarctic Krill, maintain sustainable fishing for the future, and protect the Antarctic food web from irreversible collapse.

Krill Swarms play an important role in carbon cycling



Protecting the Western Antarctic Peninsula is important because it is the fastest-warming area in the Southern Ocean and one of the fastest-warming areas in the world. The Peninsula and associated lands are home to 75% of the circumpolar krill population. Because of the vast abundance of krill, this region also sustains large breeding and foraging populations of penguins, seals, and whales. Domain 1 of the Western Antarctic Marine Protected Area aims to protect the region's biodiversity by preserving ecosystem processes, protecting vital areas for zooplankton, fish, mammal, and bird life cycles, and designating areas for scientific research and monitoring.

WE MUST PROTECT THE FUTURE OF ANTARCTIC KRILL AND THE WILDLIFE THAT DEPEND ON IT BY CREATING THE WESTERN ANTARCTIC PENINSULA MARINE PROTECTED AREA. THE TIME TO ACT IS NOW!