

GREENPEACE HISTORY IN THE ANTARCTIC

Greenpeace began campaigning for an Antarctic World Park in 1983. From 1986 onwards, Greenpeace ships travelled to Antarctica each summer to document and publicise the environmental abuses occurring there — at the time providing the only real independent source of information about governmental activities on the ice. During these trips expedition staff carried out environmental inspections of over 40 stations and documented evidence of damage to the environment and violations of the Antarctic Treaty's environmental regulations. This information was then published annually.

Greenpeace installed its own environmentally friendly station in 1987. In a world first for an NGO, Greenpeace established the World Park Antarctic Base, a small year-round base on Cape Evans, Ross Island.

During this time, Greenpeace and the Antarctic and Southern Ocean (ASOC) campaigned actively

against the signing of the Convention on the Regulation of Antarctic Mineral Resource Activities (CRAMRA), instead arguing that Antarctica should be declared a World Park and that mining should be banned. Greenpeace was concerned that mining activities would pose unacceptable risks to the unique Antarctic environment and destabilise the region politically. CRAMRA would have established the property rights regime essential for mining to proceed — and to that extent actually increased the likelihood of mining.

In 1989, the Exxon Valdez oil spill in the Arctic underscored the realities of oil drilling in polar environments. Subsequently, Australia and France led negotiations amongst Antarctic Treaty members for a comprehensive environmental protocol. In 1991, Antarctic Treaty members signed the Protocol on Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty.

The Protocol bans all commercial mining for at least 50 years and requires prior assessment of the environmental impact of all activities. The technical annexes also institutes mechanisms to set aside large protected areas, provides legally-binding measures governing waste disposal and marine pollution, and creates a Committee on Environmental Protection.

Since the signing of the Protocol, Greenpeace has continued encouraging Antarctic Treaty nations to ratify the Protocol and to implement its provisions. Further expeditions have continued to highlight threats to the Antarctic ecosystem such as pseudo-scientific whaling and illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing.

GREENPEACE HISTORY

Greenpeace is an independent organisation campaigning to ensure a just, peaceful, sustainable environment for future generations. Our mission and core values are based on independence, non-violence and bearing witness.

Behind the scenes, we campaign on many levels.

We use non-violent, direct actions to expose global environmental problems and force solutions.

Greenpeace International began in Canada in 1971 and today has a presence in more than 41 countries, and 2.65 million supporters worldwide.

Greenpeace Australia was founded in 1977 and joined forces with Greenpeace Pacific in 1998. Together, our 130,000 supporters are the backbone of Greenpeace Australia Pacific.



Antarctica needs Marine Protected Areas



Antarctica and its surrounding oceans support a unique ecosystem, unusual in that it relies heavily upon one krill species, *Euphausia superba*. Recent developments in the krill fishery indicate a massive expansion of fishing is imminent. This increase, combined with the effects of climate change threatens to impact heavily on the Antarctic ecosystem.

Marine protected areas (MPAs) offer an important opportunity to mitigate these threats and protect foraging and breeding grounds of vulnerable species. Annex five of the Protocol on Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty has provision for declaring protected areas over marine and terrestrial areas. If the protected area encompasses a marine area, the management plan must be approved by the Convention for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR).



The Antarctic ecosystem is under threat. Krill fishing is increasing, the climate is changing. By itself CCAMLR can't cope. Antarctic waters need Marine Protected Areas.

MPAs have been developed for Australian national waters in the sub-Antarctic to protect conservation values threatened by fishing activities. One example, Heard Island, lies within CCAMLR's boundaries. Yet no MPAs have been declared within Antarctic waters. Instead, Antarctic Treaty members have relied upon CCAMLR to sustainably manage Antarctic waters. However, this arrangement has failed due to CCAMLR's inability to control fishing activities. This has resulted in unsustainable impacts upon target stocks and endangered species of seabirds.

This systemic failure, combined with the current and potential impacts of climate change and fisheries expansion, may threaten populations of Antarctic fauna. Antarctic Treaty members should develop MPAs under the provisions of annex five in order to protect Antarctic fauna and mitigate the impacts of fisheries management failures.

