

Positively Ocean

Liz Fox: Hi this is Liz Fox on Positively Ocean, where we celebrate the ocean and look at what is doing well. This week story takes us off the Ross in the southern sea off of Antarctica to the entire west coast of the continental United States. Although Antarctic fishing grounds are extraordinary remote, fleets from dozens of countries compete for the bounty of fish and crustaceans, including krill. But things are starting to look better for wildlife there. Just over a week ago 25 nations agreed to protect a 600,000 square mile area, making the worlds largest Marine Protected Area. That's more than 3.5 times the size of California, and it will be off limits to commercial fishing, including krill, starting in December 2017. The Commission for the conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources, which coordinated the multinational effort, also renewed the limits they set for krill fishing, and specific areas outside of the marine protected areas for 5 years, instead of the usual 3-year renewal. Bill Douros, regional director on the west coast for NOAA office for the National Marine Sanctuaries sees the importance of the Marine Protected Area and the krill kill limits in the Southern Sea.

Bill Douros: In one of the central purposes for that is to protect krill abundance, which is really important down in the southern ocean. Which has been fished pretty heavily down their and that new marine sanctuary down off Antarctica is designed to protect krill among other species.

Liz Fox: Although krill live throughout the world ocean, Antarctic krill is harvested the most. Researchers and scientist worry that taking too much biomass out of lower parts of the food web is dangerous for the fish, mammals, and birds that feed on them. What makes krill so special is that they are primary consumers. That means they transform what they eat, teeny-tiny photosynthetic plankton, into energy that bigger organism can eat in a form of their 2inch shrimp like bodies. Fish as small as anchovies, sea birds like penguins and even the largest animals that roam the Earth, Blue Whales, feed exclusively on krill. That's why California scientists, conservationists, and decision makers in the fishing industry banned a krill call before it began. In 2006, Douros was superintendent of NOAA's Monterey's Bay National Marine Sanctuary when he proposed a krill banned to the Pacific Fisheries

Management Council, which sets catch limits for fishing on the west coast from California and to Washington. There was no local krill industry at the time but the fisheries council valued a policy that would protect food from sea life in the National Marine Sanctuaries. But human pressures increasing jeopardizes krill populations throughout the world ocean, putting all the animals that depend on them at risk. Our burning of fossils fuels changes temperature and acidity in the oceans, wind patterns, and ocean currents, which impact how and where krill can live and reproduce. And human demand for krill is on the rise people eat krill in traditional dishes throughout Asia, and in the west dietary supplement companies market the krill pill for omega-3 fatty acids. But the baulk of caught krill becomes spotter for fish in aquaria and aquaculture and for livestock on farms. Taking krill out of the oceanic food web and placing it on our tables in one form or another, can further stress species already in peril, like the endangered blue and finned whales, salmon, and rockfish. So to protect prey in the Pacific, in 2009 the Pacific fisheries management council expanded the krill banned to span the entire range of California, Oregon, and Washington shores out 200 miles to sea, in perpetuity. That's a lot of commitment at the federal level. But that's not all, again Bill Douros.

Bill Douros: Another cool thing that took place as part of this process down here, was the state of California closed some loop holes that existed in state law to prohibit the harvest of krill in state waters, and the landing of krill on any ports in California. In Oregon and Washington, they also adopted a few of the legislative changes that made this a complete and consistent banned along the west coast.

Liz Fox: With nowhere to land and process krill on the west coast and with protections that cover most of the national range of krill in the sea Douros is content.

Bill Douros: So far, I would call it the success story, so no news is good news on this front.

Liz Fox: This is an example of how to do right by the ocean folks. Until next time, I'll be searching for all things Positively Ocean. For Ocean Currents Radio on KWMR in west Marin, this is Liz Fox reporting in Berkeley, California.

(Music)

Jennifer Stock:

Thank you Liz Fox for another wonderful segment of Positively Ocean, really highlighting some of the conservation successes that apply to krill. And that took some leadership from our West Coast National Marine Sanctuaries that proposed this ban of krill to the Pacific Fisheries Management Council, and that was applied even across the other states as well to help protect all that feed for fisheries and for all those mega fauna seabirds, and whales. Excellent! And also the new sea marine protected area in Antarctica which I believe is just the first step in protecting larger areas down there too, so we will have to keep our ear posted on that.

I want to say thanks to Jeff Dorman for being on the show today, and Liz Fox, producer of Positively Ocean featuring things that are working well in the ocean. Ocean Currents is the first Monday of every month, 1-2 P.M., and we have a podcast, you can go to iTunes and look for Ocean Currents there, or go directly to Cordellbank.noaa.gov to hear past episodes. This is the 10th year here of Ocean Currents on the air here on KWMR, and in the 10th year I finally started twitter feed. So Ocean Currents is on Twitter, you can follow Ocean KWMR to get information about this program and other programs supporting web links that we feature here on Ocean Current's Radio. I love hearing from listeners, so if you have idea, topic, comments, or questions please email me Cordellbank@noaa.gov, or tweet at Ocean KWMR. We will be back next month, focusing on rockfish, another west coast species issue is the rockfish conservation areas that have been here on the west coast, so we're going to catch up and find out what all those are all about and how rockfish are responding to that, so stay tuned on Ocean Currents. Thank you so much for listening, enjoy the ocean, bay, or whatever body of water you can get into safely. This has been Ocean Currents here on Community Radio for West Marin.

(Music)

Jennifer Stock:

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**Positively Ocean
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