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# ECO



A Publication of Non-Governmental Environmental Organizations at the  
XXXI Commission on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources Meeting

## All Eyes on CCAMLR

ECO is excited to be in Hobart for this momentous CCAMLR meeting. With important marine protected area (MPA) proposals on the table, there is sure to be a lively discussion. But to what result? That will depend on whether delegates show international leadership or narrow national interests. ECO urges all Members to act to leave a lasting legacy for future generations.

### TIME TO DELIVER ON HISTORIC MANDATE

It's time. As you gather in your delegations to plan the next two weeks, remember the commitments and agreements your countries made to each other. Recall CCAMLR's 'unique' position as a conservation-based organisation with a remit to protect ecosystems. It is this uniqueness that provides the opportunity for fulfilling CCAMLR Members' joint commitment to take proactive steps to meet the World Summit on Sustainable Development goal of designating a representative system of marine protected areas (MPAs) and marine reserves, based on the best available science, by 2012.

CCAMLR has taken the necessary steps to get to this decision point. Significant efforts have been made towards meeting the milestones CCAMLR set itself to establish a representative system of MPAs within the Convention Area by 2012. These milestones included submitting proposals for areas for protection to the Scientific Committee by 2011, holding a series of workshops on planning domains, and submission of proposals on a representative system of MPAs to the Commission. The proposals on the table do not yet constitute a representative system of MPAs covering the whole Southern Ocean but they would provide a good starting point. They are based on the best available science as has been agreed by the CCAMLR Scientific Committee.

The establishment of a representative system of MPAs and marine reserves has been recognised as a matter of

priority time and again in both the Commission and Scientific Committee, and by the Committee for Environmental Protection of the Antarctic Treaty.

Delegates, the world is watching. You have the mandate, you know the urgency. Please create the legacy.

### PRECAUTION AND THE ROSS SEA

Antarctic sea ice reached a maximum in September, which was a record for all the years observed since 1979, including in the Ross Sea. Ice in the Ross Sea has been growing in part due to the impact of the Antarctic ozone hole and other changes driven by climate change. Overall there has been an increasing trend of more sea ice in the Antarctic at close to 1% per decade, and has been more dramatic in the Ross Sea. Thus, the time window for vessels getting into the Ross Sea has been closing.

This year more vessels have proposed to fish in the Ross Sea region (Area 88.1); the number of vessels has increased by 25% over the last 3 years. More vessels and more ice will mean more vessels getting into trouble.

CCAMLR members have committed to applying the precautionary approach but have yet to incorporate climate change into their decisions. Neither the implications of ice conditions nor the tragic history of accidents have led CCAMLR to take a precaution approach when considering vessel limits in Ross Sea fisheries. In the last 2 years two vessels have sunk, and several other vessels have gotten into trouble and needed assistance or had to return to distant ports for repairs. Many lives have been lost.

CCAMLR needs to consider the impacts of ice conditions, the trend in worsening ice conditions in the Ross Sea, and whether fishing vessels are designed to withstand Antarctic ice conditions and take a precautionary approach in deciding to permit them.

### **KRILL, VESSELS, CLIMATE CHANGE, and EXPLORATORY FISHERIES -- OH MY!**

MPAs are naturally on everyone's mind for this CCAMLR meeting. Yet CCAMLR has other important items on the agenda that deserve attention. High on ECO's list are krill, vessel management, climate change and the steady increase in exploratory fishing.

With notifications for krill fishing vessels exceeding the krill trigger level this year, we can't forget about krill. Increasing interest in krill fishing (as Adelie and chinstrap penguin populations decline on the Peninsula) means that now is the time to consider key issues like implementing feedback management, resolving issues surrounding green weight estimation, and providing adequate resources for the CCAMLR Ecosystem Monitoring Program (CEMP) fund (to name just a few!) undecided. The integrity of CCAMLR's precautionary approach depends on it.

Vessel management is also on the agenda, both in terms of reducing IUU and improving safety. Despite a reduction from the days of the initial toothfish gold rush, several IUU vessels have been proposed for inclusion on the contracting and non-contracting party list this year. There have been two serious vessel incidents since last year's CCAMLR meeting, one of which included fatalities. As with MPAs, CCAMLR has an opportunity to demonstrate leadership on these issues to other management bodies. ECO is particularly keen to see CCAMLR adopt strengthened port state measures, including those in the EU/US proposed revisions to CM 10-03. Fishing in the CCAMLR area should always be safe and legal.

Although the news media have recently been confused by reports that sea ice is increasing in Antarctica, we trust that CCAMLR is too smart to think that climate change isn't having a major impact on Antarctica and the Southern Ocean. The effects of warming must be considered in a wide variety of decisions, from MPA designation to catch limits. The UK's proposal to adapt a method of assessing Arctic ecosystem resilience to climate change (RACER) for the Antarctic would complement this integration of climate change knowledge into decisions quite nicely.

And let us not forget the steady expansion of toothfish fishery via exploratory fisheries, with little or no overall consideration of the capacity of areas to sustain such fisheries.

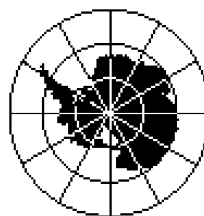
It will be tough to get through all of these issues in the short time we have here in Hobart, yet ECO considers that since CCAMLR members have put forward so many solid proposals, there's no reason to delay action.



Izzy Banks seeks loving partner. Iselin seeks a committed loving partner to support and protect her. Suitors must like penguins. Prospective partners should contact Mr Barnes of ASOC.

### **ECO Number 1**

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### **Production Team**

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