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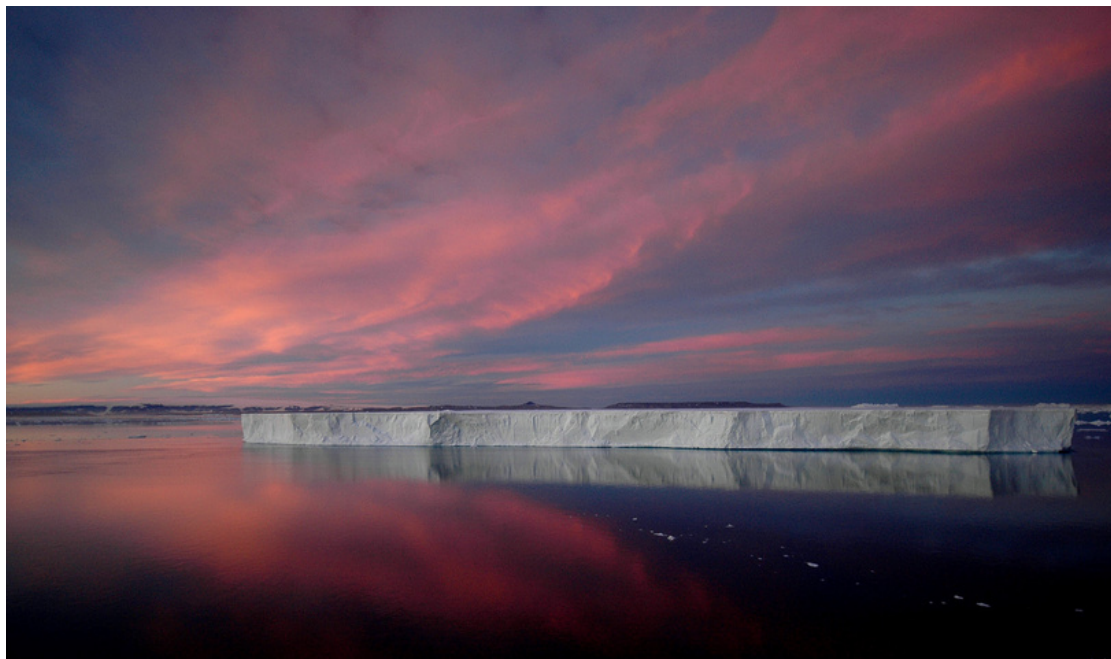


CCAMLR



© CCAMLR

ARCTIC **MARINE** LIVING
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Chinstrap penguin (*Pygoscelis antarcticus*), Antarctic fur seal (*Arctocephalus gazella*) | Photos © Volker Siegel (top right, bottom left), Karl-Hermann Kock (top left, bottom right)

The Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (the Convention) is an international agreement and is an integral part of the Antarctic Treaty system. The Convention applies to all life within the Antarctic marine ecosystem. The objective of the Convention, set out in Article II, is the conservation of Antarctic marine living resources, where the term ‘conservation’ includes rational use.

The **COMMISSION FOR THE CONSERVATION OF ANTARCTIC MARINE LIVING RESOURCES (CCAMLR)** gives effect to the Convention’s objective. CCAMLR adopts conservation measures that regulate fishing and related activities in the waters surrounding Antarctica in accordance with the Convention.

CCAMLR’s Headquarters and Secretariat is based in Hobart, Tasmania.

HISTORY AND CCAMLR ORIGINS

18TH–19TH CENTURIES

The marine life of the waters surrounding Antarctica has been harvested since 1790, when sealers first hunted fur seals for their pelts. By 1825, some populations of fur seals were close to extinction, and sealers began hunting elephant seals and some species of penguins for oil.

EARLY 20TH CENTURY

Whaling began in 1904, with seven species of whales in the region extensively exploited.

LATE 1960s

Large-scale fishing for finfish began in the late 1960s, targeting species such as mackerel icefish (*Champsocephalus gunnari*), marbled rockcod (*Notothenia rossii*) and Patagonian rockcod (*Patagonotothen guntheri*). By the late 1970s, certain species had been overfished in some areas.

MID-1970s

Krill fishing started in the mid-1970s, and by 1980, more than 400 000 tonnes were being taken annually. Krill is a keystone species in the Antarctic ecosystem, as seabirds, seals and whales depend on it for food.

1978

In 1978, concern over increased fishing and its effect on the wider ecosystem led the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties to convene a conference on the conservation of Antarctic marine living resources. The conference agreed to the Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources, signed in Canberra, Australia, on 20 May 1980.

1982

The Convention came into force on 7 April 1982. It provides the foundation for marine living resource conservation in the waters surrounding Antarctica, while recognising the prime responsibilities of the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties for the protection and preservation of the Antarctic environment and, in particular, their responsibilities under Article IX, paragraph 1(f) of the Antarctic Treaty in respect of the preservation and conservation of living resources in Antarctica.

CCAMLR MAKEUP AND RESPONSIBILITIES

As of 2026, CCAMLR is composed of 27 Members and 10 Acceding States (States that are Party to the Convention but not Members of the Commission). An Acceding State may become a Member if it is engaged in research related to, or harvesting of, Antarctic marine living resources.

CCAMLR MEMBERS

Argentina	Namibia
Australia	Netherlands
Belgium	New Zealand
Brazil	Norway
Chile	Poland
China	Russia
Ecuador	South Africa
European Union	Spain
France	Sweden
Germany	Ukraine
India	United Kingdom
Italy	United States of America
Japan	Uruguay
Republic of Korea	

ACCEDING STATES

Bulgaria
Canada
Cook Islands
Finland
Greece
Mauritius
Pakistan
Panama
Peru
Vanuatu

CONTRACTING PARTIES

As part of the Convention, the Contracting Parties established the Scientific Committee as a consultative body to the Commission. The Scientific Committee has a number of subsidiary bodies and working groups providing scientific advice to support decision making. These groups particularly consider ecosystem monitoring and management; fish stock assessment; statistics, assessments and modelling; and acoustics, survey and analysis methods and fishing-related incidental mortality mitigation. The Commission is also advised by two Standing Committees - one on Implementation and Compliance and one on Administration and Finance.

THE ROLE OF CCAMLR

CCAMLR's function is to give effect to the objective and principles set out in Article II of the Convention. It does this in a number of ways, including:



Emerald rock cod (*Trematomus bernacchi*)
Photo © Antarctica New Zealand

- Formulating, adopting and revising conservation measures on the basis of the best scientific evidence available
- Facilitating research into Antarctic marine living resources and the Antarctic marine ecosystem
- Compiling, analysing and publishing data on the status of Antarctic marine species and the factors affecting their distribution, abundance, and overall population health.
- Gathering, analysing and publishing catch and effort statistics on harvested populations

- Identifying conservation needs and analysing the effectiveness of conservation measures
- Implementing the Scheme of International Scientific Observation and System of Inspection established under the Convention
- Monitoring compliance with the conservation measures to ensure that fishing is conducted in a sustainable manner, to prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing in the Convention Area and to maintain strong market controls to prevent trade in IUU-caught fish
- In-season monitoring, forecasting and establishing fisheries closures



Fire Dragon Armoured Amphipod (*Epimeria pyrodrakon*)
Photo © John Weller

IMPLEMENTING THE CONVENTION

The CAMLR Convention applies to all marine living resources that occur south of the Antarctic Convergence. Whaling and sealing – which do not take place in the region – are recognised by CCAMLR to be the responsibility of the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling, and the Convention for the Conservation of Antarctic Seals respectively. Nevertheless, the role of these species in the ecosystem is considered by CCAMLR when making management decisions.



Antarctic shag (*Leucocarbo bransfieldensis*) | Photos © British Antarctic Survey (top), Karl-Hermann Kock (bottom)

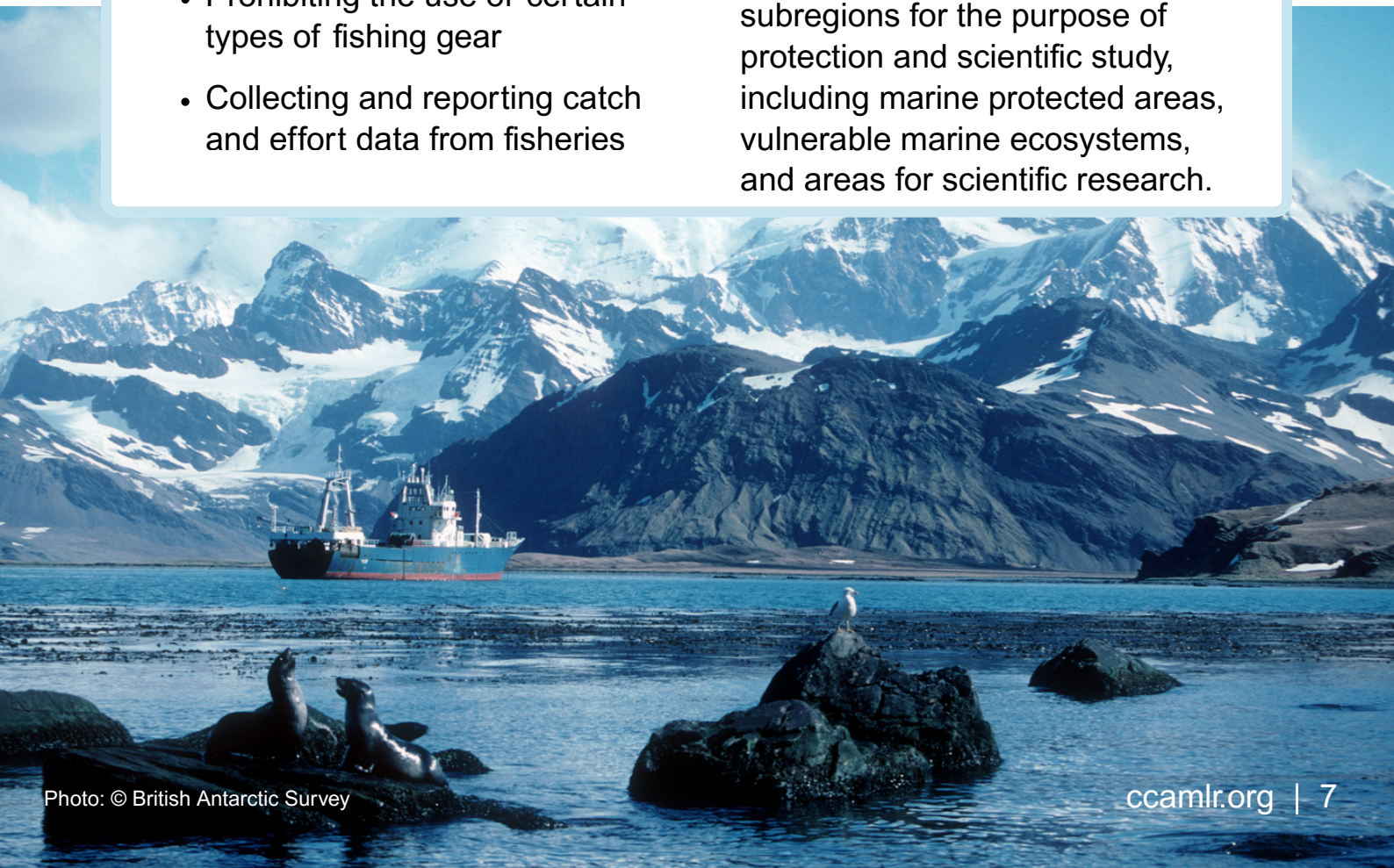


CCAMLR has adopted a comprehensive set of measures to support the conservation of Antarctic marine living resources, a large part of which is the management of fisheries in the Convention Area. Many of these conservation measures are reviewed and developed at each meeting of the Commission. All conservation measures are implemented by Members once they have been agreed by the Commission.

Antarctic krill (*Euphausia superba*), southern elephant seals (*Mirounga leonina*) | Photos © Volker Siegel

These conservation measures are based on the best available scientific evidence and best practice in monitoring, control and surveillance. The conservation measures agreed by the Commission regulate fishing and related activities by:

- Authorising and monitoring fishing vessels in the Convention Area, including through licensing, inspections, vessel monitoring systems and reporting of activities and movements
- Regulating transshipment and trade of harvested marine species
- Identifying illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) vessels and actions against such vessels
- Setting requirements for initiating and participating in new and exploratory fisheries
- Prohibiting the use of certain types of fishing gear
- Collecting and reporting catch and effort data from fisheries
- Conducting research activities on Antarctic marine living resources
- Protecting the environment during fishing, minimising the mortality of incidentally caught birds and marine mammals, and the impacts of fishing on the ecosystem
- Establishing catch limits for fisheries on toothfish, icefish and krill, as well as measures to limit the by-catch of species associated with these fisheries, and the closure of fisheries when catch limits set by the Commission are reached
- Designating the opening and closing of areas, regions or subregions for the purpose of protection and scientific study, including marine protected areas, vulnerable marine ecosystems, and areas for scientific research.



THE CAMLR CONVENTION AREA

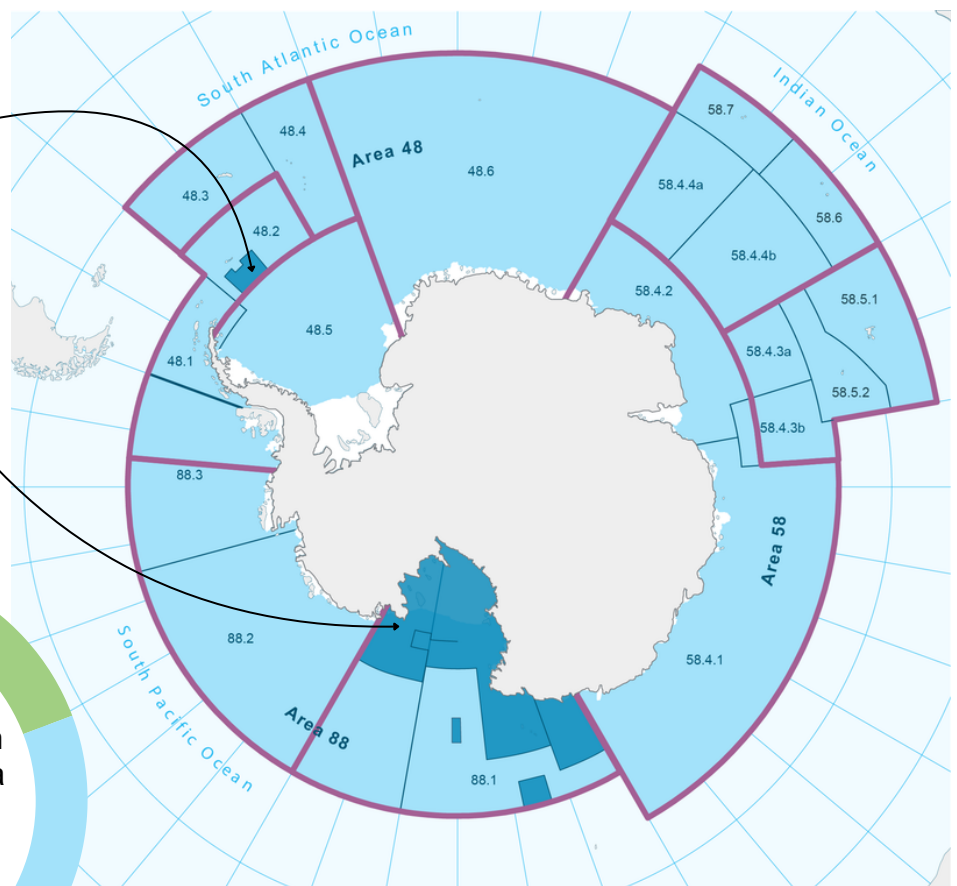
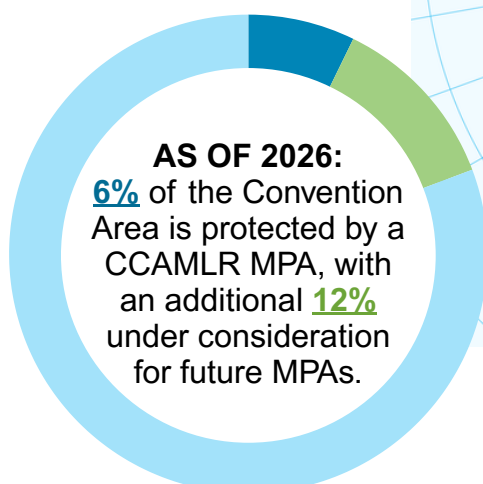
The area covered by the Convention extends northward from the coastline of the Antarctic continent to the marine area known as the Antarctic Convergence. At the Convergence, there is an abrupt increase in sea water temperature from south to north, where cold Antarctic water meets warmer temperate water and creates an ecological boundary.

CCAMLR has created a number of management areas, each with specific management requirements. Some areas are closed to certain types of fishing activity. Some are open to fishing but are subject to the requirements of conservation measures, including, but not limited to, when fishing can take place, seasonal catch limits, the data that need to be collected, restrictions on fish by-catch, and requirements for by-catch mitigation measures.

CCAMLR is developing marine protected areas (MPAs) that are representative of the marine ecosystems in the Convention Area. CCAMLR has approved a general framework for establishing such areas. MPAs may include restricted, prohibited or managed activities and each established MPA has priority elements for management plans in addition to research and monitoring plans.

The first CCAMLR MPA was the **SOUTH ORKNEY ISLANDS SOUTHERN SHELVE**

The second was the **ROSS SEA REGION MPA**, currently the world's largest in international waters



A map of the Convention Area, showing subareas and statistical divisions. CCAMLR marine protected areas (MPAs) shown in dark blue, MPA planning domain boundaries in purple.

CCAMLR SCIENCE AND MANAGEMENT

Activities in the Convention Area are regulated through a precautionary, ecosystem-based approach. Populations of harvested species are managed to avoid significant depletion and maintain ecological relationships. CCAMLR's decision rules minimise the risk of causing changes to marine populations, or the ecosystems on which they depend, that are not reversible over two or three decades. The precautionary approach to management embedded in CCAMLR enables the Commission to take decisions even when there is uncertainty in scientific knowledge.

CCAMLR makes decisions based on the best available scientific evidence. The Scientific Committee uses a variety of data to support its ecosystem-based approach, gathered through research projects undertaken by CCAMLR Members, from scientific observers on board fishing vessels, and from research and monitoring programs.

ECOSYSTEM MONITORING

CCAMLR's ecosystem approach to managing harvesting includes monitoring the effects of fishing on harvested species and on dependent and associated species. (Dependent species are marine predators with a major component of their diet comprised of species harvested by fisheries.)

The **CCAMLR ECOSYSTEM MONITORING PROGRAM (CEMP)** aims to detect and record significant changes in critical components of the marine ecosystem within the Convention Area and distinguish between changes due to harvesting of commercial species and those due to environmental variability.

Indicator species used in the program are Adélie penguin (*Pygoscelis adeliae*), chinstrap penguin (*Pygoscelis antarctica*), gentoo penguin (*Pygoscelis papua*), macaroni penguin (*Eudyptes chrysolophus*), black-browed albatross (*Thalassarche melanophrys*), Antarctic petrel (*Thalassoica antarctica*), cape petrel (*Daption capense*), and Antarctic fur seal (*Arctocephalus gazella*).

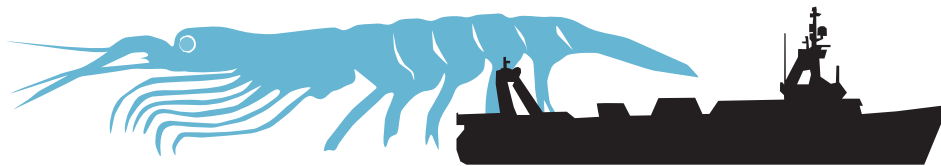
CCAMLR FISHERIES

There are currently fisheries targeting krill, toothfish and icefish in CCAMLR waters.



TOOTHFISH

Toothfish live close to the seabed to depths of at least 2000m and are long-lived, reaching lengths of up to two metres. They are caught on bottom-set longlines. Patagonian toothfish (*Dissostichus eleginoides*) are present in the northern region of the Convention Area, and Antarctic toothfish (*Dissostichus mawsoni*) dwell in the southern region. They are highly prized for human consumption. Two independent reviews (the most recent of which was conducted in 2023) have found that toothfish stock assessments are consistent with global best practice.



KRILL

Antarctic krill (*Euphausia superba*) is a shrimp-like crustacean which lives close to the ocean surface. Populations of Antarctic krill, distributed throughout the Convention Area are very large. In the Scotia Sea (south Atlantic sector) alone there are about 60 million tonnes. Krill is a keystone species as it is a food source for many marine animals in the waters surrounding Antarctica. Catches of krill, taken by pelagic (mid-water) trawlers, are limited to a small proportion of the population. While the current precautionary catch limit of 5.61 million tonnes estimates the total amount of krill that could sustainably be fished, the Commission has also further capped the allowable catch in Subareas 48.1, 48.2 and 48.3 at 620 000 tonnes until it defines an allocation of this total catch limit between smaller management units. The catch reached this trigger level in 2025, prompting the agreed closure mechanism for fishery. Krill is a source of oil, used as a health supplement, and is eaten as canned or frozen krill tails. It is also used in aquaculture feed.

ICEFISH

There is a small fishery for mackerel icefish (*Champsocephalus gunnari*) around some sub-Antarctic islands.

FISHERIES MANAGEMENT

CCAMLR determines catch limits and other measures necessary to manage fisheries through analysis of extensive data, including data collected by scientific observers, records of catches taken and the effort expended in taking those catches. All vessels fishing in CCAMLR waters provide this information.

Scientific surveys and research provide independent estimates of stock abundance and recruitment patterns. There are large-scale acoustic surveys of krill populations, a long-term toothfish tagging program implemented by fishing vessels that generates estimates of stock size, and trawl surveys to determine the stock size of icefish.

Researchers use these data to generate statistical models of toothfish and krill population dynamics. CCAMLR's precautionary decision rules are supported by projections from these models, allowing CCAMLR to set appropriate catch limits.



Black-browed albatross (*Thalassarche melanophris*), Patagonian toothfish (*Dissostichus eleginoides*), Antarctic krill (*Euphausia superba*) | Photos (L–R): © Nicolas Gasco, James Moir Clark, CCAMLR

CCAMLR's Scientific Committee develops advice on management measures for each fishery by taking the calculated precautionary catch limits and adding other elements necessary to apply a whole-of-ecosystem approach. These include measures to reduce by-catch of fish (such as skates and rays) to minimise the incidental mortality of seabirds and marine mammals and to provide benthic impact assessments of the fishing gear.

SCIENTIFIC OBSERVERS

All vessels fishing in CCAMLR fisheries must carry at least one scientific observer. Observers provide CCAMLR with information on gear configuration, including measures to reduce incidental mortality of seabirds and marine mammals; fishing operations, including catch composition of target and by-catch species incorporating size, weight and breeding condition; information such as details of fish tagging and tag recaptures; observations on marine mammals and seabirds; and data on vulnerable marine ecosystems encountered by vessels.

FISHERY MONITORING AND COMPLIANCE

CCAMLR conservation measures include monitoring and compliance systems and tools that ensure that fishing in the Convention Area is conducted in a manner that meets the Convention's principles of conservation. Members are required to implement compliance systems that include:

- Marking of fishing vessels and gear
- Licensing of vessels
- Inspection of vessels in ports
- Vessel monitoring via satellite and reporting of vessel movements
- A catch documentation scheme for toothfish to track toothfish from harvest, through international trade around the globe, to the end market
- Requirements for notifying and reporting of transshipments
- The system of inspection, which allows for at-sea inspection of authorised vessels by designated CCAMLR inspectors

Concerned that illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing compromises the objective of the Convention, CCAMLR has adopted specific conservation measures to promote compliance by vessels and vessel operators. CCAMLR has a procedure for maintaining IUU vessel lists. CCAMLR notifies the Flag States of any IUU vessels sighted in the Convention Area and the State whose nationals have been identified as being involved with the vessel's activities, and encourages Contracting Parties to investigate and to advise CCAMLR of actions taken to deter and prevent further illegal fishing activities.



Southern skua (*Stercorarius antarcticus*), humpback whale (*Megaptera novaeangliae*), chinstrap penguins (*Pygoscelis antarcticus*)
 Photos: © John Weller (top left), Volker Siegel (top right), Karl-Hermann Kock (bottom left), Norwegian Polar Institute (bottom right)

CONTROLLING MARINE POLLUTION

CCAMLR measures prohibit the discharge of plastic, oil or fuel products, and the use of plastic packaging bands to secure bait boxes by fishing vessels. Other plastic packaging bands used for purposes other than securing bait boxes are also prohibited, unless they can be incinerated at sea. Waste discharge by vessels fishing south of 60°S is prohibited, including fish offal, discards, poultry waste and garbage. Discharging sewage is also prohibited if the vessel is close to land or ice shelves.

CCAMLR monitors marine debris in the Convention Area. Members are requested to submit data from beach surveys on debris associated with seabird colonies, as well as observations of marine mammal entanglements and hydrocarbon soiling events of mammals and seabirds. If accidental loss of fishing gear occurs vessels are required to report these events.

CCAMLR'S IMPACT

The CAMLR Convention provides the foundation for marine living resource conservation in the waters surrounding Antarctica. Since its establishment in 1982, CCAMLR has set global benchmarks for long-term conservation including the rational use of marine living resources. In recognition, CCAMLR was awarded the FAO Margarita Lizárraga Medal (2017).



CCAMLR INITIATIVES

CCAMLR has developed a number of important initiatives since 1982:

- An internationally recognised best practice at-sea scientific observer program
- An international inspection system to monitor all fishing operations within the Convention Area
- A framework to develop a representative system of Marine Protected Areas
- Management decisions that consider the impacts on ecosystems and the conservation of marine resources
- Rigorous and standardised scientific methods and dedicated surveys
- Development of mitigation and fishery closures to reduce seabird and seal incidental mortality
- Robust monitoring, surveillance and market control measures for authorised fishing
- An electronic Catch Document Scheme (CDS) for the international trade of toothfish
- Proactive identification of vulnerable marine ecosystems and development of related conservation measures

NOTABLE ACHIEVEMENTS

Continuous improvements to precautionary management of fishing and related activities throughout the Convention Area



Antarctic krill (*Euphausia superba*) Photo: © Peter Nearhos

Establishment of long time series of Antarctic marine data since 1984, using standardised methods and dedicated surveys



Ecosystem monitoring site | Photo © KOPRI

Enhanced traceability of toothfish and prevention of the import of illegal catch into major global markets



Effective elimination of illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing from the Convention Area

Longline vessel (Photo © Leonid Pshenichnov)

Dramatic reductions in seabird mortality through mitigation measures and changes to fishing practices

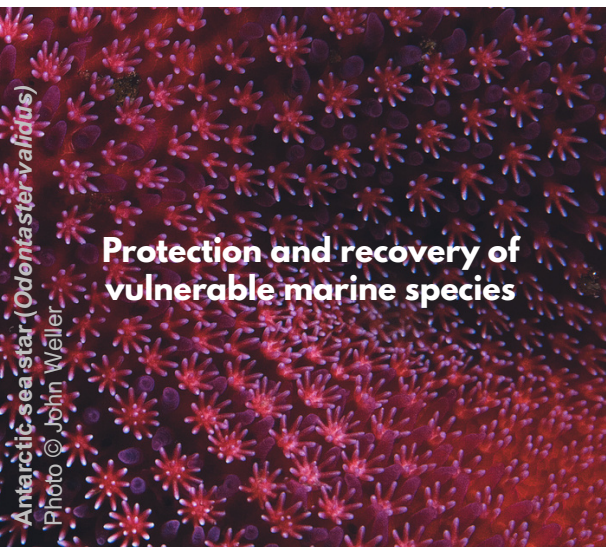


Cape petrel (*Daption capense*) | Photo © Volker Siegel



Bald notothen (*Pagothenia borchgrevinkii*)
Photo © John Weller

Protection and recovery of vulnerable marine species



Antarctic sea star (*Odontaster validus*)
Photo © John Weller

Creation of the world's largest marine protected area in international waters, the Ross Sea region MPA



Photo © CCAMLR



Photo © CCAMLR



Photo © CCAMLR

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