

OPERATION ANTARCTICA DEFENSE

**Gowings Whales Trust partners
with Sea Shepherd on Operation
Antarctica Defense**

Sea Shepherd's vessel, the Allankay, has just departed from Ushuaia, the southernmost city in the world, embarking on its return journey to the Antarctic. This voyage signals the start of the 2024 campaign for 'Operation Antarctica Defense', challenging the Krill Fishing Fleet's destructive exploitation of the Southern Ocean.

"In recent years, we've seen a concerning expansion in the krill fishing fleet, exploiting some of the most remote waters in the world," stated Captain Peter Hammarstedt, Director of Campaigns. "Most people assume that the Antarctic is fully protected from industrial fishing. But over a dozen supertrawlers—each one as large as two Olympic-sized swimming pools—are licensed to kill krill, a foundation species that whales, penguins, seals and the entire ecosystem depends on for survival".

This is why once again, the Gowings Whale Trust is partnering with Sea Shepherd Australia and providing financial support to this critical campaign. Gowings Whale Trust and Sea Shepherd have a long history of defending the oceans. Gowings Whale Trust has previously partnered with Sea Shepherd to drive the end of whaling in the Southern Ocean, and in doing so, saved the lives of over 6,000 whales.

Gowings Whale Trust is a sea conservation charity founded by John Gowing whereby 1% of all sales of Gowings businesses- Gowings Pacific Trader, FCS, Softech and Alvey goes to this fund.

For this year's Operation Antarctica Defense campaign, the crew onboard the Allankay will track and shadow the Krill Fishing Fleet, focusing particularly on their impact on marine wildlife in proposed marine protected areas (MPAs).

Sea Shepherd aims to keep the krill fishery on the political agenda and make the case for why the Antarctic Peninsula and the South Orkney Islands need to be closed off to krill fishing as 'no-take' marine protected areas, a decision the international community will be discussing and voting on later this year.



Sea Shepherd's vessel, the Allankay, on its way to Antarctica. Photo by Youenn Kerdauid/Sea Shepherd.



SEA SHEPHERD



Gowings Whale Trust

Please join us in defending the whales and the Antarctic marine environment once more. You can support by funding a donation or buying any merchandise.

www.gowingspacifict trader.com.au/pages/gowings-whale-trust

www.seashepherdglobal.org/our-campaigns/antarctica-defense/

FAQ

– Isn't the krill being taken only a small percentage of the overall population (biomass)?

We witnessed a pod of over 200 endangered fin whales feeding on krill, while massive trawlers ploughed right through them. The trawlers are going to the same areas, of high concentration of krill, where the whales are, this causes localised depletion, meaning the whales and other marine life like penguins have to travel and search further to fill their bellies. To add to this, with the impacts of climate and less sea ice, krill populations on a steady decline. In a rapidly changing climate, we need to give Antarctica all the help we can, and harvesting the lifeblood krill, makes no sense whatsoever. The simple reality is, that whales need krill to survive, we humans do not.

– I thought you only opposed illegal fishing, isn't the krill industry legal?

Yes the krill industry is legal, however it is not heavily regulated, for instance one of the operators caught and killed three humpbacks in their net and that operator was allowed to continue, whereas other industries, just catching one seabird is enough to shut down their operations.

Sea Shepherd has a history of defending vulnerable species, from whales to turtles, to sharks. A healthy ocean is one that is rich in biodiversity, and the healthier our oceans are, the greater they stand a chance in mitigating the climate emergency we face.

With shrinking sea ice, there is less algae to feed krill, meaning there is less krill. With less krill, there is less food for vulnerable penguins and whales. There can be no justification for further putting vulnerable species at risk, especially the fragile Antarctic marine environment for an industry that does not need to exist. The simple reality is, that whales need krill to survive, we humans do not.