

**Antarctic and
Southern Ocean
Coalition**



2006 Annual Report

The Antarctic and Southern Ocean Coalition

***PROTECTING ANTARCTICA'S ENVIRONMENT
SINCE 1978!***

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MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

2006 was an exciting and productive year for the Antarctic and Southern Ocean Coalition (ASOC). This report provides a short update on our activities over the past year. Please check <http://www.asoc.org> to learn more about our work and to see all ASOC position papers, ECO newspapers, reports, press articles and other documents, a calendar of forthcoming events, as well as a host of links to other Antarctic-related organizations and activities. It is possible to contribute to our work directly from the website.

ASOC maintains a core international campaign team to represent non-governmental views within the Antarctic Treaty System, and we were pleased to expand this group in 2006 because of the new krill conservation campaign being carried out with the support of the Pew Charitable Trusts. Experts around the world look to ASOC, which has the only “green” NGO seat within the Antarctic Treaty System, as the most respected voice for protecting the Antarctic environment. The campaign team, working closely with ASOC member organizations, has been successful in keeping ASOC’s priority issues on the table at Antarctic Treaty meetings:

- ASOC representatives at CCAMLR pushed for precautionary regulation of the krill fishery – the base of the food chain. We have been arguing that there should be parity with the management of other Antarctic fisheries (such as mandatory observers on each fishing vessel), and precautionary caps and ecological-based regulations for small management units in the areas of interest to krill fishers. We came close to getting agreement on observers in 2006, with the expanded campaign team doing an excellent job at the CCAMLR meeting. We expect success on the observers in 2007 and steady progress towards a truly precautionary regime for the krill fishery. Our lobby work against any bottom trawling, which can damage deep-sea corals and other ecosystems, was successful in 2006.
- ASOC is working hard to help governments find solutions to illegal, underreported and unregulated fishing in the Southern Ocean. ASOC’s goal is to halt the huge “pirate” fishing for toothfish in the region, which is wiping out that valuable species while killing hundreds of thousands of albatross and petrels.
- Regulation of commercial tourism, which made its debut on the formal agenda at the Madrid Antarctic Treaty meeting in 2003, remains the major issue on the table at annual meetings of the Committee on Environmental Protection and the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting. ASOC’s public education and advocacy efforts have convinced a majority of the member countries about the need for legally binding regulations to limit the scope, scale and growth trajectory of the industry, and we expect to see some concrete steps in 2007 to limit the growth of the industry.
- ASOC continues to raise the issue of unregulated bio-prospecting in the Antarctic, with the Treaty Parties holding a good substantive debate at the ATCM. The issue is on the agenda of the Annual Treaty meeting and the Committee on Environmental Protection for 2007.

- ASOC's IPY project was approved by the international steering committee. We created a special page on the website to highlight this work as well as the important IPY activities over the next two years.
- ASOC continues to promote the protection of Lake Vostok, the most pristine large glacial lake in the world, and other Antarctic Sub-Glacial lakes, including agreed guidelines on how to penetrate these lakes. In spite of ASOC's efforts, Russia seems determined to drill into Vostok in 2008 during the IPY, and there is no legal way to stop them using the Environmental Protocol.
- ASOC is promoting creation of a representative system of Marine Protected Areas, which was endorsed in 2004 by CCAMLR and set up a workplan for the next few years. One of ASOC's ultimate goals is creation of the world's largest Marine Protected Area, in the Ross Sea, a longer-term goal.
- ASOC is promoting setting ecologically-based standards to regulate marine acoustic impacts on whales and other species in the Southern Ocean. SCAR now is working actively on this, holding a major workshop in early 2006. ASOC's proposed steps forward at the ATCM and CCAMLR meetings were supported by many governments, but progress is very slow so far.
- ASOC is urging that Japan halt its so-called "scientific whaling" program in the Southern Ocean Whale Sanctuary, which is called JARPA II. Several ASOC member groups are actively engaged in direct actions against this illegal whaling but the sad truth so far is that Japan continues to ignore the positions of virtually all other countries. ASOC is considering making more prominent use of its observer seat at the IWC in order to raise Southern Ocean Sanctuary issues more forcefully.
- ASOC is pressing for the new Liability Annex to the Environmental Protocol to be ratified expeditiously by all Consultative Parties, which is needed in order to come into force legally.

We finalized a new statute to guide our work during the northern summer, elected a new international board of directors in October, which elected Gerry Leape as Chair to replace Roger Wilson, Denise Boyd to serve as Vice-Chair, and Roger Wilson as Treasurer. ASOC has another hard year of fundraising ahead as we work to maintain our unparalleled international campaign team, and use the "green seat" at the Treaty System to represent the international public interest.

Thanks for your support in 2006.

Sincerely,

Jim Barnes

WHY PROTECT ANTARCTICA?

The protection of the Antarctic continent and the great Southern Ocean surrounding it is important for the world's citizens and wildlife. Antarctica is a continent of superlatives. It is the coldest, windiest, highest, and driest, with mean winter temperatures ranging from -40 o to -94 o F, winds of up to 200 miles per hour, and an altitude three times higher than any other continent. This region is the world's last unspoiled wilderness. Antarctica drives the world's climate, and has a central role in regulating the earth's environmental processes, including the world's atmospheric and oceanic systems, global tides and sea levels. Its preservation and wellbeing is vitally important to the health of the rest of the planet, and impacts on Antarctica's environment could have global effects.

Antarctica's greatest value could well be in the information it provides on the functioning and health of our planet. The untrammled nature of the region provides a living laboratory where scientists can measure the effects of changes in the environment. Ongoing research is crucial to understanding and monitoring global warming, ozone depletion and atmospheric pollution. Our website features a Climate Change section, which contains summaries of and links to the recent research in the region on global warming.

Antarctica's diverse ecosystem depends on a healthy environment. Thanks to Antarctica's remote location and hostile climate, it has been largely spared the commercialism and industrial development found in most regions of the Earth. But this is changing quickly. The past 50 years have seen a tremendous increase in human activity. Scientists and support personnel from more than 30 nations now are involved in research projects across the continent, and more are interested in building bases. The number of tourists journeying to Antarctica to view its magnificent marine life has more than tripled in the past twelve years, and the numbers are headed dramatically upward along with scope of tourism activities geographically. This increase in human activity threatens the region's nearly pristine environment, which is the primary interest of scientists and tourists. Commercial fishing continues to mount and there have been some breakthroughs in krill processing technology, which could open up the Southern Ocean's base to the global aquaculture industry. Meanwhile, climate change is doing its part in undermining Antarctica's integrity, with dramatic breaking off of ice sheets and rapidly increasing temperatures along the Antarctic Peninsula, which may be interfering already with krill production and some predators' feeding.

ASOC HISTORY

Since 1978 the Antarctic and Southern Ocean Coalition has been the only non-governmental environmental voice at the meetings of the Antarctic Treaty System, challenging the status quo, and holding governments accountable for their stewardship of the region. We have played a critical role by articulating and promoting environmental values, instigating the negotiation of new agreements, ensuring their effective implementation, and increasing the public accountability of governments concerning Antarctic decisions. The sole mission of ASOC is to protect Antarctica's environment and wildlife from human impacts. Through our global membership and work with the public and allies in government agencies, we have secured international consensus for many policy changes to preserve the Antarctic region.

For many years ASOC has had its Secretariat in Washington, DC, raising funds from the public, foundations and its core group of member organizations to cover Secretariat expenses and help pay for the global campaign team. ASOC is incorporated in Washington, DC and has 501(c)(3) charitable status with the IRS.

ASOC currently has 30 dues-paying member organizations around the world, which form the ASOC Council. They elect an international board of 11 people. Each year ASOC representatives – experts in their fields – attend the intergovernmental meetings of the Antarctic Treaty System in order to ensure that the environmental viewpoint is well represented. In addition to working with and lobbying government officials, ASOC representatives work with the international scientific community and sometimes within national science committees to ensure that strong conservation principles are enshrined in Antarctic scientific programs. This has been a crucial aspect of our strategy for more than two decades, maximizing our strength and leverage with governments. ASOC also cooperates closely with IUCN, which houses the Secretariat and has an expert observer seat to the Antarctic Treaty System.

WORLD PARK CAMPAIGN

The long-term campaign to protect Antarctica has focused on the region being managed as a "World Park," in which all human activities are tightly regulated to minimize impacts on its fragile environment. Although a milestone when negotiated in 1991, the Protocol to the Antarctic Treaty on Environmental Protection contains numerous gaps and ambiguities, which taken together lessen the likelihood of actions being taken to lessen risk of serious damage as well as minimizing longer-term harm. The Protocol strengthens the environmental provisions of the Antarctic Treaty by instituting a comprehensive set of environmental measures governing human activities in the region. Although ratification of the Protocol in 1998 was a huge success for conservation efforts in Antarctica, it has a number of missing pieces and some activities are not effectively regulated, including commercial tourism and bio-prospecting. A notable victory was achieved in 2005 when the governments finally agreed on a new Annex VI to the Environmental Protocol, which will impose liability for harm to the Antarctic environment and require response actions to avoid damage in emergencies.

ANTARCTIC TREATY CONSULTATIVE MEETING (Edinburgh, June 2006)

ASOC's delegation to the 2006 ATCM was successful in maintaining momentum on several key environmental issues, including:

- Tourism, with ASOC submitting information papers that were crucial to the debate continuing on a serious level about an appropriate regulatory regime for this unregulated industry.
- Commercial bio-prospecting, with ASOC pressing governments to develop appropriate regulations for this emerging industry, which has led to the first honest debate inside the Committee on Environmental Protection and among Consultative

Party governments at a political level.

- Acoustic pollution, with ASOC submitting an updated Information Paper on this issue, again calling for mitigation measures regarding the various types of seismic and sonar devices used in the region and a research program on their impacts. SCAR responded by setting up a group of experts on acoustics, which is slowly considering appropriate standards and additional research needs.
- Protected Areas, with ASOC supporting systematic efforts to use Annex V of the Environmental Protocol to set aside some areas for special protection and management, now that this Annex has been ratified by all member governments and is in force.

The ATCM considered 44 Working Papers and 120 Information Papers tabled by Parties and other participants, as well as 12 Secretariat papers, and produced an agreed Final Report that contains three Measures¹ (management plans for protected/managed areas); three Resolutions² (on Site-Specific Guidelines relating to tourism, ballast water exchange, and Southern Giant Petrels); two Declarations (on CCAMLR-ATCM Cooperation, and the Edinburgh Declaration on the International Polar Year); and two Decisions³ (ballast water exchange and protection of Southern Giant Petrels).

CONSERVATION ON THE CONSERVATION OF ANTARCTIC MARINE LIVING RESOURCES MEETING HOBART - OCTOBER 2006

ASOC's delegation to the 2006 CCAMLR meeting was successful in maintaining momentum on several key environmental issues. ASOC priorities for CCAMLR XXV included IUU fishing for toothfish in the CCAMLR Area, the ecosystem management of Antarctic krill, the development of Marine Protected Areas, and action against noise pollution. ASOC submitted a number of papers developing ideas, proposals and recommendations related to the priority issues identified. ASOC papers proved to be a very useful tool to stimulate discussion between CCAMLR Members, and to facilitate advocacy by ASOC representatives before and during the meeting.

During the last year, ASOC members have developed new projects and initiatives for Antarctic conservation, including the Antarctic Krill Conservation Project (funded and coordinated by The Pew Charitable Trusts and involving other groups such as the National Environmental Trust) and WWF's Antarctic and Southern Ocean Initiative (ASOI). These new initiatives have enabled ASOC members to have a stronger presence in CCAMLR this year and also to engage more actively with CCAMLR scientists and delegates to promote CCAMLR work towards the conservation of Southern Ocean resources.

During CCAMLR XXV, the Antarctic Krill Conservation Project hosted a special lunch event to present its policy objectives, and WWF-ASOI run a lunch presentation of the outcome of the Experts Workshop on Bioregionalisation of the Southern Ocean that took place in early September in Hobart.

CCAMLR XXV made good progress on a variety of relevant issues, although decision-making is still slow to face the increasing challenges posed by fishing activities in the

¹ A Measure is legally binding once it has entered into force.

² A Resolution is hortatory.

³ A Decision is an administrative action, usually relating to a short-term event, and like a Resolution, hortatory.

Southern Ocean, mainly the continued plunder of toothfish stocks by IUU operators, and the expansion of krill fishing.

The estimated IUU catch for toothfish in the CCAMLR Area increased in the season 2005/06 by 50% overall, and most dramatically in high seas areas of the Indian Ocean. IUU operators are moving to the high seas as a result of enhanced enforcement by CCAMLR Members in waters that are within national jurisdiction. CCAMLR needs now to find ways to close the loopholes that allow IUU fishers to access international ports and markets. Some Members, including Australia and the European Community, did put forward innovative proposals addressing issues such as action against flag States and trade measures. It is disappointing that the Commission was unable to reach consensus on many of these proposals, although some real progress was made in the area of port state controls and actions against nationals. The listing of Contracting Party IUU vessels proved again to be a problem, undermining CCAMLR credibility and the Commission's capacity of setting the Antarctic conservation agenda.

CCAMLR successfully reacted to new challenges related to fishing such as shark exploitation or the use of gillnets, and has taken adequate action to limit the expansion of bottom trawling in the CCAMLR Area. However, the Commission remains slow in acting on other issues that are central to CCAMLR objectives, such as krill management. The regulation of the Antarctic krill fishery, which is central to the Antarctic marine food web, remains insufficient in spite of clear signs of expansion, including the deployment of Flags of Convenience super trawlers to exploit this resource. Some progress was made in requiring CCAMLR Members to notify in advance their intention to fish for krill in the CCAMLR Area, but this fishery still lacks sufficient scientific observer coverage, a vital element for providing scientific advice.

ASOC is encouraged by CCAMLR's incipient progress towards better consideration of conservation objectives beyond regulation of fishing activities, being MPAs or noise pollution notable examples. CCAMLR seems to be moving in the right direction but there is a need to speed up these processes for effective outcomes. In addition, further consideration should be given to global issues with strong implication for Antarctic conservation, such as climate change.

EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

Antarctica's future is intrinsically linked to awareness by the world community of its importance to the globe. To ensure that there will always be a constituency for Antarctic protection and that public debate over Antarctica's future is kept alive, we respond to many informational and educational requests, providing information to educators, students, environmental groups, the press, and the general public. Our website (<http://www.asoc.org/>) is our flagship for publicizing our papers and issues, and enhances our ability to communicate with many different audiences all over the world.

Because of the impacts of climate change on the Antarctic, and the potential impacts on the world from the melting of Antarctic ice sheets, we created a set of Climate Change pages for the website. Please visit our website for additional information on all of our campaigns, and to review all of the papers and press releases we have written in 2006 as well as historical materials about ASOC's work.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Individual and ASOC member donations during calendar year 2006 amounted to \$581,587, added to the campaign balance of \$79,782 on January 1, 2006. We ended 2006 with a

campaign balance of \$330,016. Several ASOC member groups also provided generous in-kind support including directly paying some ASOC staff salaries and travel. ASOC's accounts are professionally audited every year, based on a fiscal year of July 1-June 30. ASOC thanks the following foundations and organizations for their support during 2006: Anonymous Donor, Australian Conservation Foundation, Australian Wilderness Society, Bear Gulch Foundation, Centro de Conservacion Cetacea-Chile, Cetacean Society International, ECO-New Zealand, Forest and Bird-New Zealand, Friends of the Earth-Argentina, Friends of the Earth-Norway, Friends of the Earth-International, Friends of the Earth Japan, Friends of the Earth-US, Goldman Foundation, Greenpeace International, Greenpeace Netherlands, Humane Society of the US, International Fund for Animal Welfare, National Environmental Trust, Oceana, Peter Scott Trust, Pew Charitable Trusts, Sierra Club, Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society, World Wildlife Fund-Netherlands, WWF-ASOI and World Wildlife Fund-South Africa.

CONCLUSION

The Antarctic and Southern Ocean Coalition has worked since 1978 to preserve Antarctica's Environment and wilderness values. Our motivation has always been the protection of this area for the benefit of all citizens and wildlife, and to leave a heritage for future generations. We have been a persistent voice challenging the status quo, holding back the creep of commercialism and instigating both dramatic steps and many smaller implementation steps that result in Antarctica being better managed and better protected.

Our involvement has been critical in convincing the Antarctic Treaty System's institutions and member states to systematically consider the environment as a key aspect of all planning – and there is far to go to fill the numerous 'gaps' that exist. Working together over almost three decades, ASOC's member groups have ensured that Antarctica's environmental security is given primary consideration when decisions are taken about present and future activities. We remain committed to this vision. Antarctica is a very special place. It is important to the world, as the earth's last remaining ecosystem that shows few of the scars of the industrialization that has overtaken many of the world's natural places. If we continue to work together, we should be able to leave intact at least one place on earth to show future generations how truly spectacular nature can be, while its scientific virtues are a clear mirror showing us the realities and repercussions of our collective behavior.

If you are an individual supporter, thank you. Your concern and support for Antarctic protection are truly helping to make a difference in the region's environmental future. If you are not a supporter, we urge you to join with ASOC in our campaigns to save the earth's last pristine wilderness. You can contribute on line at <http://www.asoc.org/> with a credit card (from any country in the world) or send your check or international postal money order to the ASOC Secretariat.