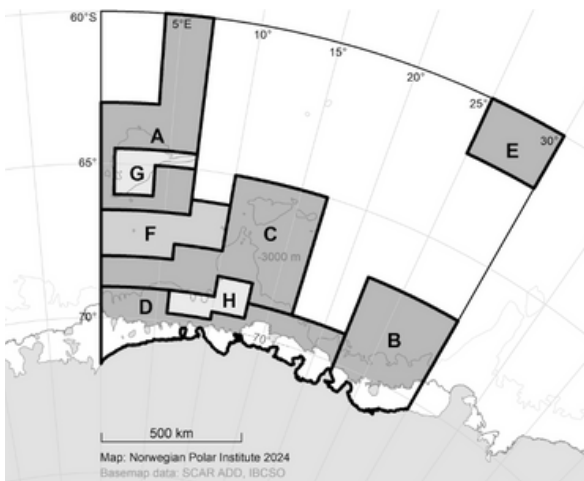




Image by John Weller

Weddell Sea Phase 2 Marine Protected Area

The Weddell Sea is the most southerly part of the Atlantic sector of the Southern Ocean. It is a region of incredible biodiversity and is significant on a global scale as it generates a considerable amount of Antarctic Bottom Water, which is central to global thermohaline circulation.



850,000 square kilometers / 330,000 square miles

Proposal
since 2023

Sponsor: Norway

Co-Proponents: Australia, United Kingdom

Zones: General Protection, Seasonal Protection, and Fisheries Research Zones

The draft Conservation Measure 91-XX for WSMMA Phase 2 has three categories of management zones; General Protection Zones (Shaded dark gray, Areas A, B, C, D & F), Seasonal Protection Zone (Shaded medium grey, Area E) and Fisheries Research Zones (Shaded light grey, Areas G and H) for inclusion under CCAMLR Conservation Measure 91-04. Credit: Norsk Polarinstitutt.

The Weddell Sea Phase 2 MPA is a concurrent rather than a successive MPA, being developed in coordination with the Weddell Sea Phase 1 MPA. The MPA includes foraging areas for a number of Antarctic bird species during the chick rearing period (January-March), which is critical to breeding success and survivability of these species. The proposal has been developed to ensure that the MPA includes areas that are most likely to retain their cold adapted biodiversity to at least the year 2050, acting as a beacon of climate refugia for the unique cold-adapted species of the Southern Ocean.



The Weddell Sea is home to an incredible variety of biodiversity, with many of Antarctica's most iconic bird species calling this place home. Approximately a third of known emperor penguins and half the Antarctic petrel population reside in this region.



Alfred Wegener Institute / OFOBS Team

In 2022 the largest recorded fish nesting area anywhere in the world was discovered there. The Jonah's icefish colony is estimated to cover at least ~240 km² and contains an estimated total of ~60 million active nests



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