

**EMBARGOED UNTIL FEBRUARY 23.**

*Sydney, February 24, 2015*

## GROUND-BREAKING ANTARCTIC WILDLIFE RESEARCH FUND LAUNCHES

Today, the Antarctic Wildlife Research Fund (AWR) was unveiled at a ceremony in Australia, with the aim of strengthening the scientific basis for the management of the Southern Ocean and the Antarctic Region.

The Antarctic Wildlife Research Fund is the result of a landmark collaboration between scientists, businesses and several of the world's leading environmental groups. It will raise significant funds specifically for research into krill and its role in the Antarctic ecosystem.

Most Southern Ocean marine species - such as whales, seals and penguins – are dependent on krill, which is a small shrimp-like organism. Donations to the Antarctic Wildlife Research Fund will come from commercial partners and will also include soon-to-be announced public contributions.

Reflecting a long history of collaboration between Australia and Norway in the Antarctic, the fund was launched at the National Maritime Museum in Sydney, during a seminar entitled *Norway and Australia: Partners in Antarctica and for Sustainable Oceans*, and attended by King Harald V and Queen Sonja of Norway, Norway's Foreign Minister Borge Brende and Australian Environment Minister Greg Hunt

AWR's founding members include:

- Worldwide Fund for Nature Norway (WWF-Norway)
- Antarctic and Southern Ocean Coalition (ASOC)
- Aker BioMarine Antarctic

Every year, scientists from all over the world will be invited to submit their research proposals to the [Science Advisory Group of the AWR](#). This group, made up of leading international Antarctic scientists, will be responsible for evaluating and prioritizing these research proposals.

THE FIRST COMMERCIAL COMMITMENT TO THE AWR WAS MADE TODAY BY AKER BIOMARINE IN THE FORM OF \$500,000 USD.

Several of Aker BioMarine's partners in Australia have also announced significant contributions to help launch the fund, including Blackmores and Swisse. Plans will be unveiled shortly for Australians to donate to the fund, which will enable them to track the progress of their "adopted penguin" in the Antarctic.

**Elisabeth Røkke, representing Aker Biomarine**, is thrilled to be the inaugural contributor to the fund:

"The Antarctic Wildlife Research Fund is an integral part of how we at Aker Biomarine fulfill our commitment to bring responsibly-fished krill to consumers worldwide. Harvested in pristine Antarctic waters, krill is nature's purest source of Omega-3 and awareness of the health benefits is rapidly increasing. The growing popularity of the products requires that scientists, NGOs and producers team up to ensure that fisheries are sustainable and that Antarctic wildlife continues to thrive.

**Bob Zuur, Manager of WWF's Antarctic program**, said the fund presented an important opportunity to better understand the impacts of krill fishing on the fragile Antarctic marine environment:

"Krill is the lifeblood of the Southern Ocean and supports important Antarctic wildlife such as whales, seals and penguins. It is crucial therefore that krill fishing be done in a responsible and sustainable way. The establishment of the Antarctic Wildlife Research Fund is an opportunity to continue monitoring the impacts of krill fishing and to conduct further ecological research on this important species."

**Mark Epstein, AWR Chair and Executive Director of The Antarctic & Southern Ocean Coalition:**

"The creation of the Antarctic Wildlife Research Fund is crucial to expanding our knowledge of krill in the Southern Ocean. Through the work of the AWR, we hope to ensure that adequate protections and management are put in place, and a healthy ecosystem is kept in place not just for krill, but for all of the Antarctic species which depend on it."

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**For more info:**

**NORWAY/ AUSTRALIA:**

As part of her position as Sustainability Manager at Aker BioMarine, Marte Haabeth Grindaker serves as Secretary and press contact to the Antarctic Wildlife Research Fund. She can be reached at [info@antarcticfund.org](mailto:info@antarcticfund.org)

+47 92 02 07 52

**AUSTRALIA:**

For further information on the event;  
Mitch Catlin – Catchy Media, Marketing and Management  
0420 985 634

**EUROPE:**

Dave Walsh  
Communications Director: Antarctic & Southern Ocean Coalition – ASOC  
[dave.walsh@asoc.org](mailto:dave.walsh@asoc.org)  
+32 493 140 966

**US:**

Mark S. Epstein  
Chair of the Antarctic Wildlife Research Fund,  
Executive Director, Antarctic & Southern Ocean Coalition  
+1 202-550-4258

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## ABOUT THE ANTARCTIC WILDLIFE RESEARCH FUND

AWR is a first-of-its-kind partnership between industry, academia and non-government organizations (NGOs), which funds research projects in Antarctica.

The AWR works with both commercial partners and individuals to raise donations for research on the Antarctic ecosystem and wildlife. Only through better understanding of the role of Antarctic krill in the Southern Ocean can we comprehensively protect the animals that depend on it for survival and ensure precautionary management of the fishery.

The Antarctic Wildlife Research Fund was established in January 2015 by representatives for ASOC – The Antarctic and Southern Ocean Coalition, WWF-Norway and Aker BioMarine. Leading scientists in the field of Antarctic research make up the Science Advisory Group of the AWR.

### ANTARCTIC WILDLIFE RESEARCH FUND – BOARD MEMBERS:

**Mark Epstein**, *Executive Director, ASOC – The Antarctic and Southern Ocean Coalition*

**Karoline Andaur**, *Head of the Marine Program, WWF-Norway*

**Matts Johansen**, *Chief Operating Officer, Aker BioMarine*

**Sigve Nordrum**, *Vice President Sustainability, Aker BioMarine*

### LEADING SCIENTISTS IN THE FIELD OF ANTARCTIC RESEARCH MAKE UP THE SCIENCE ADVISORY BOARD OF THE AWR:

**Dr Phil Trathan**, *Chair, British Antarctic Survey, Cambridge, UK*

**Dr Polly Penhale**, *National Science Foundations, US*

**Dr Javier Arata**, *Instituto Antartico, Chile, CCAMLR*

**Dr Gennadi Milinevsky**, *National University of Kiev, Ukraine*

**Dr Taro Ichii**, *Nat. Research Inst. of Far Sea Fisheries, Japan*

**Dr Andrew Lowther**, *Norwegian Polar Institute, Norway*

**Dr Slava Bizikow**, *Russian Federal Research Institute of Fisheries, Russia*

**Dr So Kawaguchi**, *Australian Antarctic Division, Tasmania, Australia*

Scientific Advisor to the AWR is **Dr. Rodolfo Werner**, who is a Senior Advisor to Pew Charitable Trusts and ASOC – The Antarctic and Southern Ocean Coalition