

Researchers find world's largest fish breeding ground

17th January, 2022



Scientists in Antarctica have made a surprising and welcome discovery - the world's largest breeding ground for fish. Researchers from Germany's Alfred Wegener Institute for Polar and Marine Research came across the fish

while mapping the seabed of the Antarctic Weddell Sea. They discovered schools of around 60 million icefish breeding in an area roughly 240 square kilometers in size. The research team had been towing a number of cameras to a depth of 530 metres under the Weddell Sea for months. Deep-sea biologist Autun Purser commented on the find. He said: "The idea that such a huge breeding area of icefish in the Weddell Sea was previously undiscovered is totally fascinating."

The researchers have been exploring the region hoping to establish it as an official Marine Protected Area. They say the seas are a unique habitat that must be preserved. They want to prevent fishing and invasive research to keep the waters as pristine as possible. A recent University of Cambridge study found that fishing trawlers in Antarctica are bringing millions of "hitch-hiking" species from 1,500 ports around the globe. These are threatening the area's fragile eco-systems. A researcher said: "So far, the remoteness and difficult sea-ice conditions of this southernmost area...have protected it, but...we should be much more ambitious with marine conservation."

Sources: scitechdaily.com / cnet.com / cnn.com

Writing

There must be a total ban on fishing in Antarctica. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

scientists / discovery / breeding / fish / seabed / cameras / biologist / fascinating / exploring / official / habitat / fishing / globe / eco-systems / conditions / conservation

True / False

- 1) The article says the fish breeding discovery wasn't a welcome one. T / F
- 2) Scientists were mapping an ice shelf when they made the discovery. T / F
- 3) The scientists found around 60 million icefish in the breeding ground. T / F
- 4) A scientist was surprised the breeding ground wasn't found earlier. T / F
- 5) Researchers want to protect the breeding ground area. T / F
- 6) Fishing boats are bringing invasive species to Antarctica. T / F
- 7) Invasive species are enhancing Antarctica's eco-systems. T / F
- 8) A scientist said Antarctica's remoteness helps to protect it. T / F

Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------|
| 1. welcome | a. investigating |
| 2. came across | b. pulling |
| 3. roughly | c. determined |
| 4. towing | d. discovered |
| 5. fascinating | e. immaculate |
| 6. exploring | f. breakable |
| 7. habitat | g. pleasing |
| 8. pristine | h. engrossing |
| 9. fragile | i. natural environment |
| 10. ambitious | j. approximately |

Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you know about Antarctica?
- b) What do you know about icefish?
- c) How has this breeding ground never been found before?
- d) Would you like to visit Antarctica?
- e) Would you like to be a polar researcher?
- f) Why is the Antarctic important?
- g) What's your favourite fish, and why?
- h) How important is this discovery?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. made a surprising and welcome | a. exploring the region |
| 2. while mapping | b. conservation |
| 3. towing a number | c. fascinating |
| 4. such a huge breeding | d. fragile eco-systems |
| 5. totally | e. area of icefish |
| 6. The researchers have been | f. around the globe |
| 7. keep the waters as | g. discovery |
| 8. from 1,500 ports | h. pristine as possible |
| 9. threatening the area's | i. the seabed |
| 10. marine | j. of cameras |

Discussion – Student B

- What do you think about what you read?
- Why should the Antarctic be preserved?
- Why is Antarctica so unique?
- Should all fishing boats be totally banned from Antarctica?
- How might invasive species affect the eco-systems in Antarctica?
- Is the North Pole or South Pole more important?
- What more can we do to help with marine conservation?
- What questions would you like to ask the scientists?

Spelling

- a surprising and welcome isodevcry
- appming the seabed of the Antarctic
- woting a number of cameras
- Deep-sea giloobits
- ipvresyulo undiscovered
- totally fsgcainaitn
- oxgienrlp the region
- the seas are a iunueq habitat
- prevent fishing and ivisaevn research
- keep the waters as nipsitre as possible
- the area's grilfae eco-systems
- meniar conservation

Answers – Synonym Match

1. g	2. d	3. j	4. b	5. h
6. a	7. i	8. e	9. f	10. c

Role Play

Role A – Icefish

You think icefish are the most interesting Antarctic creatures. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their creatures. Also, tell the others which is the least interesting of these (and why): penguins, killer whales or squid.

Role B – Penguins

You think penguins are the most interesting Antarctic creatures. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their creatures. Also, tell the others which is the least interesting of these (and why): icefish, killer whales or squid.

Role C – Killer Whales

You think killer whales are the most interesting Antarctic creatures. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their creatures. Also, tell the others which is the least interesting of these (and why): penguins, icefish or squid.

Role D – Squid

You think squid are the most interesting Antarctic creatures. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their creatures. Also, tell the others which is the least interesting of these (and why): penguins, killer whales or icefish.

Speaking – Antarctica

Rank these with your partner. Put the best at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|-----------------|--------------|
| • Icefish | • Albatross |
| • Penguins | • Silverfish |
| • Seals | • Krill |
| • Killer whales | • Squid |

Answers – True False

1 F	2 F	3 T	4 T	5 T	6 T	7 F	8 T
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.