

# fact sheet

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*Since 1971, Greenpeace has been a leading voice of the environmental movement. We work throughout the world to protect oceans and ancient forests, and to fight toxic pollution, genetic engineering, global warming and nuclear threats. Without compromise, Greenpeace takes on powerful political and corporate opposition to protect the future of our planet.*

## GREENPEACE'S HISTORY IN THE BERING SEA

Thirty six years ago, September 1971, a small group of activists took a small chartered boat, Phyllis Cormack, into an area near the Aleutian island of Amchitka to protest U.S. nuclear testing. The activists onboard the Phyllis Cormack, in the Quaker tradition of bearing witness, sought to bring the world's attention to the little-known testing in the hopes of stopping it. The test went forward, but the brave and heroic voyage had galvanized public attention, and the activists returned to port greeted by crowds of supporters. That small band of individuals grew to eventually become Greenpeace, an organization with more than 2 million members worldwide and offices in over forty countries. The Bering Sea is where Greenpeace began, and we have returned many times over the past decades. In the past two years, the Bering Sea has once again become a top priority for Greenpeace's work to defend our oceans.

Last summer, Greenpeace chartered a boat with the aim of taking a fresh approach to the issues and peoples of the region, establishing relationships with native and fishing communities, and documenting the wild beauty of the region and its inhabitants. From St. George Island to Unalaska to St. Paul Island, we heard appeals, from native elders to fishermen, for help in transforming the fishing industries that operate in the Bering Sea. It became clear that native communities and small-boat fishermen had to unite to create Marine Cultural Heritage Zones, which would protect ocean habitats and species important to the communities of Alaska's islands and coasts.

Last summer's expedition also laid the groundwork for ambitious scientific research Greenpeace will continue this year. We surveyed data poor areas in the northern Bering Sea and in Bristol Bay, to provide information on humpback whale abundance for a major project led by Cascadia Research. We assisted killer whale specialist Craig Matkin in his efforts to understand the role of killer whales in a complex and rapidly changing ecosystem. We also helped recover a submerged buoy that had been used to record marine mammal sounds, and deployed a buoy to monitor global warming.

Greenpeace is returning to the Bering Sea this summer to expand upon previous research and advocacy efforts, to be able to push for greater protection of the unique marine ecosystems there. With the cooperation of the local communities, native leaders and scientists, Greenpeace will push nationally and globally for solutions to the problems facing the Bering Sea and the communities that rely on it for survival.

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