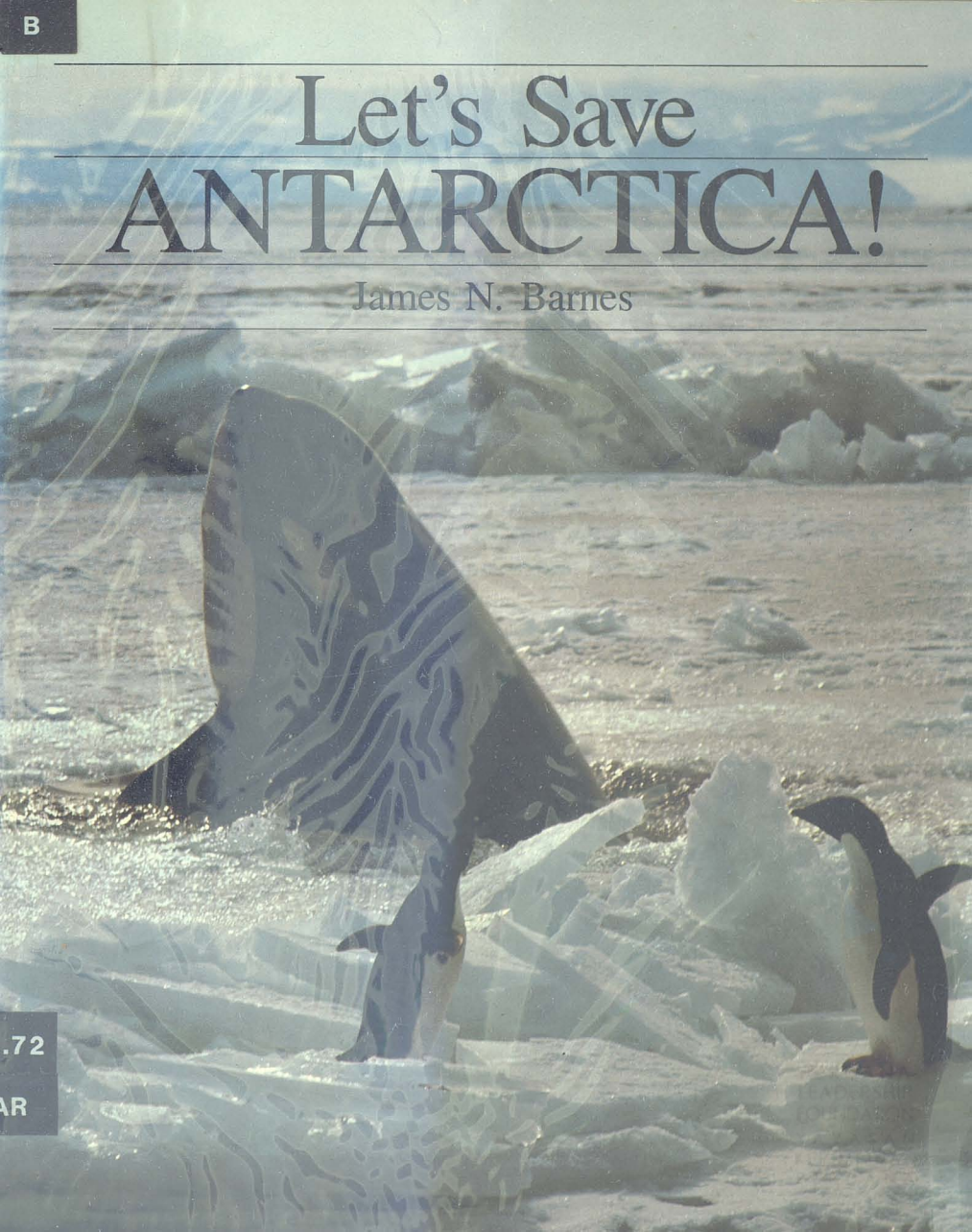


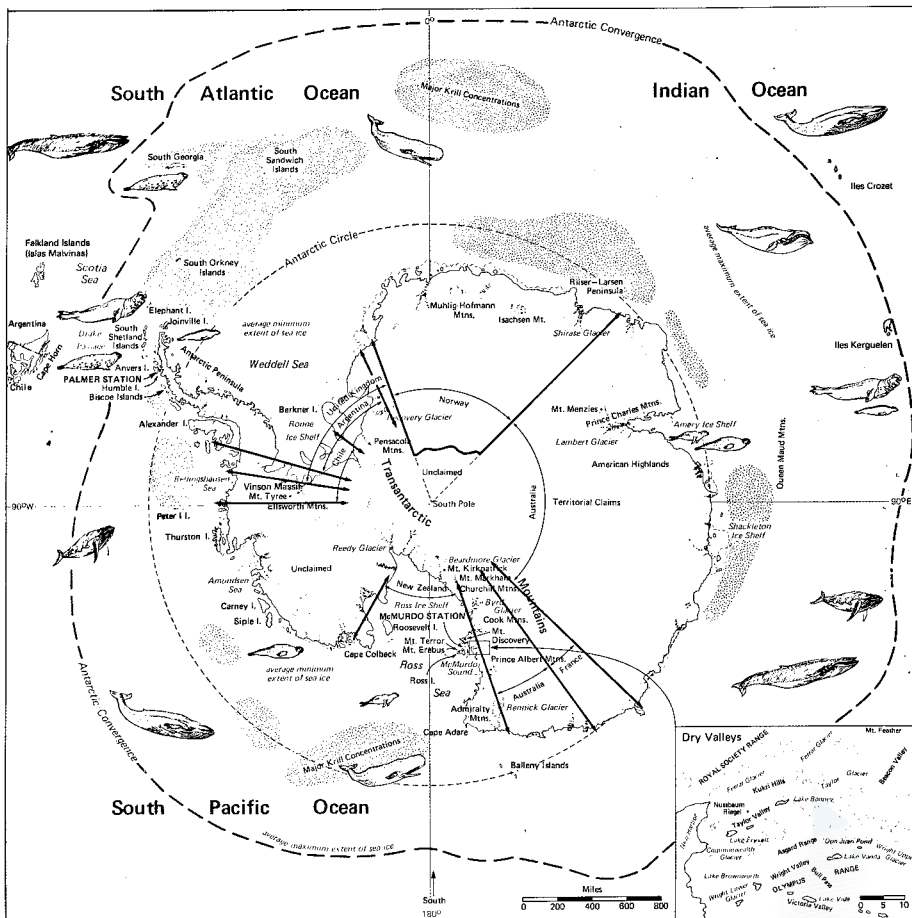
Let's Save ANTARCTICA!

James N. Barnes

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Map courtesy The Wilderness Society

Let's Save ANTARCTICA!

James N. Barnes

Photography by Eliot Porter

To Prime Minister
Mahathir Mohamed,
with love and
best regards,
and the hope
that you will
help protect
this special
region.
JN
(1983)

Greenhouse Publications

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Killer whale and Adelle penguins,
McMurdo Sound, Antarctica

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To my daughters Deborah and Sociana

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BAR



Foreword

Although so far away, and in spite of its inhospitable climate, more and more people are coming to recognize the importance of Antarctica. I have been fortunate enough to go there five times and found it an awe-inspiring continent of amazing beauty and interest. So far, the mountains and glaciers, the colonies of penguins and seals, and the krill in the sea which is the foundation species for all the other fauna, have escaped over-exploitation by man. The great whales alone were brought close to extinction by the whaling nations, and they are now at last being given a chance to recover.

But the threats to the wildlife and to the whole environment from the exploitation of krill, fish, oil and other minerals are now building up very rapidly, as this book recounts. If this is allowed to develop unchecked, it seems likely that we shall once again find ourselves killing the geese that lay the golden eggs. For example, until we know very much more about the populations of krill, we must not allow the huge catches which are now being suggested. And until we can be absolutely sure of preventing the irretrievable harm that could be caused by oil spills in the Antarctic environment, we must not allow the oil that is probably there to be exploited.

These are the reasons why I find the idea of making Antarctica an international park so exciting. The continent could then be protected in the same way as national parks are protected all over the world. People may think the Antarctic is remote, but there is fast-growing realization that the conservation of its rich wildlife, scenery and natural resources is of vital long-term importance to us all.

We, who share the earth with all other living things, must not squander the heritage of future generations of life on earth.



Sir Peter Scott

Photographer's Perspective

The Antarctic. A harsh desert land of ice-encased mountains, of the flightless penguin and hardy pelagic birds, of seals and whales.

And for all its grim and hostile character, Antarctica with its pristine snows, its unbelievable clarity of air, and its blue, cascading ice, is sublimely beautiful. The atmosphere is so clear that one is easily deceived by distances; mountains that seem no more than 100 kilometres away may be 400. And in the absence of haze, the colours of distant objects are not like those in other parts of the world.

Antarctica is a region where man's presence has been minimal, where he never ventured and could not survive before he was able to bring with him, by means of his technology, enclaves of the temperate climate of his origin.

Antarctica has escaped the fate of other continents until modern technology made its penetration possible.

Already the damage is enormous, Adelie penguins are declining as a result of human disturbance. Fur seals were nearly wiped out by the depredations of sealers. Whales in great numbers and many kinds once roamed the sub-Antarctic seas; today, because of the efficiency, persistence, and greed of the Japanese, Russian, and Norwegian whaling fleets, they are rarely seen.

The blue whale, the largest animal ever to have lived on earth, has been brought near to extermination.

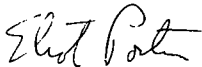
The exploitation of krill has already begun. By the time the Antarctic Treaty is susceptible to change in 1991, the pressures to exploit the continent's resources of food, fuel and minerals may well be irresistible.

Drilling on the land alone for oil and minerals will surely and irreversibly change the character of Antarctica. The great, wild beauty of Antarctica will be corrupted by trash and pollution.

Oil spills from tankers or wells would have an incalculably damaging effect on the marine life. Seals could not escape the adverse indirect effect; oil-soaked penguins would die by the thousands and their rookeries would be eventually decimated.

The predictable consequences of economic exploitation of the last untouched land on the planet demand critical and well researched decisions.

This handbook will allow concerned people to make the choice for themselves. It will allow them to influence Governments.



Eliot Porter

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- 3. Emperor penguins, McMurdo Sound, December 1975*
- 4. The giant Blue whale, now so rare, in Antarctic waters*
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