



## News Release

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**For Immediate Release**

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### Walgreens' retailing of whale food meets international backlash

Blue whale pod delivers 37,000+ petitions to store manager

San Francisco – A blue whale pod and penguins arrived to the Bay today to advocate for protection of krill, their primary food source. The activists, part of an international campaign called [Lifeline Antarctica](#), rallied outside Walgreens at 9<sup>th</sup> and Market near Twitter Headquarters as part of an international call on Walgreens Boots Alliance, the largest drugstore retailer in the United States and Europe, to stop the sale of Antarctic krill omega-3 supplements. The call to the retailer is an integral part of the international effort to establish Marine Protected Areas across the Southern Ocean, the huge body of water that surrounds Antarctica.

Krill, a small crustacean, is the foundation of the food chain in Antarctica's ocean and is critical to the [survival of penguins](#), seals, and [whales](#).

"This is a critical moment for Walgreens to act," said Lifeline Antarctica's campaign director, Kristin Urquiza. "The ocean that surrounds Antarctica is now being sucked dry of the most important species in the food chain—the tiny krill upon which all the whales, seals, and penguins rely. We're here to send Walgreens a strong message to leave the krill for the whales and stop the sale of Antarctic krill omega-3 supplements."

After asking passersby to take "photo-petitions" and tweeting them at Walgreens, activists dressed as penguins and whales delivered more than 37,000 [petitions](#) signed by Walgreens customers, to the Market street store manager. They also delivered a [letter](#) addressed to Walgreens Boots Alliance's CEO signed by eleven local, national, and international oceans, environmental, and consumer rights groups representing millions of people around the world.

The San Francisco event follows a recent "march of the penguins" in Santa Cruz and along London's Oxford street where activists dressed as whales and penguins delivered a letter to six retailers of the conglomerate.

For more than 50 years an [international treaty](#) has totally protected Antarctica from commercial exploitation – but that treaty has a huge gap that fails to protect the great ocean that surrounds the continent—and corporations like Walgreens are rushing in to make a profit.

Industrial-scale krill fisheries are literally sucking billions of these life-sustaining creatures out of the water with giant vacuums that operate around the clock – taking them from the blue whales to be crushed into omega-3 pills.

Krill is facing another human-caused challenge: climate change. In addition to overfishing, they're losing their food: the algae that grows under the rapidly melting sea ice and ocean acidification is harming krill reproduction. The double whammy of fishing and climate change has devastated the krill populations—which have declined by [80% over the last four decades](#).

“The evidence of the impact on the food chain is just up the Pacific coast where starved whales are increasingly washing up on Washington’s shores,” said Rachel Kippen, Director of Programs of California based Save our Shores and signer to the letter delivered to the store manager. “But we need look no further than the Pacific coast for the solution: the US Government had the foresight to institute a federal ban on krill harvesting in the Pacific over fifteen years ago because of the vital role that krill play in the eco-system. Antarctica’s krill need these same protections—and quickly—before the corporations profiting from krill get in the way.”

After pressure spearheaded by the consumer group SumOfUs, Sainsbury’s in the United Kingdom pulled krill products from its shelves. The 37,000 signatures were collected by SumOfUs thru an online petition launched two weeks ago to Walgreens Boots Alliance calling on the retailer to follow suit. Their report, entitled [Vacuuming Antarctica for Krill: The Corporations Plundering the Earth’s Last Frontier](#), details the important role krill play in the Antarctic marine ecosystem as the primary food source for seabirds and marine mammals including penguins, seals and whales.

“We’re calling on Walgreens Boots Alliance to champion the happiness and healthfulness of Antarctica’s marine life,” said senior campaigner Katherine Tu from SumOfUs. “Whole Foods, [Trader Joe’s](#), and United Kingdom companies [Sainsbury’s](#) and ASDA (a Walmart subsidiary) have all taken krill off their shelves. But as long as Walgreens Boots Alliance, the largest drug store retailer in the US and Europe, continues to drive a market for krill, the exploitation will not stop.”

Walgreens Boots Alliance companies sell a variety of krill-based omega-3 products. At Walgreens, these include Schiff’s MegaRed, PureLife Naturals, Sundown Naturals, Finest Nutrition, Natures Bounty, Swisse, Barlean’s Organic Oils, Nature’s Way EfaGold, Healthy Origins, Doctor’s Best, Olympian Labs, Muscletech Platinum, Omega Works Red Krill, Webber Naturals, 21st Century, Jarrow Formulas, Life Extension, and Walgreens brand.

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[Lifeline Antarctica](#) is a campaign dedicated to getting krill off store shelves and working to protect Antarctica’s oceans. The campaign is supported by [eleven](#) leading oceans and environmental organizations and tens of thousands of people.