

One of the most abundant species on the planet (in terms of overall biomass) is the Antarctic krill, *Euphausia superba*. These tiny crustaceans swim together in massive schools throughout the Antarctic Ocean, with some swarms covering more than 150 square miles of ocean and weighing millions of tons. Antarctic krill are an important food source for many different animals including whales, seals, squid, and numerous species of birds, which makes them a very critical piece of the global food web.

Antarctic krill provide another unique benefit to the oceans simply through their feeding habits. The krill are thought to make several vertical migrations throughout the water column daily, feeding on microscopic phytoplankton as they migrate. Because the krill are very untidy feeders, they often spit out aggregates of phytoplankton that slowly sink to the ocean floor. This process creates a “carbon sink” and sequesters large quantities of carbon dioxide from the biosphere.

Currently, there is little knowledge of the exact migration patterns since individual krill cannot yet be tagged to track their movements. The largest swarms are visible from space and can be tracked by satellite, but clearly more research is needed to better understand these tiny organisms and the big role they play in the planet’s ecocycle.



<https://www.bioexpedition.com/antarctic-krill/>