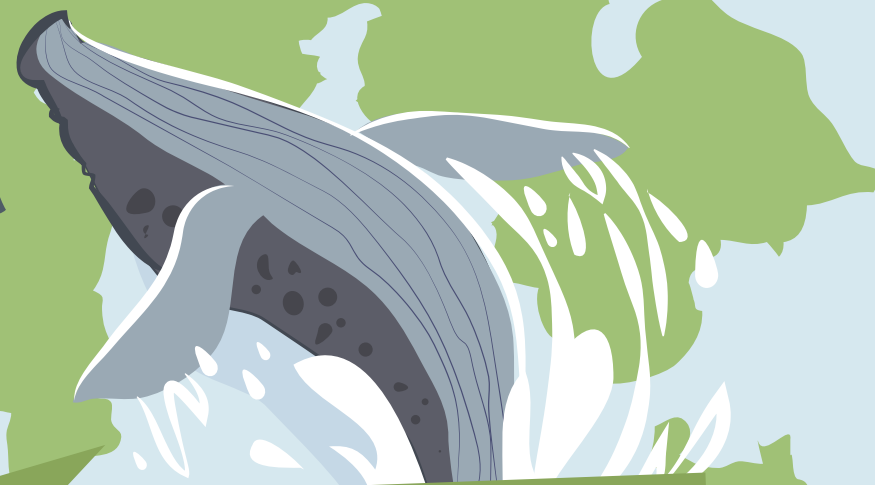


# THE BERING SEA

## AMERICA'S FISH BASKET



The Bering Sea is one of the most productive large marine ecosystems in the world—home to hundreds of species including whales, walrus, sea lions, fur seals, fish, and seabirds.



The canyons contain unusually high densities of corals and sponges, animals that can live for hundreds of years. These complex living structures provide important habitat for fish, crabs, and other marine life.

ZHEMCHUG CANYON

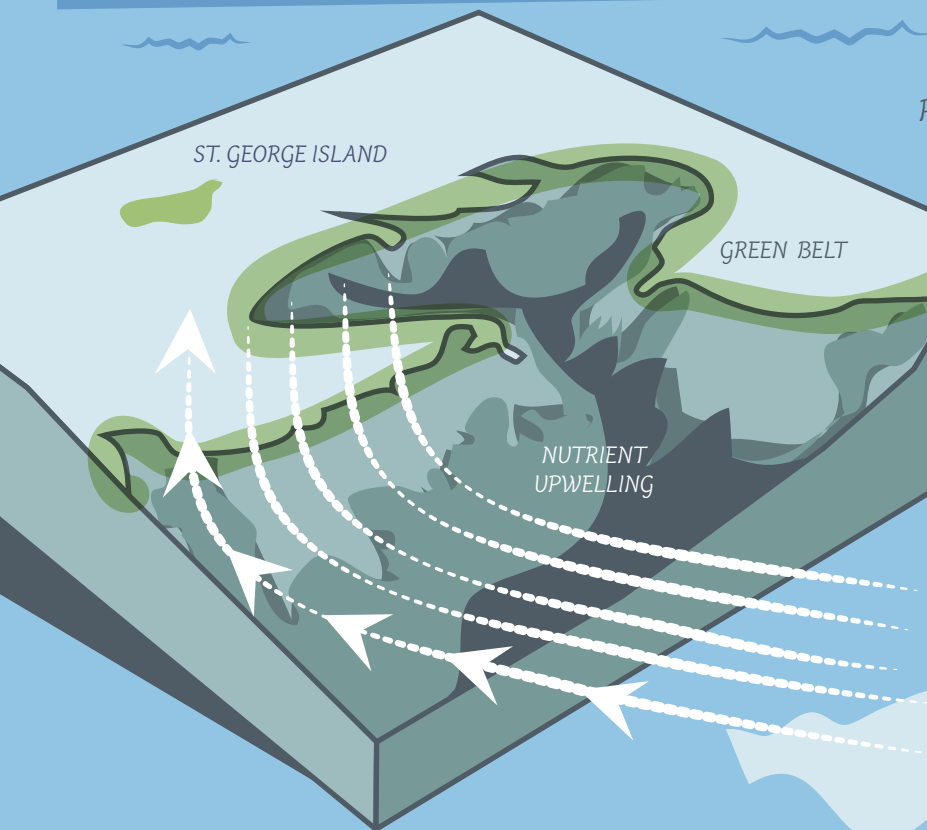
The fur seals of the Pribilof Islands could be headed for the endangered species list. The population has declined by more than 50% since the 1950s; pup production has continued to decline 5.2% per year since 1998.



ST. PAUL ISLAND

PRIBILOF CANYON

ST. GEORGE ISLAND



ST. GEORGE ISLAND

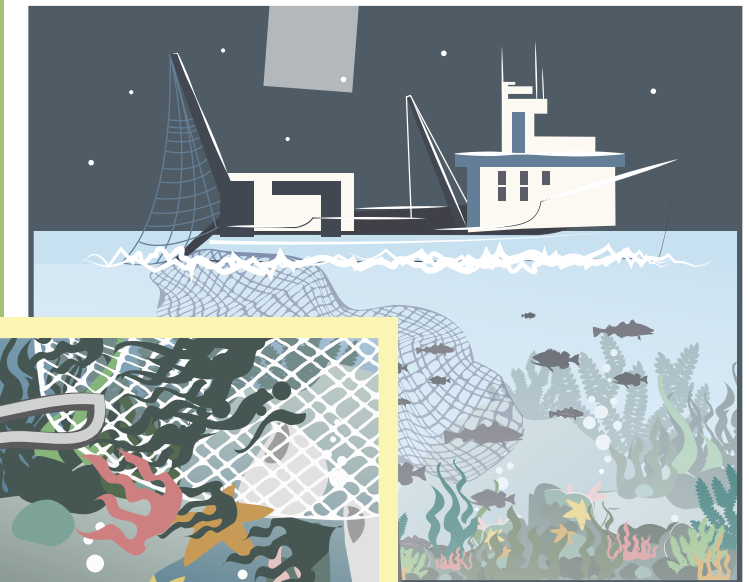
GREEN BELT

NUTRIENT UPWELLING

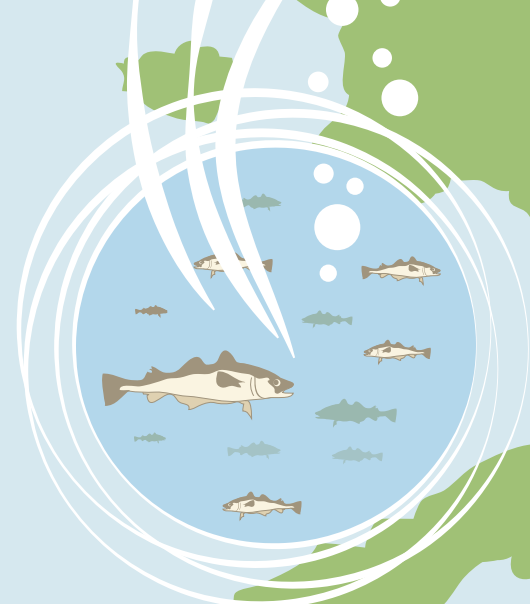
Zhemchug and Pribilof Canyons are the largest underwater canyons in the world—even larger than the Grand Canyon. Deep-sea canyons like this are rare, occurring in only four percent of the world's oceans. The 1,200 km stretch of shelfbreak along the canyon edge is known as the "Green Belt", an area where upwelling and mixing of nutrient-rich waters drives greatly enhanced productivity of phytoplankton and zooplankton—the building blocks of this highly diverse ecosystem. Greenpeace is campaigning for the protection of these critical habitat areas as no-take marine reserves.

PACIFIC OCEAN

Pollock is a key forage species: a primary prey resource for many fish, seabirds, and marine mammals including fur seals and endangered Steller sea lions. The Canyons contain spawning grounds for pollock and other fish species.



Disturbance from fishing activities is the greatest present threat to deep water coral and sponge habitats in Alaska. NMFS has estimated that 82 metric tons of coral is removed by commercial groundfish fisheries each year, with more than 90% of this bycatch reported in the Aleutian Islands/Bering Sea. King salmon, halibut and crab are also lost to trawl net bycatch.



The Bering Sea produces more seafood than anywhere else in US waters. Over a billion dollars of seafood—mostly Alaska pollock, which is turned into fish sticks, imitation crab meat, and fast-food fish sandwiches—is caught here annually.

GULF OF ALASKA

A broad alliance of conservation groups, tribal organizations, and seafood businesses is calling for protection of the Bering Sea canyons along the as-yet unprotected Green Belt. While less than 4% of the pollock and Pacific cod caught in the Bering Sea comes from these canyon areas, they are immensely valuable ecologically.