TAF Overfishing Group, 26th March 2018 Update

Good fish guide Spring 2018:

Brief summary:

This spring, the Marine Society is urging us to move away from the usual top five fish (cod, salmon, tuna, haddock and prawns) and **eat alternatives such as dab, megrim, turbot, scallops and pollack etc. in a bid to increase the sustainability of fish.**

Krill:

Brief summary:

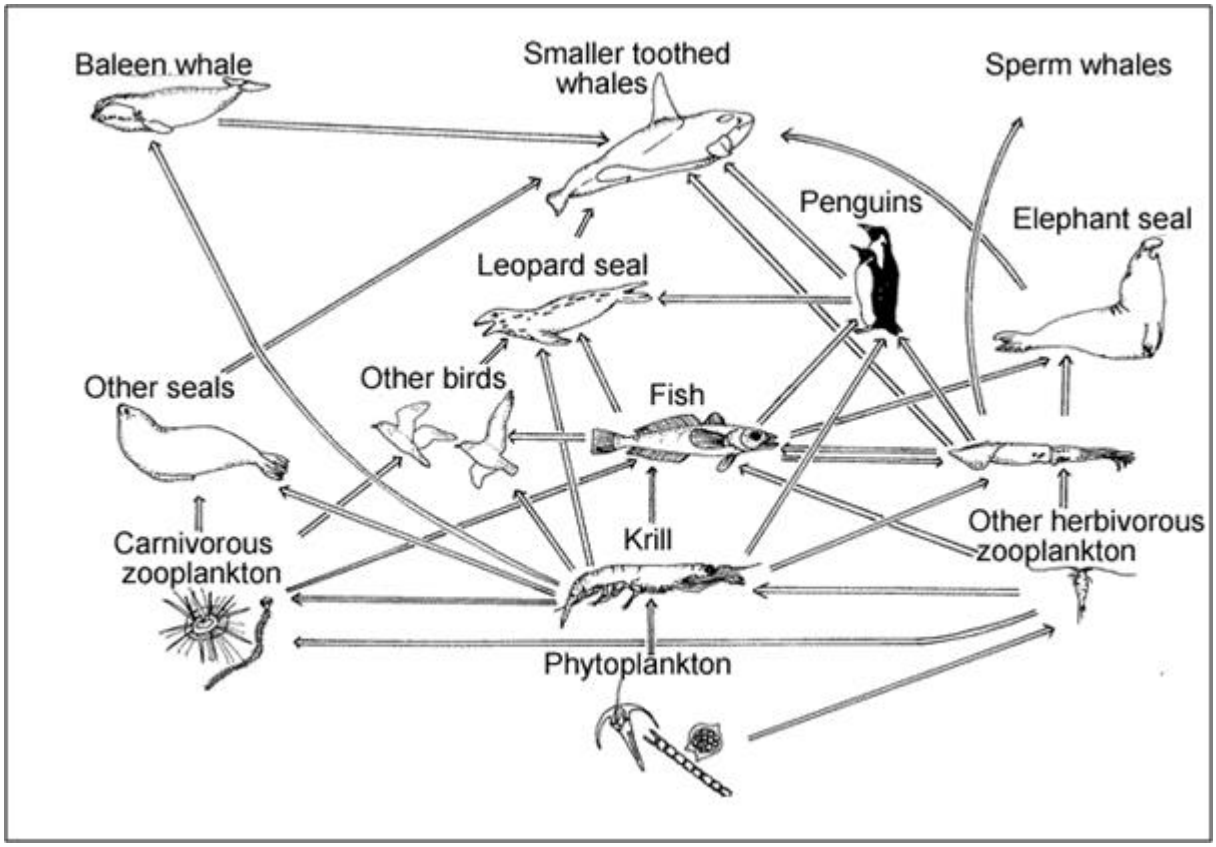
Climate change and industrial-scale fishing are impacting the krill population with a potentially disastrous impact on larger predators, say scientists.

Krill, an animal just a few centimetres long, represents a critical component of the delicate Antarctic food chain, providing food for fish, whales, seals, penguins, albatross and other seabirds.

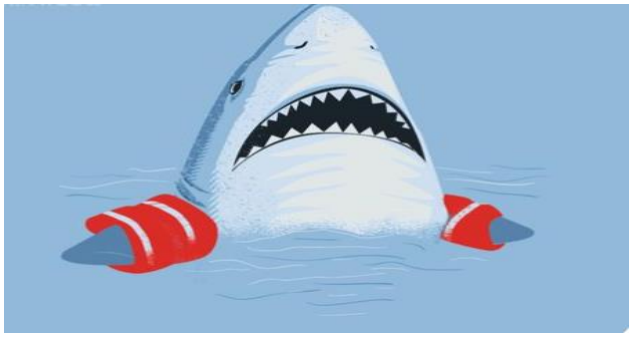
Krill are also important in removing the greenhouse gas carbon dioxide from the atmosphere by eating carbon-rich food near the surface and excreting it when they sink to lower, colder water.

Most krill is used as aquaculture feed and fish bait; other uses include livestock or pet foods.
There is growing global demand for Krill as its enzymes can be used in medical treatments against heart disease, high blood pressure, strokes, depression, etc.

Krill populations have declined by 80% since the 1970's partly due to global warming (as the ice containing the algae and plankton they feed on is retreating) and partly due to recent developments in fishing technology allowing for 'suction' harvesting by large trawlers which are now able to gather up vast quantities of krill.



Troubled waters:



Source:
http://films.economist.com/blancpain-ocean/troubled-waters?utm_source=Paid%20media%2F&utm_medium=Economist.com&utm_campaign=Editors%20picks&utm_content=troubled%20waters&cid1=cust/ednew/n/bl/n/2018038n/owned/n/n/nwl/n/n/e/104281/n&utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Editors_Picks&utm_term=2018038

Excerpts:

Worldwide, thousands of sea species are under threat.

How can we protect them, the ocean itself and the millions of people who depend on it for survival?

This film from: "The Economist" looks into creating more marine protected areas (MPA). and into new scientific ways to stop illegal fishing by electronically tracking boats.

Some examples of the species under threat:

In Mexico and the Gulf of California: one of the most endangered sea creatures on the planet, the **Vaquitas** – there are less than thirty individuals left - are being illegally poached in an MPA as the poachers can make tens of thousands of dollars per night.
Or the **Totoaba** fish that is caught in illegal nets.
Each fish is worth up to five thousand dollars to the fisherman and when it gets to China, the **swim bladder is removed and could fetch up to $100,000 a kilo as it is prized for its supposed medicinal properties.**

THE VAQUITAS

……AND ITS BLADDER IN A SOUP

The TOTOABA FISH

… AND ITS BLADDER FOR "MEDICINE"

Losing just one species in the food chain can have disastrous results on the ecosystem.

The video then looks at Cabo Pulmo in Mexico, a once thriving fishing village where overfishing has destroyed their livelihoods.
As an alternative to fishing, in order to survive, the community decided to try conservation and created an MPA with strict conservation rules.

Nobody has fished in the park since 1995. 20 years on, the area is attracting global attention as there are more and more and bigger and bigger fish, coral and even schools of bull sharks.
The area is only small (27 square miles) but it also has an effect on a far greater area as the new fish spill-over into other areas. Scientists who have closely monitored the Cabo Pulmo reef hope that many other areas of the ocean could recover too.

Another example of the ocean replenishing itself can be seen in Madagascar where the Vezu people are just some of the three billion people who have relied on the ocean as their main source of protein for generations.

The Vezu people mainly fish for octopus but they have become unsustainable and all but disappeared. So, with the help of Blue Ventures, it was decided to create small types of locally managed marine areas where the locals can continue to fish in some areas but have temporary, seasonal, bans in place in other areas, monitored by the locals, similar to crop rotations, enabling stocks of octopus to replenish itself – and it works! - allowing the community to continue to fish sustainably. These seasonal closures also mean that the octopuses grow in size.

The film then looks at a far bigger threat over which local communities have no control – this is subsidised foreign industrial fishing where a single vessel catches more than the community catches in one year.

Most of the over-fishing damage takes place around the coastal areas but to protect the biodiversity also means protecting the high seas which means policing the most remote waters on the planet.
A team in central England may have the solution to policing the high seas and fighting illegal fishing.
Oceanmind, a not-profit organisation, harness the power of satellite technology to pick up the tracking systems of hundreds of thousands of vessels, even those in remote areas.
Globally there are more than four million fishing vessels, the biggest are fitted with tracking systems and AIS (automated identification systems).
This tracking analysis technology is a game changer for fishing enforcement. The electronic system tracks the biggest fishing boats and analyses information about their location, course and speed to see it they were just passing through the protected area or fishing (and what type of fishing).

The tracking analysis can be given to the local authorities so the boats could be challenged to see if their catch is legal or not to prevent illegally caught fish passing into the supply chain. **Oceanmind are currently working with governments all over the world to help reduce the amount of illegally caught fish, valued at around 23 billion dollars per year.**

So, this new satellite technology allows the ocean to be monitored in a practical and affordable way providing hope that it will be possible to protect fishing areas in the high seas and to fight illegal fishing globally.

Our ocean is facing its greatest ever challenge – over-fishing, pollution and climate change are all threatening a resource on which the whole world depends.

We must act now if the ocean is to recover and be protected.

MPA's come in many forms but to be effective we must align the need for conservation with the needs of the people who depend on the oceans for survival.

To avoid disaster and to ensure a sustainable supply of fish in the future, far more of our oceans need urgent protection.

For the report:
Jenny Greenwood, TAF supporter and Member of the Overfishing Group

Source :
https://www.mcsuk.org/press/goodfishguide_2018_spring
https://www.mcsuk.org/press/goodfishguide_2018_spring
https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/feb/14/decline-in-krill-threatens-antarctic-wildlife-from-whales-to-penguins