

The Last Song of the Ice Whales

For centuries, the Ice Whales of the southern polar seas roamed in vast pods, their haunting songs echoing through the water for hundreds of kilometres. These creatures, nearly twice the size of humpback whales, were once abundant, feeding on krill that bloomed in the nutrient-rich currents. But in the past fifty years, their numbers have plummeted.

Scientists blame a combination of factors: overfishing, which has reduced their food supply; melting ice, which disrupts migration routes; and noise pollution from shipping lanes, which interferes with their communication. Unlike other whales, Ice Whales rely heavily on long, low-frequency calls to coordinate hunting and breeding. Without these, their social bonds weaken.

In recent years, researchers have recorded fewer and fainter whale songs. The last full chorus was heard in 2008, and many fear it may never be heard again. Yet a small team of marine biologists continues to follow the pods, hoping that the Ice Whales can adapt before their voices are silenced forever.