

Plan B: Query to Conservation magazine

Timeline:

Initial query sent to editor, May 31, 2011 (2.5 months after Plan A pitch). Note, the main pitch was very similar to the one I had sent OnEarth, with this tailored passage at the end:

<What do you think? Thanks, Kathy, for considering the query. I'd be happy to brainstorm about an approach that would best serve Conservation. An article search on your website shows a 2008 article, but it's quite different:

<http://www.conservationmagazine.org/2008/08/what-do-krill-kill/> >

////////////////////////////////////

Editor's reply, via phone, DATE:

////////////////////////////////////

Plan C: Query to NYT's Science Times editor, Nov. 2, 2011 (5 months after Plan B pitch)

Note: I emailed this as an informal addendum to an email following up on an unrelated story that I had pitched:

<Meanwhile, I'm working on another query, either for you or for the health subsection. For a teaser, it explores how voracious demand for Omega-3 fatty acid supplements in the U.S. is encouraging major fisheries companies to plum the tip of the world for Antarctic krill, the tiniest but richest fuel for the complex food web, from Adelie penguins to elephant seals to whales. Some scientists, including ones I spent time with months ago at Palmer Station on the Western Antarctic Peninsula, as well as environmental groups say "not so fast."

They argue that the krill population near the peninsula (the least difficult and costly place to fish) has plummeted in recent years due largely to melting sea ice, and that the race for Antarctica's "gold" -- as competing Norwegian fishing companies have called krill -- for aquaculture and now for the human nutraceutical market could tip the scale irreparably. World Wildlife Fund believes Antarctic krill can be fished in an environmentally sustainable way. It has become a "partner" with the largest krill fisheries, Norway's Aker Biomarine. And the Marine Stewardship Council last year certified Aker as MSC-sustainable. (I think MSC has only turned down one fisheries company.)

I'd like to take a scientific look beyond the marketing and activists' claims at whether mining the bottom of the food chain just might be a more efficient, more environmentally sustainable way for humans to get Omega-3 fatty acids than plucking the already threatened predators of the sea -- especially when salmon are now fed krill. The story would weave narrative from my trip to Antarctica as well as a visit I had in June in Oslo with representatives from WWF and Aker Biomarine. What do you think?>

.....

Editor's reply, Nov. 3, 2011. (Quick response, 1 day after pitch.)

Said he's swamped and needs a couple more days to read it and get back to me.

.....

Editor's reply2, Dec. 3, after an email nudge by me:

Said still swamped but will get back to me shortly.

.....
Editor's verdict, Dec. 12, 2011:

Susan, the krill story sounds good. 800-900 words?

////////////////////////////////////

Published article, March 12, 2012 (WC: 1,253)

Link: <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/03/13/science/tracking-antarctic-krill-as-more-is-harvested-for-omega-3-pills.html? r=1>

Note: Word count bumped up. Editor agreed that longer was good.

##