

COMPETITION WITH GOOSE BARNACLES: A FACTOR LIMITING OCEANIC DISPERSAL OF BENTHIC FAUNA BY KELP RAFTS?

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Recent concerns about the dispersal of exotic species across the Southern Ocean by burgeoning loads of anthropogenic flotsam and by increased vessel-based tourism have reinvigorated the debate about likely vectors for marine introductions. However, the risk that these vectors pose can only be put in context by an understanding of natural dispersal mechanisms in the same region. Kelp rafts have been hypothesized to provide the historical mechanism by which many taxa attained circum-subantarctic distributions and recent observations suggest that these rafts may be abundant. However, dissection of the holdfast of a large, single plant of *Durvillaea antarctica* collected at sea east of Kerguelen Island in 2002 suggests that survival of the resident fauna may be poor. In this case, competition for space with the goose barnacle *Lepas australis*, which covered all available external and internal surfaces, is hypothesized to be a key factor limiting survival rates.