

Bidarki Story (Part 3a)

Anne Salomon was interested in studying the bidarki. Other scientists had studied it in northern Washington and observed that it was important to the ecosystem. In Washington, the bidarki had been shown to be the “lawn mower” of the intertidal zone. In areas that had large numbers of bidarkis, they scraped the rocks bare of small animals such as barnacles that had settled there. They grazed on the large brown kelp so much that the kelp could not grow there. Because of this, the only kinds of seaweeds that could grow were short and stubby. The scientists also found that in areas where there were only a few bidarkis there were many different kinds of animals. They found that in areas where there were many bidarkis there were only a few different kinds of animals. Therefore, bidarkis changed the habitat by making it more difficult or impossible for some plants and animals to live there. Scientists weren’t sure whether this same thing would happen in Alaska. They did not know how harvesting of the bidarkis as food by the local people might change the story. They did not know how sea otters eating the bidarkis might also change the story.



The scientist wanted to know:

Is the bidarki an important animal in Kachemak Bay and on rocky beaches in Alaska? Do other kinds of animals and seaweeds survive better or worse if they live near them?

What controls the number and size of bidarkis in a specific area?

[Possibilities include the physical environment (for example, the force of waves on exposed shores could determine if the bidarkis can remain there or will be washed away) or predation by people, sea stars, or sea otters.]

How do people affect the bidarki and where they live? How do other kinds of marine animals and seaweeds in the same area affect the bidarki and where they live?

Bidarki Story (Part 3a)

Anne Salomon was interested in studying the bidarki. Other scientists had studied it in northern Washington and observed that it was important to the ecosystem. In Washington, the bidarki had been shown to be the “lawn mower” of the intertidal zone. In areas that had large numbers of bidarkis, they scraped the rocks bare of small animals such as barnacles that had settled there. They grazed on the large brown kelp so much that the kelp could not grow there. Because of this, the only kinds of seaweeds that could grow were short and stubby. The scientists also found that in areas where there were only a few bidarkis there were many different kinds of animals. They found that in areas where there were many bidarkis there were only a few different kinds of animals. Therefore, bidarkis changed the habitat by making it more difficult or impossible for some plants and animals to live there. Scientists weren’t sure whether this same thing would happen in Alaska. They did not know how harvesting of the bidarkis as food by the local people might change the story. They did not know how sea otters eating the bidarkis might also change the story.



The scientist wanted to know:

Is the bidarki an important animal in Kachemak Bay and on rocky beaches in Alaska? Do other kinds of animals and seaweeds survive better or worse if they live near them?

What controls the number and size of bidarkis in a specific area?

[Possibilities include the physical environment (for example, the force of waves on exposed shores could determine if the bidarkis can remain there or will be washed away) or predation by people, sea stars, or sea otters.]

How do people affect the bidarki and where they live? How do other kinds of marine animals and seaweeds in the same area affect the bidarki and where they live?