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## Giant Antarctic iceberg A68a splits into three – 29th December, 2020

### Level 4

A huge iceberg heading towards South Georgia in the southern Atlantic has split into three chunks. NASA scientists are tracking the main berg, called A68a. It split from an ice shelf in 2017 and has been floating north ever since. A fast-moving stream of water in the Southern Antarctic has put the chunks on a course that could see them run aground off the South Georgia coast. Scientists say the three fragments are about 2,600 square kilometres in size.

The size of the chunks is a big threat to the South Georgia wildlife. It could be an environmental catastrophe. If they hit the seabed, they could block penguins and seals from looking for fish. They could also block routes to feeding grounds during the breeding season. The bottom of the chunks could rake up the seabed and disrupt delicate ecosystems. A mass of melting fresh water from the chunks over the summer could worsen this situation.

### Level 5

A huge iceberg heading towards the island of South Georgia in the southern Atlantic Ocean has split into three large chunks. NASA scientists are tracking the berg, called A68a. It actually split from the Larsen C ice shelf in 2017 and has been floating northwards ever since. In recent weeks, a fast-moving stream of water in the Southern Antarctic has put the chunks on a course that means they could run aground off the coast of South Georgia. Scientists say the three fragments are about 2,600 square kilometres in size. The underwater part of one chunk is 106 metres deep.

The bulk of the three iceberg chunks is a serious threat to the wildlife of South Georgia. It is an environmental catastrophe waiting to happen. If the chunks collide with the seabed, they could obstruct penguins and seals from looking for fish. They could also block the penguins' route to their feeding grounds during the breeding season. The bottom of the chunks could rake up the seabed near South Georgia and disrupt delicate ecosystems. This could be made worse by a mass of fresh water entering the ecosystems as the stationary chunks melt over the summer.

### Level 6

An enormous iceberg that is heading toward the island of South Georgia in the southern Atlantic Ocean has broken up into three large chunks. Scientists from NASA have been tracking the berg - dubbed A68a - for several weeks. It actually calved from the Larsen C ice shelf in 2017 and has been floating northwards ever since. In recent weeks, a fast-moving stream of water known as the Southern Antarctic Circumpolar Current Front has put the chunks on a trajectory that means they could run aground off the coast of South Georgia. Scientists say the three fragments are roughly 2,600 square kilometres in size. The submerged part of one chunk is 106 metres at its thickest point.

The sheer bulk of the three iceberg chunks poses a serious threat to the wildlife of South Georgia. There could be an environmental catastrophe waiting to happen. If the three mini icebergs collide with the seabed, they could obstruct penguins and seals from foraging for fish. They could also block the route between penguin colonies and their feeding grounds during the breeding season. Scientists worry the underside of the fragments could grind the seabed near South Georgia and disrupt delicate underwater ecosystems. This could be exacerbated by the introduction of a mass of fresh water to the ecosystems as the stationary fragments melt over the summer months.