



Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna

CAFF PROGRESS REPORT SENIOR ARCTIC OFFICIALS MEETING

Luleå, Sweden November 8-9, 2011



ARCTIC COUNCIL

Acknowledgements

CAFF Designated Agencies:

- Directorate for Nature Management, Trondheim, Norway
- Environment Canada, Ottawa, Canada
- Faroese Museum of Natural History, Tórshavn, Faroe Islands (Kingdom of Denmark)
- Finnish Ministry of the Environment, Helsinki, Finland
- Icelandic Institute of Natural History, Reykjavik, Iceland
- The Ministry of Domestic Affairs, Nature and Environment, Government of Greenland
- Russian Federation Ministry of Natural Resources, Moscow, Russia
- Swedish Environmental Protection Agency, Stockholm, Sweden
- United States Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service, Anchorage, Alaska

CAFF Permanent Participant Organizations:

- Aleut International Association (AIA)
- Arctic Athabaskan Council (AAC)
- Gwich'in Council International (GCI)
- Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC)
- Russian Indigenous Peoples of the North (RAIPON)
- Saami Council

This publication should be cited as: CAFF Progress Report to the Senior Arctic Officials, Luleå, Sweden November 8-9, 2011. CAFF International Secretariat, Akureyri, Iceland.

Cover photos by Lawrence Hislop/UNEP-GRID Arendal

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CAFF Designated Area

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Note: This report is a summary of key activities and developments since the May 2011 Ministerial, and does not represent a comprehensive list of CAFF activities, priorities and projects. Timelines and dates are subject to change.

Assessments

It is necessary to provide policy makers and conservation managers with syntheses of the best available scientific and Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) on Arctic biodiversity to help successfully conserve the natural environment and allow for economic development. CAFF's assessment activities focus upon synthesizing and assessing the status and trends of biological diversity in the Arctic.

Synthesizing information on status and trends of Arctic biodiversity

Key people

- Hans Meltofte, Chief Scientist, Denmark
- Mark Marissink, Chair of ABA, Sweden
- CAFF Secretariat

Arctic Biodiversity Assessment (ABA)

The ABA scheduled, for completion in 2013, will provide the baseline on status and trends of Arctic biodiversity. This information will be used by the Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Programme.

How does the ABA help fulfill Arctic Council priorities?

The aims of the ABA are to:

- provide a description of the current state of Arctic ecosystems and biodiversity
- create a baseline for use in global and regional assessments of biodiversity
- provide a basis to inform and guide future Arctic Council work
- provide up-to-date scientific knowledge
- identify gaps in the data record
- identify key mechanisms driving change
- produce scientific and policy recommendations

Latest developments

Phase one (complete): *Arctic Biodiversity Trends 2010: Selected Indicators of Change* was released in May 2010.

Phase two (underway): The development of a full scientific Arctic Biodiversity Assessment and related policy recommendations for 2013.

High Profile Communication Activities (upcoming)

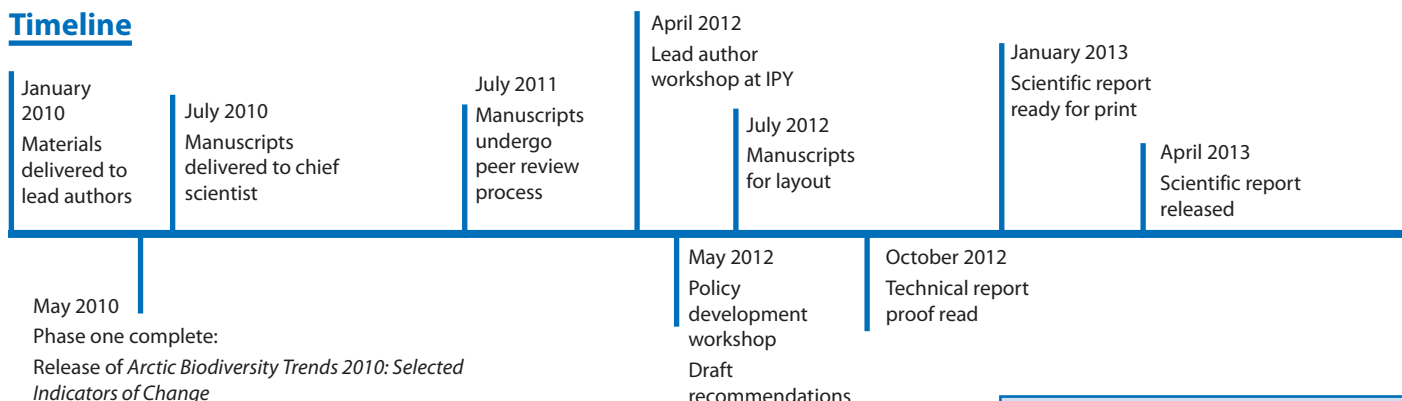
- Short documentary on *Arctic Biodiversity Trends 2010: Selected Indicators of Change* in partnership with UNEP-GRID Arendal
- SBSTTA, CBD 2011: Major contribution to Arctic biodiversity side event and submission.

A circumpolar effort

Canada, Finland, Greenland/Denmark, Sweden and the United States lead the ABA development, and have contributed funding. Additional sources of funds include the Nordic Council of Ministers and UNEP-GRID Arendal. In-kind support, including teams of lead and co-lead authors, are drawn from all Arctic Council countries, Permanent Participants and Observers.

Currently **nine manuscripts have been received**, with **seven in peer-review** and **one finalized**. A further seven await delivery.

Timeline



For more information:
www.caff.is/aba

Arctic Sea Ice Associated Biodiversity

The Arctic Sea Ice Associated Biodiversity Project will:

- provide a summary of the current status and trends of ice-associated biodiversity, including direct effects on marine species and indirect effects on terrestrial species
- discuss the expected reaction of these biota to lower occurrences of ice
- reflect on the effects low ice and its impact on species biodiversity to northern peoples
- recommend actions that might mitigate these changes.

Co-leads

- Trish Hayes, Canada
- Janet Hohn, U.S.A.
- Garry Donaldson, Lead Author, Canada

Latest developments

Phase one: A workshop in March 2011 identified issues and actions that will form the substance of a technical report. A list of authors and an outline of the report was produced.

Phase two: Preparation of the technical report and accompanying recommendations for action. Anticipated to be ready after a January 2012 St. Petersburg workshop.

Phase three: communication of the results and recommendations to a non-technical audience. The technical report will be released at a media event during the International Polar Year conference in Montreal, Canada, April, 2012.

Arctic Marine Shipping Assessment (AMSA IIC)

As requested by PAME, CAFF, AMAP and SDWG are working together to address the Arctic Marine Shipping Assessment (AMSA) Recommendation IIC. This involves the identification of areas of heightened ecological and cultural significance and their vulnerability towards marine shipping in the light of changing climate conditions and increasing multiple marine vessel activity.

The project report is a compilation of existing national and Arctic Council information that PAME requires for its use in a follow-up project with respect to AMSA recommendation II(D) regarding possible nomination of Arctic marine areas for protected status under International Maritime Organisation (IMO) criteria.

Co-leads

- Inge Thaulow, Denmark/Greenland
- Francine Mercier, Canada
- Hanne Aronsen, Norway
- Dennis Thurston, USA

Latest developments

Co-leads have contributed core drafters for the report. The Norwegian core drafter is also the coordinator of the project report. The drafting team is currently reviewing a final draft report and will circulate it to the working groups, national representatives and permanent participants. A final draft report will be sent to CAFF, AMAP and SDWG Chairs for approval in January 2012. The final report will be delivered to PAME in April 2012.

For more information: www.caff.is/assessments



Polar bear displaying unusual behaviour of feeding in Murre colony, Hudson Bay, Canada © Tony Gaston

Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Programme (CBMP)



The Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Program (CBMP) is an international network of scientists, government agencies, Indigenous organizations and conservation groups working together to harmonize and integrate efforts to monitor the Arctic's living resources. The CBMP is currently working with over 60 partner organizations across the Arctic.

How does the CBMP fulfill Arctic Council priorities?

The CBMP's goal is to facilitate more rapid detection and communication of significant biodiversity-related trends and pressures affecting the circumpolar world, and better advise for a rapid policy response.

The CBMP was created partly in response to the Arctic Climate and Impact Assessment's (ACIA) call for "improved capacity to monitor and understand changes in the Arctic and to improve and enhance long-term biodiversity monitoring."

Latest developments

- Convene three Expert Monitoring Groups to develop **long-term integrated monitoring plans for major Arctic ecosystems** (Marine, Freshwater, and Terrestrial). These groups and plans are in different stages of development.
- Convene additional focus groups to advise on various issues of importance:
 - CAFF facilitated the development of a draft **Polar Bear Monitoring Plan** as a contribution to the 1973 Agreement on Polar Bears.
 - The **Arctic Protected Areas Monitoring Group** has developed a discussion paper to inform an eventual monitoring framework.
- Develop **The Arctic Biodiversity Data Service (ABDS)**, a coordinated web-based data management system that accesses, integrates, displays and analyzes biodiversity data according to various user needs. This collaborative effort will provide answers to questions not previously attained on a circumpolar scale, and will lead to a broader understanding of the Arctic environment and the effects of various stressors on biodiversity and ecosystem integrity.
- Compile an inventory of existing community-based monitoring, local traditional knowledge and traditional knowledge monitoring programs and datasets to facilitate integration into monitoring and assessment efforts.
- A marine environment analysis from the Arctic Species Trend Index (ASTI) and a spatial/temporal analysis of the ASTI.



Key Staff

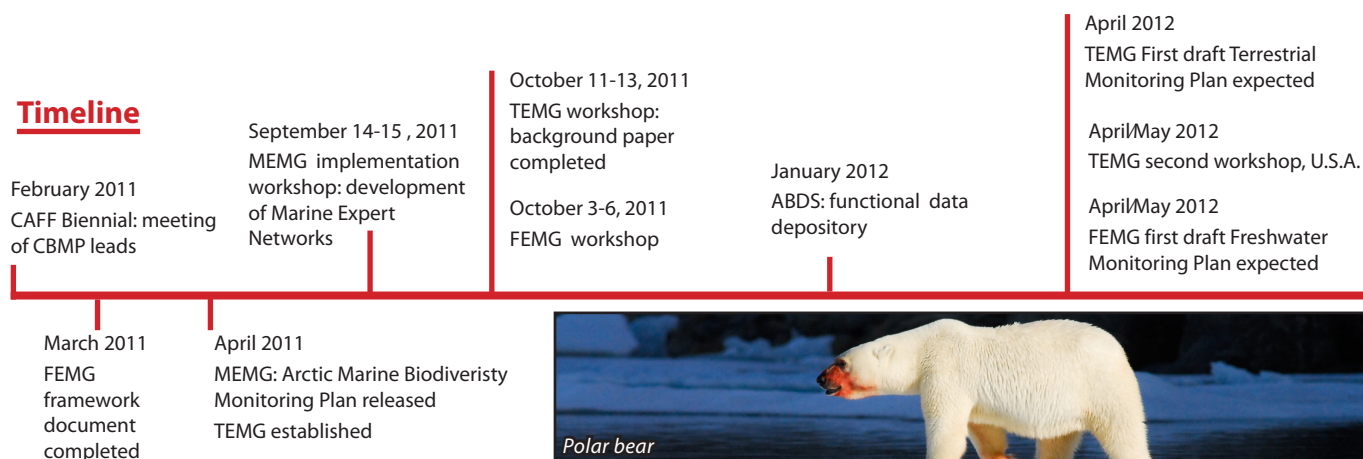
- Mike Gill, CBMP Chair
- Michael Svoboda, Program Officer
- Tom Barry, CAFF

The CBMP is maturing into the tool necessary to assist the Arctic Council to detect, explain and respond to biodiversity threats.

High Profile Communication Activities

- SBSTTA, CBD 2011: Major contribution to Arctic biodiversity submission and side event
- IPY 2012: CBMP session focusing on the marine, terrestrial and freshwater ecosystems

Timeline



Marine Expert Monitoring Group (MEMG)



The MEMG released the Arctic Marine Biodiversity Monitoring Plan in April 2011. It is the first expert monitoring group to release their integrated plan.

The Plan integrates existing marine biodiversity monitoring efforts from across the Arctic and represents an agreement between six Arctic coastal nations and many national, regional, Indigenous and academic organizations and agencies.

In September 2011 an implementation workshop established the Marine Steering Group (MSG) and seven Marine Expert Networks (MENs) to assist in Plan implementation.

Co-leads

- Kathy Crane, U.S.A.
- Reidar Hindrum, Norway

Freshwater Expert Monitoring Group (FEMG)

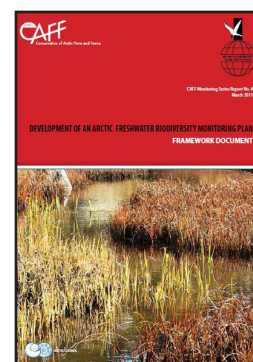
Co-leads

- Willem Goedkoop, Sweden
- Joseph Culp, Canada

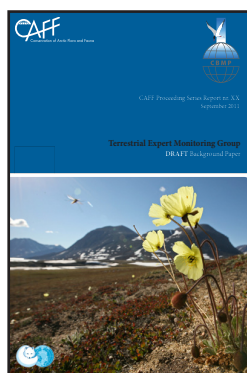
The FEMG had its first meeting in November 2010, with the Canadian sub-group conducting preparatory work the previous year.

In March 2011, the group completed its framework document. The latest writing workshop was held in October 2011.

A final Arctic Freshwater Monitoring Plan is scheduled for early 2013.



Terrestrial Expert Monitoring Group (TEMG)



The TEMG was formed in April 2011. Country co-leads developed terms of reference outlining goals and responsibilities.

In October 2011, the TEMG finalized a background paper and concluded a workshop in Denmark to initiate the development of an Arctic Terrestrial Biodiversity Monitoring Plan.

A final Arctic Terrestrial Monitoring Plan is scheduled for January 2013.

Co-leads

- Tom Christensen, Denmark
- John Payne, U.S.A.

June 2012
Anticipated release of community based monitoring and traditional knowledge inventory

January 2013
TEMG final Arctic Terrestrial Monitoring Plan

January/February 2013
FEMG Final Arctic Freshwater Monitoring Plan expected

February 2013
ABDS: initial version available

March 2013
FEMG: Approval of Freshwater Monitoring Plan

April/May 2013
MEMG: First analysis from the Marine Expert Networks

May 2013
TEMG: Approval of Terrestrial Monitoring Plan

May 2013
ABDS: First edition of ABDS deliverable at Ministerial

For more information: www.caff.is/monitoring

Expert Groups

CAFF may establish expert groups with specific mandates related to key activities for CAFF, and which ensure that scientists, conservationists, and managers interested in arctic flora and vegetation have a forum to promote, facilitate, and coordinate conservation, management, and research activities of mutual concern. These groups have been invaluable in synthesising, coordinating and publishing research.



Chair

- Grant Gilchrist, Canada

Expert Seabird Group (CBird)

CBird facilitates seabird conservation, management and research activities between circumpolar countries, and works to improve communication between seabird scientists and managers both within and outside the Arctic.

A current summary of projects include:

- The Seabird Population Trends Index is up and running, allowing researchers to examine circumpolar population trends for the first time.
- The Circumpolar seabird monitoring plan is scheduled to be finalized in January 2012.
- A research proposal is in development to support a geolocator study of the thick-billed murre. This technology has provided dramatic new results in habitat use and can assist in international cooperation for conservation.
- A glaucous gull decline analysis is undergoing review and is scheduled for completion in February 2012.
- Data is being compiled for a status and trends report of the black-legged kittewake in order to assess the species conservation concerns.
- A summary of monitoring efforts and population status of the ivory gull is being prepared for the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).
- The Circumpolar Murre Conservation Strategy is undergoing review and will be ready in February 2012.

Expert Circumpolar Flora Group (CFG)

The CFG promotes, encourages and coordinates the conservation of Arctic flora and vegetation, habitats and research activities on an international scale. It also works to enhance the exchange of information relating to Arctic flora and vegetation and factors affecting status and trends in Arctic flora.

Current activities include:

- The Circumboreal Vegetation Map project produced a background paper in July 2011. This subgroup of vegetation scientists within the Flora Group and the International Association for Vegetation Science (IAVS) are mapping the vegetation of the boreal region in order to integrate conservation and management at a circumboreal scale.
- The CFG is developing a Red List for Arctic Vascular Plants and are also planning the development of an Arctic vegetation database.



Chair

- Stephen Talbot, U.S.A.

For more information: www.caff.is/expert-group

Partnerships

Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

CAFF has submitted a report on Arctic biodiversity to the CBD's Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) at their 15th meeting in November 2011.

The report presents an overview of CAFF activities, and highlights current and planned work that will contribute to the objectives of the process of the CBD, namely the tracking of the status and trends in biodiversity across the Arctic.

This is a result of COP 10 decision X/13 that invited the Arctic Council to provide relevant information and

assessments, Arctic biodiversity, specifically results from the Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Programme and the Arctic Biodiversity Assessment.

Proposed Arctic Council Initiatives

CAFF has been participating in the organization and development of the proposed **Arctic Change Report** and **Arctic Resilience Report**.

Sustaining Arctic Observing Networks (SAON)

CAFF's CBMP is the biodiversity component of SAON. CAFF sits on the SAON Board and coordinates the

community monitoring component of the SAON process. Partners include:

- AMAP
- SWDG

Ongoing partnerships

CAFF cooperates with many international organizations and conventions. Some current partners include:

- CBD
- UNEP-GRID Arendal
- UNEP WCMC
- International Polar Year (IPY)
- World Wildlife Fund (WWF)
- Association of Early Polar Career Scientists (APECS)
- Ramsar Convention

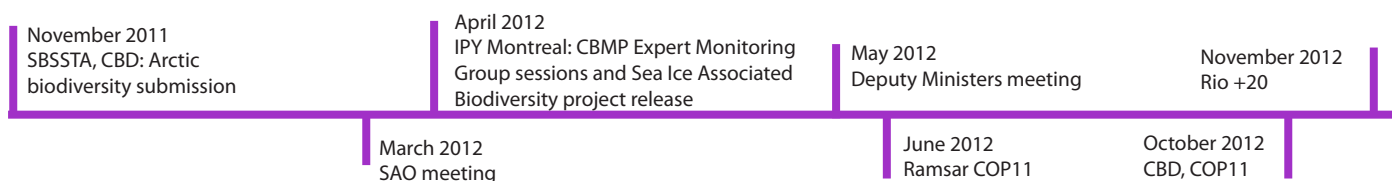
Communications

CAFF is finalising a communications strategy that provides guidance on how develop, package, deliver and evaluate communications activities pertaining to CAFF's projects, programs, messages of conservation and target audiences.

This document is intended as a complementary expansion of the original communications document, the *Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna: an outline of a communications strategy*, while aligning the communications approach with the newly developed Arctic Council communications guidelines. It also provides an expansion into new media tools and techniques.

Communications materials and messages must be audience relevant and based on user-needs. To the best of CAFF's ability, communication will respond to user-preferred timelines, language, content, style and dissemination.

Prominent Meetings and Presentations



Ongoing Communications Projects:

- CAFF website
- ABDS data portal
- Report generation
- Media response and issues management
- Student engagement project: Association of Early Polar Career Scientists
- Social media presence
- Project specific communications: ABA, CBMP, expert groups
- Representation on Arctic Council communications contact group

For more information: www.caff.is



Youngsters fishing in Greenland
©LawrenceHislop/UNEP-GRID/Arendal



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