

CAFF PROGRESS REPORT
ARCTIC COUNCIL MINISTERIAL MEETING



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 Environment and Nature Agency, Greenland Home Rule Government, Greenland (Kingdom of Denmark)
- 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 Organisations:

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

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CAFF Designated Area

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Response to Arctic Council Priorities

The Conservation of Arctic Flora & Fauna Working Group (CAFF) is the Biodiversity Working group of the Arctic Council. It is guided by the CAFF Strategic Plan for the Conservation of Arctic Biological Diversity and biennial Work Plans. CAFF's mandate is to *address the conservation of Arctic biodiversity, and to communicate the findings to the governments and residents of the Arctic, helping to promote practices which ensure the sustainability of the Arctic's living resources*. This document summarizes the current status of CAFF projects and activities during the 2006 – 2009 ministerial period.

In order to successfully conserve the natural environment and allow for economic development requires baseline data and status and trend analysis of Arctic biodiversity, habitats and ecosystem health. CAFF's projects provide data for informed decision making in resolving conflicts which are now arising in trying to both conserve the natural environment and permit regional growth.

The common priorities agreed upon for the Norwegian, Danish and Swedish Chairmanship period of the Arctic Council are concerned with climate change,

integrated resource management, the International Polar Year, Indigenous peoples, local living conditions and management issues. CAFF's work over the past two years reflects the emphasis placed on these priorities.

CAFF's Arctic Biodiversity Assessment and the Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Program, the Bering Sea Sub Network, ECORA and the work of its expert groups on Seabirds and Flora are important contributions towards understanding the impacts of climate change on:

- Nature and biodiversity (management issues)
- The adaptability and sustainable use of all living resources in the Arctic.

CAFF has also placed a strong focus on the International Polar Year (IPY) both through benefiting from IPY generated research and contributing to IPY legacy. As requested by the Senior Arctic Officials CAFF is actively cooperating with other Working Groups to help to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Arctic Council



1. Arctic Climate and Impact Assessment (ACIA) - follow-up

CAFFs 2006 – 2008 Work Plan placed a strong focus on climate Change and building upon the recommendations contained in the *Arctic Climate and*



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Impact Assessment (ACIA). The ACIA and CAFFs *Flora & Fauna: Status and Conservation* report both indicated that it was necessary to consider the status and trends of biodiversity in the Arctic. ACIA called for improved capacity to monitor and understand changes in the Arctic and to improve and enhance long-term Arctic biodiversity monitoring. The Arctic Biodiversity Assessment and the Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Program are two of the

primary vehicles via which CAFF is responding to these calls.

CAFF remains prepared to contribute to the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programmes (AMAP) efforts on climate change monitoring and to the Sustainable Development Working Group (SDWG) on adaptation efforts in the Arctic. CAFF will work on additional aspects of ACIA follow-up through IPY endorsed projects, and projects by CAFF's expert groups, the Seabird Group (CBird) and the Flora Group (CFG). CAFF is also actively participating in the discussions and activities of the Sustaining Arctic Observing Networks (SAON) process.

1.1 The Arctic Biodiversity Assessment (ABA)

The ABA was endorsed by Arctic Council Ministers in Salekhard 2006. Its purpose is to:

Synthesize and assess the status and trends of biological diversity in the Arctic.

It will provide a much needed description of the current

state of the Arctic's ecosystems and biodiversity, create a baseline for use in global and regional assessments of Arctic biodiversity and a basis to inform and guide future Arctic Council work. It will provide up to date scientific and traditional ecological knowledge, identify gaps in the data record, identify key mechanisms driving change and produce recommendations.

Administration

The ABA is led by Finland, Greenland/Denmark and the United States. Finland is the Chair and the USA is the Vice Chair of the ABA Steering Committee. The Chair of the Steering Committee will rotate and next in line to take the Chair will be the USA. Other members include Greenland/Denmark, Canada, UNEP GRID Arendal and UNEP WCMC, Gwich'in Council International, the Arctic Athabaskan Council and the CAFF Secretariat. Its Chief Scientist is provided by Greenland/Denmark. The administrative aspects of the ABA are conducted by the CAFF Secretariat. Several Steering Committee meetings have been held, including productive meetings in Russia and America to discuss the involvement of scientists in the Arctic Biodiversity Assessment. The ABA has received direct funding from Greenland/Denmark, Finland, Canada and the USA. In-kind support is being received from other CAFF Countries, Permanent Participants and Observers

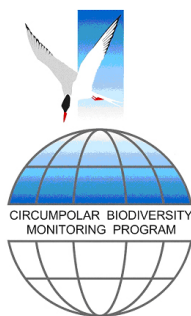
Activities

The ABA Work plan and Financial Strategy was endorsed by the Senior Arctic Officials in Narvík in November 2007. The report will be produced in two phases. Phase 1 is an *2010 Arctic Highlights Report*. This will present twenty one indicators of trends and is based on the suite of indicators developed by the Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Programme. It is anticipated that this report will be ready as an Arctic Council contribution to the United Nations 2010 Biodiversity Target and the International Biodiversity Year in 2010. UNEP GRID Arendal have been appointed as editors to the Highlights Report. Phase 2 will be a full scientific Arctic Biodiversity Assessment scheduled to be completed in 2013.

Publications

- *The Arctic Biodiversity Assessment: Work Plan and Financial Strategy* (2007)

1.2 The Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Programme (CBMP)



The CBMP is an international network of scientists and local resource users working together to enhance Arctic biodiversity monitoring to improve detection, understanding and reporting of important trends in biodiversity and to facilitate effective and informed management

decisions. The CBMP has over 60 global partners, 33 of which are Arctic biodiversity monitoring networks operating and linked to the CBMP. Many of these networks (e.g. CARMA¹, ITEX²) have received substantial support from the International Polar Year.

The program takes an ecosystem-based management approach, operating as a network of networks, coordinating existing species, habitat and site-based networks. The CBMP is in the process of convening five Expert Monitoring Groups tasked with developing

long-term integrated monitoring plans for the Arctic's major systems (Marine, Coastal, Freshwater, Terrestrial, Vegetation and Fauna).

Administration

Canada has reaffirmed its commitment to lead the CBMP and fund the programme office located in Whitehorse, Canada - until September 2010, at which point Canada's commitment will be reviewed. The program has received funding from multiple sources in Canada, the United States, Sweden, Norway, Finland and from the European Commission. In-kind support is currently received from all CAFF Countries, Permanent Participants (i.e. the Arctic Athabaskan Council, Aleut International Association, Gwich'in Council International) and Observers (i.e. The World Conservation Union and the United Nations Environment Programme).

Activities

The 2006 – 2009 Ministerial period has been an active and productive time for the CBMP. It has accomplished

¹ CircumArctic Rangifer Monitoring and Assessment Network

² International Tundra Experiment: impacts of long-term experimental warming and climate variability on tundra ecosystems





many important tasks and has embarked upon a number of exciting projects which will be of critical importance in enhancing our understanding of the status and trends of Arctic Biodiversity e.g. the Seabird Information Network and the Arctic Species Trend Index. The programme is also in the process of developing a suite of indices and indicators for tracking trends in Arctic biodiversity

The following are the accomplishments of the CBMP during the 2006 – 2009 Ministerial period:

Organisation, communication and outreach:

The full version of the CBMPs Five Year Implementation Plan was presented to and endorsed by the Senior Arctic Officials at Svolvær, April 2008. A Five Year Implementation Plan Overview document, outlining the program's key activities and costs, had previously been presented to and received endorsement at the Senior Arctic Officials meeting in Tromsø April 2007.

- The CBMP has joined the 2010 Biodiversity Indicators Partnership and will be responsible for the Arctic analyses of the Convention on Biodiversity relevant biodiversity (CBD) indicators.
- The CBMP has continued strategic partnership engagement to expand program capacity in key areas, as identified in the Five Year Implementation Plan. This has involved targeting key organizations in Europe, Russia and North America with the aim of trying to establish a broad-based consortium for improved Arctic biodiversity monitoring and conservation.
- The CBMPs Marine Expert Monitoring Group has been formed and is currently developing a long-term integrated monitoring plan for Arctic marine mammals. Norway and the US co-chair the Group

and Russia, Denmark/Greenland, Canada, the Aleut International Association, PAME (Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment) and AMAP are members. Norway funded a successful workshop held in Tromsø, January 2009.

- The CBMP has focused on outreach and communication activities to promote the CBMP and its vision. To this end a number of successful and productive workshops have been held during the 2006 – 2009 ministerial period e.g.
 - The CBMP hosted an implementation planning workshop in Alaska in October, 2006.
 - The US Marine Mammal Commission sponsored a CBMP workshop on an Arctic marine mammal monitoring plan in Valencia, Spain in March, 2007.
 - A Stakeholders workshop was held in Washington in March 2008 to discuss the development of the CBMPs Expert Monitoring Groups.
 - The CBMP worked with the SAON Canada working group to develop the 2nd SAON workshop which was held in Canada in April, 2008.
 - The CBMP hosted a workshop to discuss the formation of the CBMPs Terrestrial and Freshwater Expert Monitoring Groups in Vancouver in September 2008.
 - The CBMP hosted a workshop at the BirdLife Conference held in Buenos Aires in September 2008. The workshop discussed a broad circumArctic partnership with BirdLife Regional Partners and their Global Seabird Programme.
 - CAFF/CBMP in cooperation with the World Conservation Union (IUCN) held a very successful workshop at the recent IUCN World Congress held in Barcelona, October 2008 – see item 5.2.

Projects:

- The Seabird Information Network
- The Arctic Species Trend Index
- Arctic Report Cards



- Integrated Arctic Marine Biodiversity Monitoring Plan
- Integrated Arctic Freshwater Biodiversity Monitoring Plan
- Inventory of current Arctic Biodiversity Monitoring Programs
- Community-based Monitoring Program Development Manual
- Circumpolar Protected Areas Monitoring Framework

The CBMP will next focus upon the further development of program partnerships and commencement of the development of the CBMP indicators and indices for use in the Arctic Biodiversity Assessment. The Marine Expert Monitoring Group has been formed and the remaining Expert Monitoring Groups will be activated. The technical framework for the CBMP will be further enhanced through the creation of platforms for web-based data portals, CBMP website and the Seabird Information Network.

Publications

- CAFF CBMP Report No.12. *A Strategy for Developing Indices and Indicators to track Status & Trends in Arctic Biodiversity* (2008).
- CAFF CBMP Report No.13. *A Strategy for Facilitating and Developing Community Based Monitoring Approaches in Arctic Biodiversity Monitoring* (2008).
- CAFF CBMP Report No.14. Developing an

Integrated and Sustained Arctic Biodiversity Monitoring Network: *The CBMPs Five Year Implementation Plan* (2007).

- CAFF CBMP Report No.15. *Framework for a Circumpolar Arctic Seabird Monitoring Network: CAFFs Circumpolar Seabird Group* (2008).
- CAFF CBMP Report. *A Framework for Monitoring Arctic Marine Mammals* (in press)

Foundation Work and Ongoing Activities

The following sections outline the progress made in CAFFs various expert groups and projects. Each of which contributes to the foundation upon which cornerstone projects such as the Arctic Biodiversity Assessment and the Circumpolar Biodiversity Programme are built.

2. CAFF Expert Groups

CAFF currently has two expert groups: which ensure that scientists, conservationists, and managers interested in arctic flora and fauna have a forum to promote, facilitate, and coordinate conservation, management, and research activities of mutual concern. These groups have been invaluable in synthesizing, coordinating and publishing research.

2.1 CAFF Flora Group (CFG)

With botanical expertise drawn from Arctic Council countries the CFG promotes, encourages and coordinates internationally the conservation of

biodiversity of arctic flora and vegetation, habitats and research activities in these fields. It also works to enhance the exchange of information relating to arctic flora and vegetation and factors affecting status and trends in arctic flora.

The 2006 – 2009 Ministerial period has been an active and productive time for the CFG and it has accomplished many important tasks outlined in CAFFs 2006 – 2008 Work Plan. It has embarked upon a number of exciting projects which will be of critical importance in enhancing our understanding of status and trends of both arctic flora and fauna. One of its most important challenges will be in working towards the development of the *Circumpolar Boreal Vegetation Map* (www.cbvm.org), the creation of which will mark a significant contribution towards research and policy making on the Arctic environment.

The following are the accomplishments of the CFG during the 2006 – 2009 Ministerial period:

- Documentation was submitted to the World Conservation Union in support of a proposed Red List of Arctic plant species.
- An evaluation of monitoring of local flora in Russia was completed which determined its application in a circumpolar context.
- A successful workshop was held to develop a

strategy for the development of a Circumpolar Boreal Vegetation Map. The workshop was funded by the Nordic Council of Ministers and Canada. Its proceedings are due to be published as a CAFF report in 2009.

- A checklist of Arctic lichens was finalized and is scheduled for publication as a CAFF report in 2009.
- A checklist of Arctic mosses is being developed and is planned for completion in 2009.
- Global Observation Research initiative in Alpine Environments sites have been established in Alaska (Selawik and Arctic National Wildlife Refuges) and Iceland; with sites planned for the Faroe Islands (2009) and Greenland (2010).
- A successful workshop was held in the Faroe Islands in May 2007. The workshop proceedings have now been published as a CAFF technical report (no. 15).
- The CAFF Flora Group serves as the official Arctic Plants Specialist Group within the Species Survival Commission of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature.

The CFG website has been updated and revised - www.caff.is/cfg. All CFG publications are now available online and all presentations/PowerPoint's



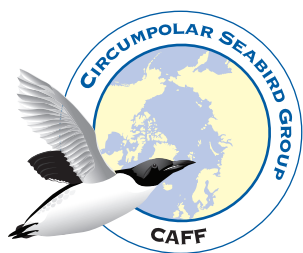


from the meeting in the Faroe Islands are also available online.

Publications

- CAFF Technical Report No. 15. *Proceedings of the Fourth International CAFF Flora Group Workshop*, 15-18 May 2007, Tórshavn, Faroe Islands (2008).
- CAFF Technical Report No. 20. *A checklist of Arctic lichens* (in press).
- CAFF Technical Report No. 21. *Proceedings of the Workshop to develop a Strategy to Create the Circumpolar Vegetation Map*. October 2008 (in press).

2.2 CAFF 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. Conservation issues include alien predators, habitat alteration, oil and contaminants, seabird bycatch, subsistence harvesting, unregulated harvesting and climate change. CBird also promotes the conservation of migratory seabirds outside of the arctic, coordinates the circumpolar seabird monitoring network in addition to developing various seabird initiatives

The 2006 – 2009 Ministerial period has been an active and productive time for CBird and it has accomplished

many important tasks outlined in CAFFs 2006 – 2008 Work plan. It has also embarked upon a number of exciting projects which will be of critical importance in enhancing our understanding of the status and trends of both arctic seabirds and the changing arctic environment.

The following are the accomplishments of CBird during the 2006 – 2009 Ministerial period:

- Completed a framework for a Circumpolar Arctic Seabird Monitoring Network.
- Completed a report on seabird harvest in the Arctic.
- Completed an International Ivory Gull Strategy.
- Published a peer reviewed article on Fluctuations in circumpolar seabird populations linked to climate oscillations.

CBird has conducted analyses for papers on the status and trends of Black-legged Kittiwakes and on the decline of Glaucous Gulls in the Arctic. Work has also begun on the creation of a circumpolar seabird colony database and on a web-based Seabird Information Network, the pilot version of which is now operational. CBird is also in the process of completing a Murre population model for the Atlantic.

CBird held meetings in Sweden in 2007 and in Greenland in 2008. The reports from both meetings are available on the CBird website (www.caff.is/cbird). The CBird website has been updated and revised and all CBird publications are now available online. A new CBird logo has been created and is used on all CBird documentation.

Publications:

- CAFF CBMP Report No.15. *Framework for a Circumpolar Arctic Seabird Monitoring Network* (2008).
- CAFF Technical Report No. 16. *Seabird Harvest in the Arctic* (2008).
- CAFF Technical Report No. 18. *The International Ivory Gull Conservation Strategy & Action Plan* (2008).
- Global Change Biology. *Fluctuations in circumpolar seabird populations linked to climate oscillations* (2008).

2.3 Circumpolar Protected Areas Network (CPAN)

CPAN has been an expert working group within CAFF since 1996. It had a very active and productive start however it has faced many challenges in the intervening years and it has proved difficult to find solutions on how CPAN should move forward. During its recent board meetings it was recognized that CAFF has a heavy workload and must prioritize its activities.

However, in recognizing the importance of the issues CPAN addresses for achieving CAFF's mission it was realized that some of the issues CPAN deals with are reflected in other CAFF projects and activities. For example this can be seen in the Arctic Biodiversity Assessments 2010 *Arctic Highlights Report* which includes a protected areas indicator as developed by CAFF's cornerstone programme the CBMP. Canada will also lead a project in CAFF's new 2009 – 2011 Work Plan to update the circumpolar map of protected areas. A workshop on monitoring and protected areas led by Canada and the USA is scheduled to be held early in 2009.

It was thus decided at the recent CAFF Biennial meeting in Greenland that CPAN would not be placed on the 2009 – 2011 CAFF Work Plan.

3. CAFF Projects

3.1 ECORA

ECORA is a Global Environment Facility (GEF) sponsored project initiated by CAFF, UNEP/GRID-Arendal and the Russian Federation. It uses an integrated ecosystem management approach to conserve biodiversity and minimize habitat



fragmentation in three selected model areas in the Russian Arctic. The aim of ECORA is to develop Integrated Ecosystem Management (IEM) strategies and action plans in three model areas representing different ecosystems and anthropogenic pressures in the Russian Arctic: Kolguev Island (Nenets), the Kolyma River Basin (Yakutia/Sakha Republic), and the Beringovsky District (Chukotka). The ECORA website can be found at - <http://www.grida.no/ecora>.



Russia and Norway are members of the Steering Committee, representatives from the USA and Sweden serve as Western Advisers in the Model Areas, and RAIPON has been directly engaged in the project implementation. In addition, six of the CAFF countries have provided financial support. ECORA is nearing completion and its expected major outcomes are:

- Strengthening the enabling environment for IEM.
- Strengthening knowledge base for IEM.
- Development of IEM plans and strategies in model areas.
- Pilot projects to test IEM implementation strategies.

The following are the accomplishments of ECORA during the 2006 – 2009 Ministerial period:

- Baseline mapping of key ecological and socio-

economic features

- Completion of field studies on key ecological indicators.
- Recommendations on management of reindeer husbandry, waterfowl harvest and conservation of threatened species.
- Community monitoring implemented in two model areas.
- Training and education activities completed, including environmental education for schools and training in traditional nature use for local people, environmental management and policy
- Pilot projects initiated in each model area: clean water, waste, and energy on Kolguev Island; Sustainable waterfowl harvest and Sustainable reindeer husbandry in Kolyma River Basin; and Development of cluster nature protected areas in Beringovsky.
- A successful mid-term review by the GEF indicated substantial progress in collecting unique biodiversity and other related information in support of IEM. It acknowledged the progress made in challenging physical, social, and economic circumstances.

A proposal is being prepared to develop a follow-up project to ECORA that will build on the outcomes of the current project to enhance adaptation to climate change in the management of biodiversity in the Russian Arctic and support traditional lifestyles of indigenous peoples of the North through protecting traditional nature use. It will help support CAFF's activities relating to the Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Programme and the Arctic Biodiversity Assessment in Russia, as well as addressing recommendations from the ACIA. This project is included in CAFF's new 2009 – 2011 Work Plan.

Publications

- Project to be published in 2009 under the title: *Towards integrated ecosystem management in the arctic: lessons learned and the way forward*.
- ECORA Report, Arctic Council Ministerial (2009)
- The activities of ECORA over the 2006 - 2009 Ministerial period have resulted in a wide range of publications a full list of which can be accessed on the CAFF website - www.caff.is/ecora.

3.2 The Bering Sea Sub Network (BSSN)



The BSSN International Community-Based Environmental Observation Alliance for the Arctic Observing Network is an IPY project implemented under the auspices of CAFF by the Aleut International Association in collaboration with the University of Alaska, UNEP-GRID Arendal and the Alaska Native Science Commission. BSSN is funded by the US States National Science Foundation (NSF). The goal of BSSN is to increase our understanding and knowledge of pan-Arctic processes, enhancing the ability of scientists, Arctic communities, and governments to predict, plan, and respond to environmental changes and their socio-economic effects. The project's pilot stage began in June 2007 and is scheduled to end in May 2009.

BSSN provides the means for the systematic collection of information about the environment by six indigenous coastal communities: three in the Russian Federation and three in the United States. Semi-structured interviews are used to gather Observations on primary subsistence and commercial species of the Bering Sea. The network provides for the efficient management of the data gathered from community-based environmental observations. Thus far, emerging trends of interest include the difference in observations and perceptions of change in ice-dependent and non ice-dependent communities, as well as in health of species caught in Alaskan versus Russian communities.

A proposal to fund a further five-year project has been submitted to the NSF, under the title "Bering Sea Sub Network: a Distributed Human Sensor Array to Detect Arctic Environmental Change". It focuses on understanding variations in environmental and socio-economic conditions that have a meaningful impact on everyday life in indigenous communities; the evolution of consequences of change; potential strategies to enhance communities capacity to adapt and interactions and feedbacks between biophysical and social systems, so as to assess how changes in each impact one another.

Publications:

- CAFF Technical report No.17. *Bering Sea Sub-Network Annual Report* (2008).

4. Cooperation with other Working Groups

In Salekhard 2006, Ministers requested Senior Arctic Officials to continue to examine the organization of the Arctic Council and their work to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the Arctic Council. Bearing this in mind CAFF has been developing cooperation's with other Working Groups which would contribute towards increased efficiency. Activities have included the following:

4.1 The Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme (AMAP)

CAFF has worked with AMAP to develop the Coordinated Monitoring effort (CME). The aim of the CME has been to explore how AMAP and CAFF can look for opportunities to coordinate their monitoring programs to further strengthen our understanding of



the processes driving change across the Arctic and the effects of these changes on Arctic ecosystems, and to identify possible actions to compensate for, or reverse the effects of these changes, with sustainability and sustainable use of Arctic ecosystems as the ultimate goals.

In order to develop the CME and to discuss the harmonization of monitoring between CAFF and AMAP joint CAFF-AMAP Board meetings were held in Copenhagen in October 2007 and in Quebec in December 2008. A Green paper was developed which outlines the aims and objectives of the CME. A list of projects which meet the CME requirements has been approved and a report reviewing these projects was presented to the Senior Arctic Officials at Svolvær in April 2008.

The CAFF Secretariat has cooperated and participated closely with AMAP in the development of the Sustaining Arctic Observing Networks Process (SAON) – see *item 5.6*. It has also cooperated with AMAP on the issue of the use and management of spatial data within the Arctic Council – see *item 4.2*. CAFF has also contributed to the Oil & Gas Assessment.

Publications:

- *Green Paper on AMAP-CAFF Coordinated Monitoring Effort* (2007).
- *AMAP – CAFF Coordinated Monitoring Effort, Status Report*, Narv k (2008).

- *AMAP – CAFF Coordinated Monitoring Effort, Status Report*, Svolv r (2008).

4.2 Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response (EPPR)

The CAFF, EPPR and AMAP Secretariats have been cooperating to consider how spatial information can best be managed and used within the Arctic Council. CAFF created an information paper on spatial data and the Arctic Council and this was used as a basis for discussion. Two workshops to further discuss the use, availability and management of spatial information in the Arctic were held in Troms  January 2008 and in Oslo, February 2008.

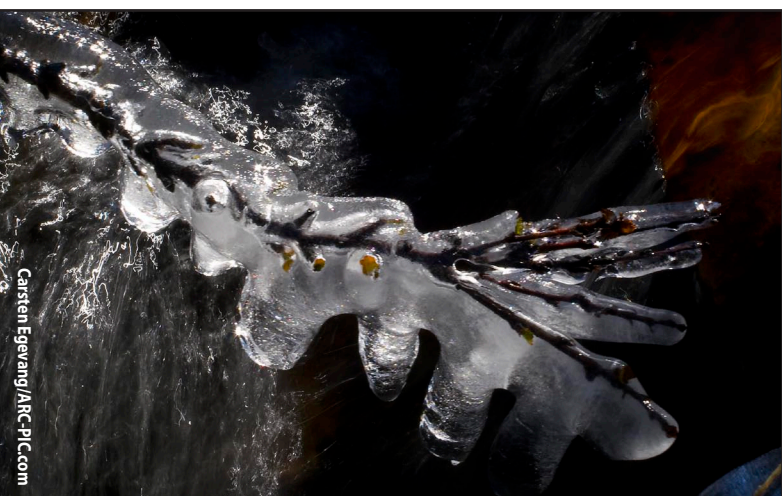
CAFF in cooperation with EPPR and AMAP has used the discussions generated by the workshops and the CAFF paper to create an information paper which has been submitted to the Senior Arctic Officials at Svolv r in April 2008. The purpose of this document was to inform the Senior Arctic Officials of progress to date with regards to discussions on how spatial information could be managed within the Arctic Council and how this could be conducted in co-operation with external parties.

The information paper introduced plans to present a more complete proposal to the Arctic Council, outlined the current *vision* for collaborative activities among the Arctic Council Working Groups. It also considered how the Arctic Council and its Working Groups could



cooperate with external parties with regards to spatial information. Based upon the results of discussions between the Working Groups, the plan is to further develop this document and to submit a proposal for consideration by the Senior Arctic Officials.

Subsequently the National mapping agencies of Iceland, Denmark/Greenland, Norway, Finland and Sweden have used the above outlined workshops and publications to start preparations for the development of an Arctic Spatial Data Infrastructure. A proposal for which was presented to the Arctic Council in Kautokeino in November 2008.



Publications:

- *CAFF Report. The Arctic Council – Approach to Spatial Data* (2008).
- *Spatial Data – Information paper to the SAOs, CAFF, EPPR and AMAP* (2008).

4.3 Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment (PAME)

CAFF remains committed to contributing to further cooperation with PAME. However a common understanding needs to be reached between CAFF and PAME which will outline how this cooperation could take place. CAFF is actively exploring how to further develop cooperation which has thus far focused on contributions to PAMEs Regional Programme of Action and exploring how CAFF and PAME can cooperate in relation to large marine ecosystems and marine sensitive areas. PAME also participates in the CBMPs Marine Expert Group.

4.4 Sustainable Development Working Group (SDWG)

CAFF is exploring how to further develop cooperation with the SDWG.

5. Cooperation with International conventions and organizations

CAFF cooperates and communicates with a wide variety of International organisations and conventions. These include:

International Organisations

- The Arctic Parliamentarians
- Birdlife International
- The Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS)
- The International Arctic Science Committee (IASC)
- The International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN)
- The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)
- The United Nations Environment Programme Global Resource Information Database (UNEP GRID – Arendal)
- The United Nations Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC)
- Wetlands International
- Working Group of the International Petroleum Environmental Conservation Association (IPIECA)
- The World Wildlife Fund (WWF)

Agreements

- The Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA)
- The International Polar Year (IPY)
- The Polar Bear Agreement

Conventions

- The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)
- The Convention on Wetlands (RAMSAR)

Find below a summary of some recent actions taken with regards to cooperation with international organisations, agreements and conventions.

5.1 UNEP-WCMC and UNEP/GRID-Arendal

CAFF cooperates with UNEP-WCMC and UNEP/GRID-Arendal on the development and data management of the CBMP and a web-based portal. Both organisations are represented on the Steering Committees for the Arctic Biodiversity Assessment and the Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Programme.

5.2 The International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN)

The CAFF Flora Group also now serves as the official Arctic Plants Specialist Group within the Species Survival Commission of the IUCN. CAFF is in the process of formulating a joint project with the Polar Bear Specialist Group of the IUCN in connection with the CBMP. IUCN-US also hosted and contributed to organising the CBMP stakeholders' workshop in Washington in March 2008. CAFF/CBMP in cooperation with IUCN held a workshop at the recent IUCN World Conservation Congress held in Barcelona in October 2008. The workshop was very successful, generated a lot of interest and was effective in highlighting Arctic biodiversity issues as well as promoting CAFF - the CBMP and ABA. At the Congress the IUCN adopted a resolution on an Arctic legal regime for environmental protection.

5.3 The European Union (EU)

The European Environment Agency (EEA) has

expressed a desire to cooperate with CAFF on biodiversity issues in the Arctic. A number of meetings have been held with the Biodiversity unit of the EEA.

At a recent Arctic Council meeting held in Kautokeino in November 2008 the European Commission (EC) announced its intention to apply at the Arctic Council Ministerial scheduled for April 2009 to be a full Observer to the Arctic Council. The EC also announced their adoption of a *Communication on The European Union and the Arctic Region* which highlights the effects of climate change and human activities in the Arctic. Apart from setting out EU interests and policy objectives, the text also proposes a systematic and coordinated response to rapidly emerging challenges. The Communication is the first step towards an EU Arctic Policy and an important contribution to implementing the Integrated Maritime Policy for the EU.

5.4 Working Group of the International Petroleum Environmental Conservation Association (IPIECA)

CAFF is continuing dialog with the biodiversity working group of the International Petroleum Industry Environmental Conservation Association to develop possible joint projects. CAFF participated in the round table discussion held between representatives from Oil & Gas companies and the Working Groups in the Arctic Council in Tromsø, January 2008.





5.5 The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

CAFF is in discussions with the Secretariat of the CBD on the potential for cooperation and signing of a Memorandum of Cooperation between CAFF and the CBD.

5.6 The Sustaining Arctic Observing Network (SAON)



CAFF has been active in the SAON Process and has participated in each of the SAON workshops. In support of the coordinated action requested by the SAOs regarding an Arctic observing network as

referred to in the 2006 Salekhard Declaration the CBMP is recognized as the biodiversity component of SAON. CAFF through the Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Programme helped to develop the 2nd SAON workshop held in Edmonton in April, 2008. The CBMP Chair co-chaired the Terrestrial Observation Networks session at the 2nd SAON workshop. CAFF also played an active role in the final SAON workshop which was tasked with developing the SAON report and recommendations to the Arctic Council. CAFF remains prepared to actively participate in the next phase of the SAON process.

At a recent Ministerial conference on the Arctic held in Monaco in November 2008 the conference declaration noted the need to make an important European contribution to support a future SAON.

5.7 The International Polar Year (IPY)

CAFF has in the previous two years placed a strong focus on the International Polar Year (IPY). CAFF involvement in IPY included: endorsement of IPY

projects; benefiting from Research generated by IPY projects and contributing to IPY legacy. The following list outlines those IPY proposals which have received CAFF support:

- Arctic Biodiversity of Chars – Network for Monitoring and Research.
- Arctic Freshwater Biodiversity Monitoring and Research Network.
- Arctic Portal - a comprehensive gateway to the Arctic on the internet.
- Back to the Future (BTF) - changes in high latitude terrestrial ecosystem structures and functions.
- Bering Sea Sub-Network of Community-Based Environmental Monitoring, Observation and Information Stations.
- BIRDHEALTH (Health of Arctic and Antarctic Bird Populations).
- CARMA (CircumArctic Rangifer Monitoring and Assessment Network).
- CAVIAR (Community Adaptation and Vulnerability In Arctic Regions).
- Conservation Status Assessments of Canadian Arctic Flora.
- EALAT (the Reindeer Herders' Vulnerability Study).
- Flora of the Canadian Arctic: diversity and change.
- Greening of the Arctic (GOA) - Circumpolar biomass.
- Predictive Modeling of the Circumpolar Pelagic Seabird Distribution.

- Pan-Arctic Vegetation Change.
- MERSAM – Mercury Seabird Arctic Monitoring.

An example of how CAFF is benefiting from IPY will be through the role IPY generated research will play in the Arctic Biodiversity Assessment. The Arctic Biodiversity Assessment will also provide a vehicle for IPY researchers to insure that their research will reach a wider audience. CAFF's cornerstone project the Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Programme is itself an IPY endorsed project and it will play a significant role in contributing to IPY legacies. This can be seen in how it is recognised as the Biodiversity component of SAON. CAFF is also a member of the contact Group which has been established as part of the Arctic Council project being led by Norway to maximise the legacy of the IPY.

6. Management and administration

The CAFF International Secretariat is located in Akureyri, Iceland. The Secretariat has a staff of three. A new Executive Secretary was appointed in October 2007 and a new staff member was appointed

in January 2009 to assist with the coordination and administration of the Arctic Biodiversity Assessment. The CAFF web system has been updated and a CAFF Newsletter been created, two issues of which were distributed in 2008. Iceland has stepped forward to take the Chair from Greenland at the 2009 Ministerial.

CAFF has held five management board meetings in the 2006 – 2009 ministerial period. CAFF held its eleventh Biennial meeting in Ilulissat, Greenland on September 2008. The meeting was very successful with participation from a broad cross section of organisations and countries active in Arctic issues. The meeting helped to form the next CAFF Work Plan and reviewed progress over the preceding two years. During 2008 CAFF held two joint board meetings with AMAP to discuss joint cooperative efforts.

Publications:

- *CAFF Newsletter* (December 2007).
- *CAFF Newsletter* (March 2008).

