



CONSERVATION OF ARCTIC FLORA AND FAUNA

CAFF



Progress Report

**Presented to the Senior Arctic Officials
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CAFF continues making excellent progress on its 2004-2006 Work Plan within available resources, while maintaining its strong focus in developing international partnerships and working with the other Working Groups within the Arctic Council. There are also new initiatives to report. CAFF is hopeful that the financial situation of the International Secretariat will improve in 2007, with the significant dialog from the SAO meeting in Khanty-Mansiysk, and the subsequent cooperative dialog at the CAFF Management Board meeting held in February.

FOLLOW-UP OF CAFF WORK PLAN 2004-2006, CBMP AND EXPERT GROUPS

Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Program (CBMP)

Canada has committed to lead the CBMP and has established an international secretariat. It is currently providing two full time staff to the program. Other Arctic Nations have also pledged support. An international steering committee with members from 6 task teams (data management, indicators, funding, community-based monitoring, remote sensing, and outreach and assessment) is providing guidance. A workshop in November 2005 in Whitehorse, Canada brought together monitoring experts and selected a suite of pilot indicators to report on the status and trends of Arctic biodiversity. The pilot indicators are largely adapted from the Convention on Biological Diversity indicators, with additional indicators reflecting the capacity of the existing Arctic Species Networks (i.e. ITEX, CARMA, etc.). The Species Networks and other partners are currently being consulted for further feedback and refinement of the indicators. Where applicable, indicators are being coordinated with indicators used by AMAP. Once completed, a draft discussion paper will be circulated for peer review. A data management strategy is also in progress and is due to be released for review this spring. Pilot projects on several of the indicators have been identified, and a detailed implementation plan is being prepared for review at the CAFF XI Biennial meeting in Finland and the next AMAP HOD meeting.

The CBMP has been fully endorsed by the International Polar Year, and funding applications are being prepared by several Arctic Council countries. Other funding resources are also being pursued by the funding task team. A stakeholders workshop is planned for September 06 in Washington DC. The intention of the CBMP is to seek new funding sources for monitoring efforts and use funds for new field work, in addition to increasing support to existing monitoring activities and networks. Current country based monitoring efforts would also be incorporated. Dr. Martin Raillard, CBMP chair, will start a one year sabbatical, concentrating full time on the CBMP, in June 2006, based at IUCN Headquarters near Geneva, Switzerland. Results from the CBMP will be presented in a form tailored to address needs of indigenous people and assist decision makers in the Arctic. Products envisioned include an interactive web-based data portal, regular newsletters and annual reports, coordinated data bases, and a 2010 Arctic Biodiversity Assessment.

ECORA- an integrated ecosystem approach to conserve biodiversity and minimize habitat fragmentation in the Russian Arctic

The ECORA Expert Task Team (ETT) met in Moscow 5-7 October 2005 and the Steering Committee met on 7-8 October. A joint session was held on 7 October. The main purpose of the meetings was to conduct a critical review and assessment of project implementation, and begin 2006 work planning and budgeting. Important progress was made in 2005 with regard to thematic program of work, including field work in the three model areas, but also delays compared to planned schedule and work plan. There is a need to address complex issues with many stakeholders related to the model areas, and need for focus on an integrated ecosystem approach. The project also entails a complex management structure, and need for improved communications and administrative procedures.

ECORA continues to receive important contributions from the CAFF community, including from Russia as a member of the Steering Committee and in project implementation, RAIPON, USA and Sweden as Western advisers, and from Norway (Finland as alternate) as CAFF members in the Steering Committee.

A “mid-term project review” is planned by GEF in early 2007, and this will be important in relation to continued support and possible changes in project design. Co-funding from CAFF members has been confirmed, but there are some outstanding issues regarding financial and in kind contributions from Russian partners.

ACIA Follow-up, Focal Point, and ASSW

CAFF’s response to ACIA follow-up is primarily through the Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Program (CBMP), and community-based monitoring as part of that in cooperation with the Permanent Participants. CAFF will also work on additional aspects of ACIA follow-up through IPY-endorsed projects. CAFF expects further clarification through the Focal Point process that is ongoing. The CAFF ES made a presentation on behalf of CAFF at ASSW in Potsdam, Germany 26 March. This was an opportunity to build stronger links with IASC projects, and other international research organizations, especially as related to ACIA follow-up and the CBMP. The CAFF Chair and ES continue to participate in Focal Point meetings.

IPY – Status of projects

The CBMP received full IPY endorsement and applications for funding are being prepared for submission in several Arctic countries. CARMA and ITEX – two of the networks under the CBMP have also received IPY endorsement and are proceeding with funding.

AIA’s project titled: *Bering Sea Sub-network of Community-based Environmental Monitoring, Observation and Information Stations* received a full IPY endorsement. CAFF is second proposer on this project.

COMAAR received IPY endorsement. CAFF is second proposer on the COMAAR IPY.

The Netherlands (as observer to CAFF) IPY project titled: *Health of Arctic Bird Populations*. received IPY endorsement as well as CAFF endorsement. This project is especially significant as it relates to the transmission of Avian flu to Europe and the Arctic. They are proceeding now with funding applications in the Netherlands, Norway and Canada.

Greening of the Arctic, an IPY-endorsed project submitted by University of Alaska, Fairbanks, and which also received CAFF endorsement, has been funded. This project is in cooperation with the CAFF Flora Group.

The CAFF-endorsed IPY titled: *Arctic Reindeer Herders’ Vulnerability Network Study (EALÁT)*, submitted by the International Center for Reindeer Husbandry, received full IPY endorsement and is now proceeding with funding.

The CAFF-endorsed IPY project titled: *Community Adaptation and Vulnerability In Arctic Regions*, CAVIAR, submitted by the University of Guelph, Canada also received full IPY endorsement, and is now seeking funding.

Sacred Sites Workshop as follow-up to Sacred Sites Report of 2004

RAIPON has now proposed to hold this Sacred Sites Workshop before the Ministerial meeting in Yamal. This initiative is supported by the Administration of Yamalo-Nenetskiy Autonomous

Okrug and they are putting forth partial funding for this event. RAIPON is still seeking the remaining funds to hold this workshop.

CAFF Expert Groups

Circumpolar Seabird Expert Group - CBird

CBird held its annual meeting 2-5 March 2005 in Scotland. A progress report from this CBird meeting is posted on the CAFF Website and is available upon request. The 2006 meeting was held in St. Petersburg, Russia, 1-4 March. CBird has identified 12 products which they hope will be ready as deliverables for the October Ministerial. The most recent meeting report will be available soon on the CAFF website.

CAFF Flora Group - CFG

CFG is now the official Arctic Plants Specialist Group within the Species Survival Commission of the IUCN. As a first task, CFG has now identified 15 species that hold the threat status of vulnerable or higher. A progress report from the Flora Group is posted on the CAFF Website and is available upon request. CAFF Map No. 2 – Vegetation of Arctic Alaska has been completed and printed. Copies are now available from the CAFF International Secretariat and will be delivered to Ministers in October. A workshop is being planned to begin the work on the circum-Arctic boreal forest map. Funding still needs to be obtained for this workshop. The CFG will meet again in 2007, and the location is still to be determined.

Circumpolar Protected Areas Network - CPAN

CPAN can provide important input to the 2002 Johannesburg (WSSD) target to significantly reduce the loss of biodiversity by 2010 and to key international obligations on protected areas. However, the Management Board of CAFF concluded that CPAN is currently dormant until a CAFF country takes the position of lead country. During the interim, the ES has been serving as Acting Chair of CPAN. However, this term of Acting Chair ends at CAFF XI. The CAFF Management Board will meet on the 5th of June 2006 in the context of the CAFF XI Biennial meeting to decide the future direction for CPAN, and to search for a country lead before moving ahead with CPAN projects.

COOPERATION WITH OTHER WORKING GROUPS

Arctic Council Oil and Gas Assessment

CAFF continues to provide technical and policy review and overall cooperation with AMAP on this assessment.

CAFF-AMAP Cooperation

CAFF-AMAP cooperation continues to progress. The Chair of AMAP and the Deputy Executive Secretary of AMAP attended the CAFF Management Board meeting in Helsinki in February to discuss this formally with CAFF. CAFF and AMAP have agreed to exchange and review each other's documents pertaining to indicators. A proposed CAFF-AMAP monitoring workshop of experts has been agreed to, and is scheduled for 23-24 May in Washington DC. CAFF has identified three pilot projects as possible joint efforts: 1) CBird-STAMP – Seabird Tissue Archival and Monitoring Project which is originally an Alaskan program begun in 1999 which collects seabird eggs and stores them for later analyses of environmental contaminants. Similar projects have been done in Canada, Norway, Sweden and Russia. 2) Polar Bears for which contaminants data and population data have been collected for decades. 3) Arctic Char – one of the CBMP networks with good historical data.

PAME Arctic Marine Shipping Assessment (AMSA)

CAFF sent a representative (from Norway) to the PAME meeting held in Oslo 1-2 March to further the cooperation between CAFF and PAME on the AMSA. CAFF is prepared to continue cooperation with PAME on follow-up on the Arctic Marine Strategic Plan (AMSP), especially concerning large marine ecosystems (LMEs), AMSA and marine sensitive areas.

Arctic Portal Initiative

The ICEPORT management team has been established in Iceland to execute the feasibility study of the Arctic Portal. Three representatives from the Arctic Council are a part of the management team – the Iceland SAO and the executive secretaries for PAME and CAFF. The Executive Secretary for SDWG and the Deputy Executive Secretary for AMAP are part of the broader feasibility study team. A workshop was convened in Akureyri, Iceland 8-9 December 2005 to begin the feasibility study. An update will be given by the Icelandic SAO at the April SAO meeting. Also, the Arctic Portal was submitted as an IPY project and received full IPY endorsement.

COOPERATION WITH INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS AND ORGANIZATIONS

CAFF cooperation with UNEP-WCMC and UNEP/GRID-Arendal

CAFF has continued a close cooperation with UNEP-WCMC and UNEP/GRID-Arendal on development and data management of the CBMP and a web-based portal.

CAFF cooperation with IUCN

The CAFF Flora Group is now the official Arctic Plants Specialist Group within the Species Survival Commission of the IUCN. In addition, the Chair of the CBMP will be at IUCN for one year beginning in June 2006.

CAFF cooperation with the Convention on Biological Diversity

Canada made a presentation on the CBMP at the Global Biodiversity Forum during the CBD COP 8 in Brazil. The CAFF International Secretariat was not able to attend to give a side event, however, there were many members of the CAFF community present at the meeting, representing governments, indigenous peoples' groups and non-governmental organizations. CAFF's contributions have been welcome, and we will continue to follow developments and implementation of the CBD work program on protected areas.

Cooperation with oil and gas biodiversity conservation efforts

The joint biodiversity working group of IPIECA and OGP (the International Petroleum Industry Environmental Conservation Association and Oil and Gas Producers), approached the CAFF Management Board to ask about the possibility of holding an oil and gas biodiversity conservation workshop in the general vicinity of and within the timeframe of the CAFF XI Biennial Meeting. The CAFF Management Board welcomed this initiative and opportunity for dialogue, but underlined that the Oil and Gas workshop is not to be considered or advertised in any way as CAFF sponsored. The Oil and Gas workshop will therefore follow the CAFF XI Biennial at another location, 12-13 June in Tromsø, Norway. The purpose of the Oil and Gas Biodiversity workshop is to bring together oil and gas industry environmental managers and specialists, NGOs, and government authorities to share information and improve understanding of current biodiversity conservation issues and best management practices in the Arctic environment.

MANAGEMENT AND OPERATIONS OF CAFF

CAFF XI and CAFF Management Board Meetings

The first meeting of 2006 was held in Helsinki 13-15 February 2006, and the CAFF XI Biennial meeting is scheduled for 5-9 June 2006 in Ylläsjärvi, Finland. An official invitation has been

circulated. Another management board meeting will be convened in August - the date has not been set.

CAFF Map Redraw to Include the Faroe Islands

Arctic countries have defined and continue to define their own borders for the Arctic. It has now been agreed that the CAFF map should now officially include the Faroe Islands. All new publications issued by CAFF will reflect this new map. Other possible redraws of the CAFF map have also been identified, some of which are under further consideration.

CAFF Financial Situation

The minutes from the Khanty-Mansiysk SAO meeting state: “The SAOs and PPs urged the countries which support CAFF and PAME secretariats, to raise their contribution by 15-20%. The meeting has also asked the countries which are not making their input, to consider the possibility of voluntary contributions.”

This recommendation from the SAOs was discussed at the CAFF Management Board meeting in February 2006, where countries indicated their possibilities to improve CAFF’s financial situation. Iceland, as host, continues to pay over 50% to the operations of the CAFF Secretariat, however, Iceland has agreed to raise their contribution by 15-20%, if other countries would also raise their contributions. Several countries stated that they would contribute to such an increase, while some countries expressed that this would not be possible for 2006.

CAFF Website Upgrade

A project to upgrade the CAFF website, which was supported by the CAFF Management Board in February 2005, has proceeded. The CAFF Board wants CAFF to improve its image to the general public, international organizations and professionals interested in CAFF work. PAME is considering a similar upgrade. Money would be saved if the two websites are done together. The CAFF Website will now be more dynamic, interactive and functional – including an improved calendar of events, on-line registration for meetings, better document access and easier access for updating the website to keep it current. Sections providing professional support for the expert groups of CAFF are being created as well. Part of the upgrade will include an invisible counter to track visits to the website, both by country and organization. This CAFF website upgrade will possibly serve as a pilot for the Arctic Portal.

NEW PROJECTS

2010 Arctic Biodiversity Assessment

CAFF would like approval to complete a 2010 Arctic Biodiversity Assessment, as has been suggested to CAFF by the AC Chair.

The 2010 Arctic Biodiversity Assessment would be completed in cooperation with the Permanent Participants, and would be one of the major deliverables from the Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Program, endorsed by the Arctic Council Ministers as a cornerstone program of CAFF in 2004.

This 2010 Arctic Biodiversity Assessment would be part of CAFF’s follow-up to the biodiversity-related recommendations as set forth in the Arctic Climate Impact Assessment. The interdisciplinary nature of this Assessment would also be useful in relation to other work in the Arctic Council, including in relation to the AMSP and AMSA, and to the work of SDWG and AMAP.