



**INARI 2002-10-09**

## **ACTION AGAINST POLLUTION AND ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION**

## **CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE USE OF ARCTIC BIODIVERSITY**

### **Recommendations for Action Sune Sohlberg Chair of CAFF**

I represent CAFF WG of AC (Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna). CAFF was established to address and advise on the special needs of Arctic ecosystems, species and their habitats in the rapidly developing Arctic region. CAFF's main goal is to ensure that Arctic ecosystems and their biodiversity remain viable and vigorous for generations to come and, therefore, able to sustain human socio-economic and cultural needs. This is a basis for all life.

On behalf of the Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF) Working Group, I am pleased to present the *Arctic Flora and Fauna: Recommendations for Conservation*. They contains a series of thematic goals and recommendations based on the main themes and conclusions of the report, *Arctic Flora and Fauna: Status and Conservation* (CAFF 2001), which covers the full range of key issues relevant to the Arctic today.

The *Recommendations for Conservation* is a collective product of the member countries, Permanent Participants, and observers to the CAFF Working Group, assisted by a small editorial team. I want to express my sincere thanks to all involved.

Notwithstanding the generally good condition of Arctic biodiversity, the 2001 report made it clear that there are challenges which can only be addressed through collaborative actions. The recommendations are strategic guidelines for the Arctic Council, its partners and subsidiary bodies, as well as others active in Arctic conservation.

CAFF focuses on the following five key conservation challenges:

- conservation of Arctic species,

*The overall goal is to maintain vigorous populations of Arctic plant and animal species.*

- conservation of Arctic ecosystems and habitats;

*The overall goal is to maintain and enhance ecosystem integrity in the Arctic and to avoid habitat fragmentation and degradation.*

- assessing and monitoring circumpolar biodiversity;

*The overall goal is to monitor status and trends in Arctic biodiversity as an integral part of assessing the overall state of the Arctic environment.*

- addressing global issues; and

*The overall goal is to understand and minimize the impacts of global changes and activities on Arctic biodiversity.*

- engaging society.

*The overall goal is to promote circumpolar and global awareness of Arctic biodiversity issues.*

**Today CAFF's input will focus on three areas which cover the five key conservation challenges for action. They are:**

1. Conservation of arctic ecosystems, habitats and species, including the global issue of migratory species who frequent the Arctic.
2. Arctic circumpolar biodiversity monitoring.
3. Engaging society and capacity building.

### **1. Conservation of Arctic Ecosystems, Habitats and Species, including the Global Issue of Migratory Species who frequent the Arctic**

In the report, *Arctic Flora and Fauna: Status and Conservation*, conservation means the preservation of wild plants and animals and the natural processes that sustain them while accommodating sustainable use of these resources and of the environment. **It includes the ocean, multiple seas, and adjacent lands.**

The natural and the human components of the Arctic ecosystem are constantly changing and adapting, and that conservation measures must also adapt to these changes. A healthy environment depends on compatible human uses.

For the Arctic, conservation issues must be considered in a global context. Pollution and Climate change is perhaps the most significant challenges to the Arctic as a region. The push for sustainable development is one response to the combined effects of these various forms of change.

For example, protected area coverage is distributed unevenly across countries and biogeographic zones. **The Circumpolar Protected Areas Network (CPAN) is being developed to support and promote protected areas and conserve key habitat throughout the Arctic and to adequately represent all biogeographic zones. The protection of marine areas is one issue of importance.**

The Arctic is home to countless numbers of marine and terrestrial migratory wildlife that over-winter in other parts of the globe. **Conservation of these species, therefore, requires not only local action but co-operation and collaboration with the global community.**

### **CAFF Recommendations:**

**CAFF recommends** that the Arctic States in collaboration with indigenous people and communities, other Arctic residents, and stakeholders:

- Identify threats to Arctic species of common conservation concern, **and implement necessary conservation measures for species of concern that currently lack concerted international actions.**
- Assess the scope and impacts of non-endemic species in the circumpolar Arctic and develop appropriate response strategies.
- Identify important freshwater, marine and terrestrial habitats in the Arctic and ensure their protection through the establishment of protected areas and other appropriate conservation measures.
- Promote an ecosystem approach to resource use and management in the circumpolar Arctic, through, *inter alia*, the development of common guidelines and best practices
- In co-operation with non-Arctic states, strengthen conservation measures for those migratory species that lack adequate protection outside of the Arctic.

### **CAFF Activities:**

- CAFF Recommendations for Conservation (brochure)
- CPAN- Value of Protected Areas (brochure)
- Circumpolar Arctic Vegetation Map (first of CAFF Map series)
- The ECORA project.

## **2. Arctic Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring**

**Given the focus of this discussion on pollution, ozone depletion, and climate change are recognized as widespread threats to the Arctic. CAFF focuses on strengthening biodiversity monitoring as a basis for assessments, for understanding Arctic ecosystems, and for evaluating the need for nature protection.**

### **CAFF Recommendations:**

**CAFF recommends** that the Arctic States in collaboration with indigenous people and communities, other Arctic residents, and stakeholders:

- Promote activities that identify and classify Arctic species and ecological processes to better understand Arctic ecosystems.
- Build on national and international work to implement a program to monitor biodiversity at the circumpolar level that will allow for regional assessments, integration with other environmental monitoring programs, and comparison of the Arctic with other regions of the globe.
- Assess the interaction between global changes and Arctic biodiversity, and develop strategies to address negative impacts.

### **CAFF Activities and Future Efforts, focus on implementing the Arctic circumpolar biodiversity monitoring project**

- **Intent to submit another and broader proposal to EU and other funders in 2003, with Iceland taking the lead role.**
- Co-ordinate the CAFF biodiversity monitoring program with the AMAP contaminants monitoring program and other global monitoring initiatives to support ACIA and other assessments.
- **Work with Permanent Participants and US to scope a process to gather and incorporate traditional knowledge for the use and conservation of arctic plants.**

### 3. Engaging Society and Capacity Building

To engage society in conservation is to promote education and to provide better access to information for the public and decision-makers about the Arctic environment, its biodiversity, and the relationship that humans have with it.

- Publications such as *Arctic Pollution Issues: A State of the Arctic Environment Report* (AMAP 1997) and *Arctic Flora and Fauna: Status and Conservation* (CAFF 2001) have been significant contributions to this effort.
- The *Arctic Bulletin*, published by the WWF-Arctic Programme, provides continuous information on Arctic conservation and protection activities and issues.
- Other newsletters, websites, and specialised reports have been published as a result of Arctic Council conservation activities.
- The Nordic Council has *The Nordic Plan to Protect the Natural Environment and Cultural Heritage of the Arctic. – Greenland, Iceland and Svalbard* which has been coordinated with Arctic Council and CAFF work.

**In addition to this, the active participation of indigenous people and local communities** in conservation work is essential to foster better communication, understanding, and co-ordination between researchers, managers, and resource users. Further development of Arctic protocols for international programs, such as the Globe Learning Program and similar community- and school-based environmental programs, should be encouraged.

#### **CAFF Recommendations:**

**CAFF recommends** that the Arctic States in collaboration with indigenous people and communities, other Arctic residents, and stakeholders:

- Document and incorporate into decision-making the full range of values of Arctic natural resources.
- Promote formal and public education, including outreach to non-Arctic countries, on the values, conservation, and sustainable use of Arctic natural resources.
- Encourage the participation of Arctic indigenous people, local communities, and schools in conserving and monitoring of Arctic species and ecosystems.

## **CAFF Activities:**

### **CAFF collaboration with other Arctic Council working groups and Permanent Participants, and engaging the broader society**

- CAFF cooperates with other Arctic Council working groups to incorporate CAFF's expertise for Arctic species and biodiversity conservation. **Co-ordinate the CAFF biodiversity monitoring program with the AMAP contaminants monitoring program.**
- **CAFF participation in ACIA reports. In cooperation with AMAP, lead in the preparation of the ACIA Policy Document.**
- **ECORA project in Russia. Complete detailed project planning and begin implementation of the main phase of ECORA, subject to confirmation of funds from the Global Environmental Facility**
- Continuing efforts with RAIPON and IPS for Sacred Sites project and **Sacred Sites reports in English and Russian. In future, this includes a circumpolar workshop and technical report on outcomes and recommendations on the project. This project is, in CAFF's viewpoint, an example of capacity building at its best.**