

WORKPLAN 2021-2023

CONSERVATION OF ARCTIC FLORA AND FAUNA

May 2021



ARCTIC COUNCIL



Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna

Acknowledgements

CAFF Designated Agencies:

- Norwegian Environment Agency, Trondheim, Norway
- Environment and Climate Change 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, Garðabær, Iceland
- Ministry for Agriculture, Self Sufficiency, Energy and Environment, Government of Greenland
- Russian Federation Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, 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) – Greenland, Russia, Alaska and Canada
- Russian Indigenous Peoples of the North (RAIPON)
- Saami Council

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CAFF Boundary

The area covered by the the Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF) working group of the Arctic Council. Each Arctic Council country was responsible for defining their Arctic boundary



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CAFFS MANDATE

The Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF) Arctic Council Working Group (WG) mandate is to address the conservation of Arctic biodiversity, and to communicate findings to the governments and residents of the Arctic, helping to promote practices that ensure the sustainability of the Arctic's living resources.

WORKPLAN 2021-2023

The following work plan outlines the projects and activities CAFF plans to undertake for the 2021-2023 Russian Federation's Arctic Council Chairmanship. It may be amended by the CAFF Board according to new opportunities and priorities. CAFF's mandate and associated activities are integral to the success of Russia's Chairmanship priorities.

The Actions for Arctic Biodiversity 2013-21: Implementing the recommendations of the Arctic Biodiversity Assessment (ABA) guides how the Arctic Council addresses biodiversity. A new action plan for the coming years has been delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic related challenges, including delays in international processes informing our work. Key actions in phase 4 of the ABA (2021-2023) include the development of a new plan, as well as completing projects, implementing strategies and plans developed in early phases, evaluating progress and designing follow-up. During the incoming Chairmanship, CAFF

will undertake a prioritization process regarding all activities it plans to conduct.

Focus will continue over ongoing CAFF actions that address:

- Mainstreaming biodiversity;
- Ecosystem services;
- Communications and outreach;
- Adaptation to climate change;
- Coordination of long-term biodiversity monitoring;
- Stressors on biodiversity, e.g., invasive species and pollution;
- Protecting migratory species;
- Indicator development;
- Safeguarding biodiversity under changing conditions;
- Cumulative effects;
- Bringing together different knowledge systems to build evidence-based information to enhance understanding of changes occurring in the arctic to inform decision making across scales;
- Improving knowledge and public awareness; and,
- Contributing to the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Sustainable Development Goals, and the new global biodiversity post 2020 framework [currently under development].

Many projects benefit from in-kind support from Arctic States and PPs. Additional support is requested through grant applications and state contributions. The timeline for each project is completed as projects develop.

ACTIONS FOR ARCTIC BIODIVERSITY: IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE ABA

Lead/co-leads: Components are led by different Arctic States, PPs, WGs and other Arctic Council subsidiary bodies.

Rationale and overall objective: A foundational framework following up from the Kiruna, Iqaluit (2015) and Fairbanks (2017) declarations, this project has the objective of promoting ABA implementation among Arctic States and others. Expected deliverables include an evaluation report on implementation of ABA recommendations and a new Actions for Arctic Biodiversity 2023-2030. Development of the new Actions for Arctic Biodiversity was delayed until 2023 due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. This delay allows more time to develop content and structure, including alignment with the post-2020 UN Global Biodiversity Framework, which is currently under development and has also been delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The current Action plan is extended until 2023 and will continue as the guiding framework for CAFF and the Arctic Council on biodiversity activities..

Main activities:

- Implementation of ABA recommendations including projects and activities;
- Evaluation of the implementation of ABA recommendations towards the end of the Action plan period; and,
- Development of a new Action plan for 2023-30.

Timeline: Ongoing

CONTINUED IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CIRCUMPOLAR BIODIVERSITY MONITORING PROGRAM (CBMP)

Lead/co-leads: Kingdom of Denmark and the United States, with components chaired by Canada, the United States and Sweden

Rationale and overall objective: This is a foundational program implementing CAFF's mandate and ABA recommendations which is working to harmonize and integrate efforts to monitor the Arctic's biodiversity. Expected deliverables include the implementation of the CBMP Strategic Plan for 2021-2025 and the Arctic Coastal/Marine/Freshwater/ Terrestrial Biodiversity Monitoring Plans. This involves for example follow-up on the State of Arctic Freshwater, Terrestrial and, Marine State of the Arctic Biodiversity reports, the development of the Coastal Biodiversity Report as well as the ongoing development of the CBMP suite of headline indicators.

Main activities:

This project will standardize and integrate efforts to monitor, collect and harmonize data and report on the status and condition of Arctic biodiversity, ecosystems and living resources. Key activities include continuing the implementation of the CBMP Strategic plan with a follow-up on the State of the Arctic Freshwater, Marine and Terrestrial reports, and the development of the State of the Arctic's Coastal biodiversity report as well as other CBMP activities.

Timeline: Ongoing



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CONTINUED IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ARCTIC MIGRATORY BIRDS INITIATIVE (AMBI)

Lead/co-leads: Russian Federation

Rationale and overall objective: This project aims to improve the status and secure the long-term sustainability of declining migratory bird populations that breed in the Arctic. Expected deliverables include progress towards, and achievement of, various actions identified in the AMBI workplan. Implementation of the work plan will continue for the next chairmanship period (until 2023).

Main activities: Implementation of the AMBI 2019-2023 work plan

Timeline: 2017-2023

MARINE INVASIVE ALIEN SPECIES IN ARCTIC WATERS (JOINT PAME-CAFF PROJECT)

Lead/co-leads: Kingdom of Denmark, Canada, Norway.
Partner: CAFF.

Rationale and overall objective: Contribute to the implementation of the Arctic Invasive Alien Species Strategy and Action Plan (ARIAS 2017) by improving the knowledge base for CAFF and PAME on specific actions in ARIAS that focus on the risk of potential transfer of alien invasive species by ships via ballast water (BW) and biofouling (BF) into and within Arctic waters.

Main activities: The project will compile a list of known non-indigenous species, including their current distributions, in Arctic waters. Presently, most Arctic States have data and knowledge that can be included directly in the project, which will also include a list of data sources. Furthermore, the project will review methods and tools used for risk assessment of invasive species, vectors and pathways, and identify those best suited for the project's risk assessments, as well as an assessment of the probability of nonindigenous species to be transferred by ships into Arctic waters, and between different ecoregions in the Arctic, presently and in the year 2100.

Timeline: 2021-2023

MAINSTREAMING ARCTIC BIODIVERSITY

Lead/co-leads: Sweden and the United States

Rationale and overall objective: This project seeks to incorporate biodiversity objectives and provisions into all Arctic Council work and encourage the same for ongoing and future international standards, agreements, plans, operations and/or other tools specific to development in the Arctic. This includes, but is not restricted to, oil and gas development, shipping, fishing, tourism, and mining.

Main activities: The project will continue engagement with partners and follow-up on phase 1 and 2.

Timeline: 2019-2023

CIRCUMPOLAR SEABIRD EXPERT GROUP (CBIRD)

Lead/co-leads: Finland with different activities led by individual countries

Rationale and overall objective: This expert group coordinates the conservation of Arctic seabirds and enhances the exchange of information on factors affecting status and trends in Arctic seabirds.

Main activities: Activities of CBird include the implementation of seabird conservation strategies, several items on the AMBI Circumpolar flyway workplan and the Circumpolar Seabird Monitoring Plan. Other activities include data compilation, analysis, and coordination. Expected deliverables: assessments, technical reports, strategies, data, and meetings.

Timeline: Ongoing

INSPIRING ARCTIC VOICES THROUGH YOUTH: ENGAGING YOUTH IN ARCTIC BIODIVERSITY

Lead/co-leads: United States, World Wildlife Fund Arctic Program (WWF-Arctic).

Rationale and overall objective: The project seeks to advance youth involvement, capacity-building and leadership in public outreach and education about the Arctic. Its main objective is to create opportunities for dialogue amongst youth and with appropriate organizations around the world to share their perspectives.

Main activities: Continue to work towards organizing the 2nd Arctic Youth Summit in 2022, parallel to the third Arctic Biodiversity Congress and continue the implementation of the Youth Exchange Program, including through virtual exchanges. Expected deliverables include approval of a CAFF International Arctic Youth Engagement Strategy. This Strategy will be developed in close coordination and alignment with other Arctic Council youth engagement efforts.

Timeline: Ongoing

SCOPING FOR RESILIENCE AND MANAGEMENT OF ARCTIC WETLANDS

Lead/co-leads: Sweden

Rationale and overall objective: This project aims to follow-up on outcomes from Phase 3 of the Scoping for Resilience and Management of Arctic Wetlands.

Main activities: Develop a plan to follow-up on the policy recommendations from Phase 3.

Timeline: 2017-2023

FOLLOW-UP ON THE ARCTIC COUNCIL CROSS-CUTTING INITIATIVES

Lead/co-leads: CAFF Chair



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Rationale and overall objective: To continue work on cross-cutting activities between the Arctic Council's WGs, projects, expert groups, Task Forces and the Arctic Council Secretariat (ACS).

Main activities:

- Follow-up on recommendations of the Ecosystem Based Management expert group (EBM EG);
- Follow-up on the outcomes of the AMAP-CAFF scoping process to explore potential for climate change impact analyses in marine, terrestrial and freshwater ecosystems;
- Underwater noise;
- Climate change factsheets;
- Supporting implementation of the Arctic Marine Strategic Plan (AMSP);
- Assist in the implementation of the framework for a circumpolar Arctic network of Marine Protected Areas;
- Follow-up on the Arctic Council's Resilience framework; and
- Coordination of biodiversity input.

Expected deliverables include continued contributions to support cross-cutting activities.

Timeline: 2017-2023

UNDERSTANDING CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACTS ON ARCTIC ECOSYSTEMS AND ASSOCIATED CLIMATE FEEDBACKS (JOINT CAFF- AMAP PROJECT)

Lead/co-leads: TBD

Rationale and overall objective: Climate change is altering Arctic ecosystems and biodiversity. These changes feed back to the climate system, with a potential to dampen or accelerate local to regional changes in climate and greenhouse gas emissions. The resulting impacts on ecosystem services, livelihoods and well-being will have far-reaching consequences for Arctic communities and beyond. The objective of this activity is to assess how climate change affects Arctic ecosystems and climate feedbacks to inform strategies for adaptation and resiliency. The work will address how:

- Climate change impacts fundamental ecosystem properties and trigger ecosystem perturbations. Emphasis will be on how climate change could erode resilience, making Arctic ecosystems more prone to abrupt changes and tipping points, as well as changes over longer time periods. Assessments will encompass marine, coastal, freshwater, and terrestrial ecosystems;
- The capability of ecosystems to regulate climate, which are impacted by climate induced changes. This entails feedbacks related to a range of mechanisms, including storage and release of carbon, hydrological fluxes, and surface albedo; and,
- Climate-induced changes impact Indigenous Peoples, local communities and livelihoods, and how ecosystem-based adaptations could reduce the vulnerability of Indigenous Peoples and local communities to impacts.

PPs will be engaged in developing the project, identifying questions to be answered and how Indigenous Peoples and IK will be included.

Main activities: •

- Step 1 Preparatory Activities (2021): Co-design and prepare a detailed plan describing the topics, relevance, available datasets, methods, case studies and assessment products;
- Step 2 Implementation (2021-2023): Products might include reports, scientific articles, special journal issues, policy-summaries, and communication products; and,
- Step 3 Follow-up (2023-2025): Joint AMAP/CAFF science assessment and Summary for Policy Makers.

Timeline: 2017-2023

THE ARCTIC BIODIVERSITY DATA SERVICE (ABDS) DEVELOPMENT INCLUDING COOPERATION ON THE ARCTIC SPATIAL DATA INFRASTRUCTURE (SDI)

Lead/co-leads: CAFF Secretariat

Rationale and overall objective: : This project facilitates access, integration, analysis and display of biodiversity information for scientists, practitioners, managers, policy makers. It will ensure that biodiversity data generated by the Arctic Council are organized to guarantee a legacy and be available to inform global and regional assessments. A new initiative, the Arctic Biodiversity Dashboard, will focus on improving access to biodiversity information through the development of an interactive component to the ABDS that will harness and visualizes datasets to

streamline regional target tracking and reporting, e.g., regarding global biodiversity targets.

Main activities: The project involves data rescue, development, standardization, integration, and display of biodiversity information. Expected deliverables include continued development of the ABDS, addition of data and support to CAFF activities.

Timeline: 2017-2023

THE ARCTIC WILDLAND FIRE ECOLOGY MAPPING AND MONITORING PROJECT (ARCTICFIRE)

Lead/co-leads: Gwich'in Council International (GCI)

Rationale and overall objective: The project seeks to improve the understanding of fire ecology and impacts in Arctic States and to communities represented by the PPs, and to reduce the threat of catastrophic wildland fire.

Main activities: The project will seek to promote the conservation and sustainable use of Arctic flora and fauna by mapping the extent and distribution of fires across the Arctic, collecting guidelines and best practices for Arctic fire ecology and forest management to manage impacts on Arctic ecosystems, air quality, and climate change, including from PPs, and providing an annual digital Arctic Fire Monitoring compilation that includes relevant Arctic fire ecology and fire-related IK research.

Timeline: 2019-2023



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THE 3RD ARCTIC BIODIVERSITY CONGRESS

Lead/co-leads: Arctic States and PPs - CAFF Chair, and others (tbc); WG partners: all WGs. Other partners: Observers – all Observer States and organizations invited. Others: public, scientific community, IK holders, CAFF partners and expert organizations as relevant.

Rationale and overall objective: The project seeks to promote the conservation and sustainable use of Arctic biodiversity focusing on the results of the CBMP “State of the Arctic biodiversity” reports, and progress on implementation of ABA recommendations. It is considering to host a second youth congress in conjunction with the Arctic Biodiversity Congress.

Main activities: The project will convene and report on the results of the 3rd Arctic Biodiversity Congress.

Timeline: 2021-2023

OTHER EFFECTIVE AREA-BASED CONSERVATION MEASURES (OECM) AREAS IN THE ARCTIC MARINE ENVIRONMENT (JOINT PAME-CAFF PROJECT)

Lead/co-leads: Kingdom of Denmark, Canada, USA.

Rationale and overall objective: This project will provide an overview of the current range and understanding of international and national criteria

used for identification of OECMs in the Arctic, this would include potential case studies on the approach Arctic States have applied to identify OECM's in their national waters, and how those are contributing to broader marine conservation objectives. In addition, it would facilitate an exchange of information among Arctic States on the range of information and application of OECMs, and potentially contribute to updates of the Framework for a Pan-Arctic Network of MPAs. Include updated references and information on OECMs, consistent with what will be developed as part of this project into the updated PAME/CAFF “Indicator Report” (to be re-named “Status and Trends for Arctic Conservation Measures”).

Main activities: The project will be implemented by CAFF/PAME through a joint steering to be established to guide the work.:

- Project co-leads will gather existing sources on OECM criteria and Arctic State's approaches to identifying OECMs, and relevant case studies. Provide relevant updated information on OECM's to the PAME/CAFF Indicator report revision (spring 2021);
- A report will be developed, based on the results gathered, which would include an overview of OECM criteria and application in the Arctic context, and Arctic relevant case studies; and,
- Convene a workshop or session at the 2022 IMPAC V Congress in Vancouver (potentially in partnership with the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Secretariat/others) to bring together Arctic marine conservation practitioners and managers to share information on the application of OECMs in the Arctic.

Timeline: 2019-2023

COMMUNITY OBSERVATION NETWORK FOR ADAPTION & SECURITY (CONAS)

Lead/co-leads: Aleut International Association

Rationale and overall objective: The project seeks to utilize human observers to document environmental changes, significant to understanding pan-arctic processes.

Main activities:

- **Community engagement:** building rapport and trusting relationships with each community involved, educating about free and informed consent and data sovereignty;
- **Capacity building:** on-boarding new communities wanting to utilize the program, allowing time for communities to meet amongst themselves to define the project and results they want to see, establishing agreements with Tribal and community governments; and,
- **Data collection:** intended to be used for generating

map and data products to inform decision making for communities participating in the program.

Timeline: 2021-2023

SALMON PEOPLES OF ARCTIC RIVERS

Lead/co-leads: AAC, Saami Council, RAIPON), AIA

Rationale and overall objective: IK holders, scientists and resource agencies are designing an assessment of freshwater river systems based on Ik. The design of this holistic assessment will focus on “Salmon peoples” as a measure of ecosystem health and outline future data needs that could contribute to the resilience and adaptation of these peoples and the salmon populations upon which they depend.

Main activities: Complete phase 1, initiate phase 2.

Timeline: 2019-2023



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DEVELOP ADDITIONAL INFORMATION BRIEFS ON THE ARCTIC MARINE ENVIRONMENT UNDER CHANGE

Lead/co-leads: : TBD. Partner: PAME

Rationale and overall objective: Continue to develop Information Briefs (IBs) on the Arctic marine environment under change with the aim to leverage and synthesize information from the Arctic Council's work on this topic, communicate to decision makers and the public, and contribute to cross-cutting WG cooperation on common topics.

Main activities: : Establish a joint PAME/CAFF scoping team to begin scoping possible content and areas of focus for an IB on a topic or topics related to joint PAME/CAFF activities under the broad theme of biodiversity, including consideration of what would be feasible and most valuable to present during this biennium. This may require a virtual workshop. Once the scope is clear, project co-leads will work with a drafting team inclusive of interested Arctic States, PPs, and relevant Observers to develop drafts of the IB for regular review by PAME and CAFF. Co-leads will aim for a completed product in time for submission to the SAOs for consideration for the 2023 Ministerial.

Timeline: 2019-2023

ACTIONS FOR ARCTIC BIODIVERSITY 2023-2030: IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE ABA

Lead/co-leads: : Arctic States and PPs - Components are led by different Arctic States, PPs, WGs and other Arctic Council subsidiary bodies. WG partners: Components are led by different WGs. Other partners: Observers – observers are involved in projects related to ABA implementation.

Rationale and overall objective: : At the 2015 Arctic Council Ministerial meeting in Iqaluit, Canada, CAFF presented the Actions for Arctic Biodiversity 2013-2021. This Actions for Biodiversity guides how the Arctic Council addresses biodiversity issues and describes actions to be undertaken in response to the findings of the ABA. At the Reykjavik Ministerial in 2021, a new Actions for Biodiversity was planned to be presented along with a final report on the implementation of the Actions for Arctic Biodiversity 2013-2021. However, development of the new Actions for Biodiversity has been delayed due to COVID-19 related challenges, including delays in international processes informing this process i.e., the Post2020 Global Biodiversity Framework. In response, the lifespan of the current Actions for Biodiversity was extended until 2023 and over 2021-2023 a new Actions for Biodiversity will be developed for delivery to the 2023 Arctic Council Ministerial meeting in the Russian Federation.

Main activities: This project will develop an Action Plan 2023-2030.

Timeline: 2019-2023



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