

Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna

Arctic Council Working Group

Report to Senior Arctic Officials

Fairbanks, April 26-28, 2000

SECTION I: PROGRESS

1.1. Introduction

The first Arctic Council meeting in Iqaluit identified five priority tasks for CAFF:

1. to prepare an overview report on status and trends in changes to Arctic ecosystems, habitats and species;
2. to assess, in collaboration with AMAP, the impacts of climate change on Arctic ecosystems;
3. to identify elements of a program to monitor circumpolar biodiversity;
4. to continue developing and co-ordinating the implementation of the Circumpolar Protected Areas Network (CPAN) with focus on the marine environment;
5. to continue co-ordinating implementation of the Murre and Eider conservation strategies and action plans;

2. CAFF Overview Report "Arctic Conservation Issues"

The basic text, except "Conclusions and Recommendations", has been drafted and is available at "<http://ginkgo.pc.helsinki.fi/caff/>". Work on text boxes and inserts, submitted by Arctic experts, is progressing well.

A detailed list and status of graphics (by themes and chapters) is available at the same address. The graphical work will be further developed shortly.

The Editorial Team has identified experts to review the existing draft, chapter by chapter, with deadline May 1, 2000. The report will then be sent out for a country review (June to August 1). An advanced draft will be prepared for final revisions at CAFF VIII (Trondheim, September 6-8), prior to submission to the Arctic Council Meeting in October.

The Conclusions and main Recommendations of the Overview Report are currently being drafted. CAFF will report on topics and direction of recommendations at the SAO meeting. The CAFF Heads of Delegation meeting in Copenhagen, May 8-9, will finalise a draft for circulation to the SAOs in late-May, 2000.

1.3 Climate Impacts

The US hosted an ACIA scoping workshop in Washington DC, February 28 to March 1. The workshop was attended by around 30 Arctic climate impacts experts, in addition to the Assessment Steering Committee. Based on discussions at the workshop, a revised ACIA Implementation Plan has been prepared and submitted to the SAOs.

CAFF is launching several initiatives relevant for research on and monitoring of climate change impacts (see under 1.4).

1.4 Biodiversity Monitoring Program

A CAFF/AMAP Workshop on a Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Network was held in Reykjavik, Iceland, February 7-9, 2000. The workshop was hosted by the Icelandic Institute of Natural History and the CAFF Secretariat, and cosponsored by the AMAP Secretariat and Icelandic Research Council. A summary report of the workshop has been prepared and submitted to the SAO's. The workshop decided to launch (voluntary) expert monitoring networks on important biota elements, for which there is already national and regional interest (reindeer/caribou; Arctic plants -ITEX, waders, Arctic char, ringed seal and seabirds). The initial mandate of the networks is to explore the interest and opportunities for circumpolar collaboration within the broader context of a Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Network and to report on progress at CAFF VIII.

1.5 Circumpolar protected areas network (CPAN)

A CPAN Standing Committee, led by the US, is preparing recommendations for CAFF VIII on ways to further advance national implementation of CPAN.

A Circumpolar Marine Workshop, cosponsored by IUCN, CAFF and PAME was held in Montreal, November 28 to December 2, 1999. The workshop gathered around 70 representatives from the circumpolar countries and relevant international organizations. A workshop report has been circulated to the SAOs and will be reported on by IUCN at the Fairbanks meeting. The workshop developed recommendations, addressing six broad themes of: Communication and Participation, Funding and Capacity Building, Tools and Mechanisms for Marine Management, Marine Protection, Integrated Marine Management, and Marine Resource Management. These recommendations will be considered by CAFF and forwarded, as appropriate, to the SAOs.

1.5. Seabirds and Migratory Birds.

The CAFF Circumpolar Seabird Working Group (CSWG) met in Ottawa, December 3-5, 1999. National implementation of the International Murre Conservation Strategy and Action Plan and the Circumpolar Eider Conservation Strategy and Action Plan is progressing well. A report on Harvest of Seabirds has been published as CAFF Technical Report No. 5. The US/CSWG has prepared an outreach brochure on proper conduct of tourists at Arctic seabird colonies. Two relevant workshops are in the pipeline:

- CAFF Workshop on Incidental Take (Bycatch) of Seabirds in Fishing Gear in the Arctic, cosponsored by Canada and the US, to take place in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, April 26-28, 2000;

- CAFF Workshop on Arctic Migratory Birds, hosted by the Netherlands in Wageningen, May 15-17, 2000.

1.6. New initiatives:

1.6.1 Russia/CAFF/UNEP-GEF project

Together with the State Committee for Environmental Protection in Russia and UNEP-GRID-Arendal, CAFF is developing a full Global Environmental Facility (GEF) Project on "Integrated Ecosystem Approach to Conserve Biodiversity and Minimise Habitat Fragmentation in the Russian Arctic". The Project will enhance Russia's implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and support progress on CAFF objectives in the Russian Arctic. A PDF-A consultation phase, supported by UNEP and the Norwegian Government, has been successfully completed. A request for \$350 000 for a PDF-B preparatory phase was submitted to GEF in early March. Arctic States and Observers (the Netherlands and WWF-Arctic) are requested to provide \$450 000 (cash and *in kind*) in co-financing for the PDF-B phase, which (if funded) will run for 15 months until fall 2001. CAFF will report on GEF's response and on further plans at the SAO meeting.

The goal of the full Project, which will be running for 5 years, is to safeguard large tracts of undisturbed ecosystems and ensure conservation and sustainable use of globally significant biodiversity in the Russian Arctic. The project intends to accomplish this through the development and implementation of integrated ecosystem based management strategies in selected regions, which can serve as models for the remaining Russian and circumpolar Arctic region. The project will encourage and establish mechanisms for consultation and participation of indigenous peoples, local communities and regional and federal authorities.

1.6.2 Sacred Sites of Indigenous Peoples

The Danish Environmental Protection Agency has decided to fund a RAIPON led CAFF project, "Sacred Sites and Sanctuaries: Protection of the Heritage of Indigenous Peoples in Arctic Russia". The objective is to enhance protection and management of such sites through linkage to biodiversity conservation efforts under CAFF/CPAN. RAIPON in collaboration with the CAFF Secretariat, RF State Committee for Environmental Protection, and IPS is currently finalising a detailed project description and work plan.

1.7. Overview of upcoming CAFF meetings and workshops:

- CAFF Editorial Team meeting in Cambridge April 1-2, 2000;
- CAFF Bycatch Workshop, Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, April 26-28, 2000;
 - CAFF Heads of Delegation meeting, Copenhagen, May 8-9, 2000;
 - CAFF Migratory Bird Workshop, May 15-17, 2000;
 - CAFF Working Group (CAFF VIII) in Trondheim, September 6-8, 2000.

SECTION II: Planned Deliverables to Ministers

CAFF aims to deliver the following products to the Ministerial meeting in October

2000:

- A. An advanced draft of the CAFF Overview Report: "*Arctic Conservation Issues*" with recommendations;
- B. Status report on the Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Network;
- C. Status report on ACIA (together with AMAP and IASC);
- D. Status report on the GEF Project in Arctic Russia; "*Integrated Ecosystem Approach to Conserve Biodiversity and Minimise Habitat Fragmentation in the Russian Arctic*";
- E. Technical reports and Workshop reports;
- F. Status report on CAFF strategies and action plans.

SECTION III: Requests to SAO's

CAFF requests that the SAOs:

- Comment and endorse, as appropriate, current and planned CAFF activities, cf. Section I above;
- Consider and facilitate co-financing of the PDF-B and main phases of the CAFF/GEF Project in Arctic Russia, cf. 1.6.2 above.
- Comment and endorse as appropriate the planned CAFF deliverables to Ministers at the Second Arctic Council Meeting, cf. Section II above.