



CONSERVATION OF ARCTIC FLORA AND FAUNA

CAFF



**2004-2006
Progress Report**

**Presented to the Senior Arctic Officials
And Arctic Council Ministers
Salekhard, Russian Federation
24-26 October 2006**



CAFF successfully completed its 2004-2006 Work Plan within available resources, while maintaining a strong focus in developing international partnerships and working with the other Working Groups within the Arctic Council.

Summary of CAFF Work Plan 2004-2006, CBMP and Expert Groups

Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Program (CBMP)

The CBMP was officially launched September 2005 in Cambridge with hosting by UNEP-WCMC. Canada took the lead on this program, after 5 years of Iceland's successful lead. An international secretariat has been established in White Horse, Canada. An international steering committee comprised of 6 task teams (data management, indicators, funding, community-based monitoring, remote sensing, and outreach and assessment) work together to provide leadership to the CBMP. The CBMP is being built up through a series of currently existing networks, such as wild and domestic reindeer herders associations, international flora and vegetation networks, shorebirds and seabirds. More networks are anticipated such as the Polar Bear specialist group of IUCN, marine mammal networks, the brown bear network of the Northern Forum and others. A suite of indicators is being developed to report on the status and trends of Arctic biodiversity in line with indicators used for other international conventions and agreements. Where applicable, these indicators are being coordinated with indicators used by AMAP and the Convention on Biological Diversity. A data management strategy is also in progress by UNEP-WCMC. A detailed progress report with planned actions, is being prepared for the 2006 Arctic Council Ministerial Meeting.

In accordance with the mandate set forth in the 2004 SAO report to Ministers and the Ministerial Declaration, the Indigenous People's Secretariat and Permanent Participants have been involved in this program since its launch, and a main component of the CBMP is community-based monitoring. Results from the CBMP directly connect with efforts toward sustainable development in the Arctic. The findings will be presented in a form tailored to address the needs of the Indigenous People, and assist policy makers on management of the Arctic's living resources. Products envisioned include an interactive web-based data portal, regular newsletters and annual reports, coordinated data bases, and the 2010 Arctic Biodiversity Assessment for which Ministerial endorsement is being sought at the 2006 Ministerial.

CAFF Flora Expert Group (CFG)

The draft checklist of Panarctic Lichens has now been placed on the upgraded CAFF website. Bryophytes are soon to follow and this database will also be placed on the upgraded website. Mosses will be completed by March 2007.

The Aleut International Association's project on "*Traditional Use and Conservation of Plants from the Aleutian, Pribilof and Commander Islands*" has been published in printed form, on CD-ROM and is available on the upgraded CAFF website in searchable format.

The proceedings of the Second International Workshop on Circumpolar Vegetation Classification and Mapping has been published.

The CAFF Flora Expert Group is now designated as the Arctic Plant Specialist Group of the IUCN Species Survival Commission. One of the first duties was to develop a list of species whose threat was "Vulnerable" or higher. A list of 15 species has been developed, published, and posted on the CAFF website.

CAFF Map No. 1 – *Circumpolar Arctic Vegetation Map*, and CAFF Map No. 2 - *Vegetation of Arctic Alaska* have now been published. The circumpolar boreal forest mapping project endorsed by the AC Ministers in 2004 is proceeding with applications for funding, and a workshop is being planned for Spring 2007 in Helsinki.

CAFF Seabird Expert Group (CBird)

Countries have continued to implement the “*Circumpolar Eider Conservation Strategy and Action Plan*”. CBird has now completed a “*Common Eider Colony Poster*” of the circumpolar region for all four eider species and this is a deliverable for the 2006 Ministerial. Countries have also continued to implement the “*International Murre Conservation Strategy*” and related national implementation plans, and reported progress at the CBird XII meeting.

The *Ivory Gull Conservation Strategy* has been completed and published. This is a deliverable for the 2006 Ministerial. Canada and Norway lead this project.

A paper on Murres and climate change was completed and submitted to the journal *Global Change Biology*. US and Norway had the lead on this paper.

The 2006 CBird XII meeting was held in St. Petersburg, Russia, 1-4 March 2006. The meeting report is available on the CAFF website, as are numerous other CBird documents. Soon, with the upgraded CAFF website, the datasets on circum-Arctic bird distributions will be accessible in integrated mapping format on the website. Norway proposed using existing software that is used for the Seabird Colony Database of the Barents Sea region, ARC IMS, for putting the Circumpolar Murre Colony Maps on the web.

Some projects not completed during the 2004-2006 period are now listed on the 2006-2008 Work Plan, such as the status of gillnet by-catch; an updated harvest report; and a Technical Report on the status and progress of the Eider Conservation Strategy. An inventory of all data on Black-legged kittiwakes in the Arctic was completed and a summary of general trends showed that kittiwakes are declining throughout the Arctic. CBird will continue to examine the data more carefully and discuss ideas for a publication on the status and trends of kittiwakes.

Circumpolar Protected Areas Network (CPAN)

Although Ministers endorsed the continued efforts of CPAN in the 2004 Declaration, CAFF was unsuccessful in identifying a country lead for the 2004-2006 inter-ministerial period, so no products were produced from CPAN during this time. However, in cooperation with UNEP GA and WWF, CAFF/CPAN was part of the successful report *Vital Arctic Graphics* while the Executive Secretary served as Acting Chair. CPAN will remain dormant for the 2006-2008 inter-ministerial period until a country lead can be identified. There is much work to be done in assessing the effectiveness of the currently designated protected areas of the Arctic. There is no compiled circum-Arctic information on whether these protected areas are actually protecting threatened or endangered species or habitats. This information will be necessary as part of the conclusions of the 2010 Arctic Biodiversity Assessment.

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

ECORA is a Global Environment Facility (GEF) sponsored project initiated by CAFF and the Russian Federation that uses an integrated ecosystem management approach to conserve

biodiversity and minimize habitat fragmentation in three selected model areas in the Russian Arctic.

Integrated ecosystem management is an approach to addressing both conservation and sustainable development, where government authorities, indigenous peoples, industry representatives, and environmental organizations are working together to assess problems and find solutions.

Three Model Areas have been selected in the Russian Arctic to test the implementation of such an approach, namely Kolguev Island, Kolyma River Basin, and Beringovsky, and Model Area Coordinators and Western Advisors are in place for all three model areas.

The first year of field work was undertaken in 2005, and activities included habitat assessments, harvest studies, bird surveys, and surveys on traditional nature use. The 2006 field season is progressing according to schedule and all results will be reviewed at the next meeting of the Expert Task Team in November 2006.

Good progress is being made on other aspects of the project, including the development of training programs in environmental policy and management. Significant work has been undertaken on raising public awareness at the local level via print and electronic media.

Communications at all levels of the project continue to be a challenge for the project but efforts are being made to address this. Extra support for translation is being sought to ensure good involvement from all project participants. Other logistical issues include availability of local experts in the regions, and cost increases particularly related to travel and salaries.

ECORA continues to receive important contributions from the CAFF community. 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 is directly engaged in project implementation.

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.

ACIA Follow-up and the Focal Point

CAFF's response to ACIA follow-up is detailed in the Focal Point Report to Ministers.

IPY – Status of projects

The CBMP received full IPY endorsement and applications for funding were 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. This project is now on the 2006-2008 Work Plan.

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 co-leads University of Guelph and CICERO, also received full IPY endorsement, and is now seeking funding.

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

RAIPON received the offer from the government of Yamal-Nenets Autonomous Okrug to defer the Sacred Sites Workshop at Salekhard, to April 2007. This proposal is in light of the complex preparations for the Ministerial meeting 2006. Yamal is still ready to partially finance this workshop and RAIPON will continue collaboration with the Yamal government on preparations.

Cooperation with other Working Groups

Arctic Council Oil and Gas Assessment

CAFF provided technical and policy review and overall cooperation with AMAP on this assessment.

CAFF-AMAP Cooperation

A joint CAFF-AMAP monitoring workshop of experts has been agreed to by both working groups, and an invitation to identify experts has been recently circulated. Once the experts have been identified, a date will be set for this workshop. However, it is not possible that this workshop will take place ahead of the 2006 Ministerial, so the results will be reported at the subsequent SAO meeting.

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), and marine sensitive areas.

Arctic Portal Initiative

The ICEPORT management team was established in Iceland to execute the pilot phase 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. The Arctic Portal was submitted as an IPY project and received full IPY endorsement. The CAFF upgraded website is part of the pilot phase of the Arctic Portal.

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.

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), held an oil and gas biodiversity conservation workshop with CAFF following the CAFF XI Biennial Meeting. The purpose of the Oil and Gas Biodiversity workshop was to bring together oil and gas industry environmental managers and specialists, NGOs, and government authorities with CAFF members, to share information and improve understanding of current biodiversity conservation issues and best management practices in the Arctic environment. This workshop was considered a huge success with many fruitful opportunities to emerge from it in the future.

Management and Operations of CAFF

CAFF XI and New Chairmanship of CAFF

The CAFF XI Biennial meeting was held 5-9 June 2006 in Ylläsjärvi, Finland. As of the writing of this report, the chairmanship of CAFF for 2006-2008 had not yet been decided. A decision will be verbally reported at the 2006 Ministerial.

CAFF Map Redraw to Include the Faroe Islands and Commander 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; and the Commander Islands as part of the Aleutian chain of islands. All new publications issued by CAFF will reflect these two new changes.

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." Several countries have now agreed to this increase.

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 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.

New Projects

2010 Arctic Biodiversity Assessment - *Refer to Annex I for details regarding the budget for this Assessment.*

CAFF would like Ministerial endorsement to proceed with a 2010 Arctic Biodiversity Assessment. 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.

Recommendations to SAOs and Arctic Council Ministers

- Endorse the 2010 Arctic Biodiversity Assessment as a primary deliverable of the Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Program, in support of international conventions and agreements to globally protect biodiversity.
- Support the continued development of mapping Arctic flora and vegetation using remote sensing and other monitoring techniques to establish baseline data on the effects of climate change and human impacts to Arctic ecosystems.

List of Deliverables to Ministers

CAFF General (3)

- CAFF 2006-2008 Work Plan
- CAFF 2004-2006 Progress Report to SAOs and Ministers
- Upgrade to the CAFF Website/Pilot of the Arctic Portal

CBMP (3)

- 2006 Annual Report
- World Reindeer Husbandry Network
- Human-Wild Rangifers Network

Flora Expert Group (5)

- Lichens Checklist is now posted on the CAFF upgraded website in searchable format.
- Traditional Use and Conservation of Plants from the Aleutian, Pribilof, and Commander Islands by 2006, lead by Aleut International Association is now published for the 2006 Arctic Council Ministerial.
- Second International Workshop on Circumpolar Vegetation Classification and Mapping has been published.
- The CAFF Flora Expert Group has now been designated the Arctic Plant Specialist Group of the IUCN Species Survival Network. A list of 15 species has now been developed whose threat is Vulnerable or higher. This list has been published for the 2006 Arctic Council Ministerial and is posted on the upgraded CAFF website.
- CAFF Map No. 2 – Vegetation of Arctic Alaska has now been published.

Seabird Expert Group (3)

- Peer-reviewed publication "*Fluctuations in circumpolar seabird populations linked to climate oscillations*".
- Publication of the "International Ivory Gull Conservation Strategy"
- Common Eider Colony Poster for all four eider species

ANNEX I:

Proposal for 2010 Arctic Biodiversity Assessment
(prepared by CAFF, UNEP–WCMC and UNEP/GRID-Arendal)

Purpose

The 2010 Arctic Biodiversity Assessment is intended to provide a scientific foundation for biodiversity policy and priority setting in Arctic countries. Although the assessment will be technical in nature the assessment process is expected to create a momentum and market for the development of information-based policy options, Arctic research, public education tools and outreach products. It will be of particular importance to both indigenous and non-indigenous people living in the Arctic, as it will underpin future decision-making in the Arctic region relating to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystem services.

The 2010 Arctic Biodiversity Assessment will facilitate national reporting for Multi-lateral Environmental Agreements (i.e. CBD, CITES, Migratory Species Convention, Ramsar Convention on Wetlands) and regional processes (i.e. the Nordic Council of Ministers, the North American Commission on Environmental Cooperation, Pan-European Biodiversity and Landscape Strategy, Barents Euro-Arctic Council). It will also help to identify and enhance linkages and synergies among a wide-range of regional processes in the Arctic.

Rapid changes to biodiversity as a result of climate change (ACIA report) coupled with recent and projected increases in industrial development in the Arctic create a pressing need for an assessment of current status and trends and establishing baseline information against which changes can be tracked and the success of policy initiatives can be measured.

Leadership

Major Arctic Council projects such as this do not proceed without a country champion. Finland has generously agreed to serve as co-lead of the 2010 Biodiversity Assessment, on condition that another one to two countries take on co-leadership. To date no other country has stepped forward.

Mandate

Calls for an Arctic Biodiversity Assessment have come from many quarters over the past few years, including the former Arctic Council Chair, Vitaly Churkin and the Senior Arctic Officials (April 2006).

Budget Summary (details in Appendix 1)

Budget would be approximately €1.26 Million (\$US 1.62 Million over 3 years)

- € 420,000 (\$US 539,000)/year for 3 years
- € 60,000 (\$US 77,000)/year/country if the 7 countries currently contributing to the International Secretariat contribute equally
- € 52,500 (\$US 62,300) /year/country if the 9 AC member countries contribute equally

Opportunities

An upcoming global focus on biodiversity, generated by the 2010 Biodiversity Target of the CBD and World Summit on Sustainable Development, “to significantly reduce the rate of biodiversity

loss" coupled with a renewal of polar research, supported through International Polar Year projects, provide a unique opportunity to highlight the importance of Arctic biodiversity and ecosystem services to the world.

Recent global assessments, such as the CBD's Global Biodiversity Outlook, the UN Millennium Ecosystem Assessment and the draft of the upcoming UN Global Environment Outlook 4 have to varying degrees reported on some aspects of Arctic biodiversity. However, these reports provide a relatively light treatment of the Arctic in comparison to the megadiverse tropical countries. The 2010 Arctic Biodiversity Assessment will provide an opportunity to inform people outside the Arctic on the importance of Arctic biodiversity, for example as breeding grounds for migratory species and as early warning signals to illustrate the impacts of climate change on the biodiversity and ecosystem services on which life depends.

Support

UNEP-WCMC and UNEP/GRID-Arendal are prepared, on a cost recovery basis, to provide coordination and technical expertise for implementing the assessment. Both of these agencies have extensive experience in biodiversity and polar assessments, including stakeholder engagement, data analyses and syntheses and technical compilation and dissemination, including website production and maintenance. UNEP has provided some seed funding (\$10K). Although there are pros and cons to contracting out to UNEP/WCMC and GRID/Arendal, the costs would be approximately the same if the report was managed internally.

Relationship to CAFF and other Arctic Council Initiatives

The 2010 Arctic Biodiversity Assessment will be complementary to the Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Program (CBMP) and Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Program (AMAP). It will be a key vehicle for delivery of the results of the CBMP, focusing on what we know, why it is happening, what we can do about it, and what the critical gaps in knowledge are.

The CBMP is envisioned as a long term process, providing repeated measurements to examine trends, develop targets and understand mechanisms. The 2010 Arctic Biodiversity Assessment, on the other hand, will synthesize data from the CBMP and other sources to provide a snapshot of the state of knowledge. Data gaps identified through the 2010 Arctic Biodiversity Assessment will feed back into further development of the CBMP.

The 2010 Arctic Biodiversity Assessment will engage with a large network of partners, most importantly local and indigenous communities and their traditional ecological knowledge, but also the existing species networks and research initiatives throughout the Arctic region. The Assessment will also benefit from current global and regional processes such as the International Polar Year and the Biodiversity Indicator Partnership (a global process to implement biodiversity indicators in support of the 2010 target).

Other Arctic Council programmes have produced or are currently preparing several assessments – Arctic Climate Impact Assessment, Arctic Human Development Report, Arctic Council Assessment of Oil and Gas Activities in the Arctic, Arctic Marine Shipping Assessment. As CAFF's first comprehensive assessment, the Arctic Biodiversity Assessment will complement these other efforts, drawing on their findings and extending their work to address the global significance of Arctic biodiversity.

Appendix 1: Estimated Budget

The estimated budget is for 3 years, 2007 to 2010.

Staffing	
Secretariat	
1 person for 3 years at UNEP-WCMC	€ 315,000
1 support person for 3 years at UNEP-WCMC (could be seconded from an Arctic country)	270,000
20% of a person at Grid Arendal (3 yrs.)	90,000
Graphic design	150,000
Travel	30,000
Contracts	150,000
Workshops and meetings	
2 stakeholder consultations @25K	50,000
4 production meetings @15K	60,000
Editing and Production	40,000
Communication	
Outreach, Communication, Web design, Delivery	80,000
Printing	25,000
TOTAL OVER 3 YEARS	€ 1,260,000
	(\$US 1,620,000)