



Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna
Working group of the Arctic Council

Resolution on Cooperation between the Secretariats of the Partnership for the East Asian-Australasian Flyway and the Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna Working Group

Background

The Arctic plays host to a vast array of biodiversity. The size and scope of Arctic ecosystems make them an important part of the biological, chemical and physical balance of the globe. Dramatic changes (e.g. climate change) now underway are threatening the resiliency and sustainability of the Arctic's biodiversity and the overall balance of its ecosystems. Continued rapid change in the Arctic will have global repercussions affecting the planet's biodiversity as a whole. The Arctic plays host to a globally significant array of flora and fauna including many globally significant populations.

Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF):

The Arctic Council (AC) is a high level forum of eight member states [Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russian Federation, Sweden, and the United States] and six Arctic Indigenous Peoples' representative organizations, which are known as Permanent Participants (The Aleut International Association (AIA), The Athabaskan Arctic Council (AAC), the Gwich'in Council International (GCI), the Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC), the Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North (RAIPON), and the Saami Council (SC)).

The Program for the Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF) is overseen by a working group of the Arctic Council. Its mandate is to address the conservation of Arctic biodiversity, and communicate its findings to the governments and residents of the Arctic, helping to promote practices which ensure the sustainability of the Arctic's living resources. In order to successfully conserve Arctic flora and fauna and allow for sustainable utilization, baseline data on long-term status and trends of Arctic biodiversity, habitats and ecosystem health is required. CAFF projects provide data for informed decision-making on biodiversity issues.

The core objectives of CAFF are:

- To collaborate for more effective research, sustainable utilization and conservation;
- To cooperate in the conservation of Arctic flora and fauna, their diversity and their habitats;
- To protect the Arctic ecosystem from human-caused threats;
- To seek to develop more effective laws, regulations and practices for flora, fauna and habitat management, utilization and conservation;
- To work in cooperation with the Indigenous Peoples of the Arctic;
- To consult and cooperate with appropriate international organizations and seek to develop other forms of cooperation;
- To regularly compile and disseminate information on Arctic Conservation.

The Partnership for the East Asian-Australasian Flyway (EAAFP):

The East Asia - Australasian Flyway is one of nine major migratory waterbird flyways around the globe. It extends from within the Arctic Circle in Russia and Alaska, southwards through East and South-east Asia, to Australia and New Zealand in the south, encompassing 22 countries. Migratory waterbirds share this flyway with 45% of the world's human population. The Flyway is home to over 50 million migratory waterbirds - including shorebirds, ducks, geese, swans and cranes - from over 250 different populations, including 33 globally threatened species.

The Partnership, adopted in the list of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) as a Type II initiative - an informal and voluntary initiative which aims to protect migratory waterbirds, their habitat and the livelihoods of people dependent upon them within the Flyway. There are currently 28 partners including 15 national governments, 3 intergovernmental agencies, 9 international non-government organizations and 1 international business organization.

The Partnership provides a framework for international cooperation, including:

- development of a Flyway Site Network (for sites of international importance to migratory waterbirds) to identify and protect critical sites throughout the Flyway;
- collaborative activities to increase knowledge and raise awareness of migratory waterbirds along the flyway;
- building capacity for the sustainable management, conservation and monitoring of migratory waterbirds and their habitats along the flyway.

In order to effectively conserve migratory species along the East Asian-Australasian Flyway requires cooperation between Arctic and non-Arctic states. To this end both the EAAFP and CAFF objectives and activities complement one another in that CAFF as a Working Group of the Arctic Council provides a vehicle for knowledge and action in the Arctic region while the EAAFP provides an important framework for efforts to conserve migratory birds along the East Asian-Australasian Flyway, where they are increasingly threatened by loss of critical staging areas. CAFF can help inform the EAAFP on the status and trends of migratory birds in this globally significant region while EAAFP can help identify bottlenecks and threats over the complete range for these migratory species. CAFF is developing a position paper outlining potential actions regarding conservation of migratory birds and this is a process which could benefit from cooperation with EAAFP.

Objectives

In the face of increasing pressures on Arctic biodiversity, cooperation towards conservation of migratory species within this fragile and unique ecosystem is extremely important. A resolution of cooperation between the Secretariats of the EAAFP and CAFF can contribute to building and sharing knowledge, creating awareness and enhancing capacity for conservation of migratory bird species along the East Asian-Australasian Flyway. Governments and other Stakeholders may see the activities of CAFF and the EAAFP as mutually supportive.

The EAAFP Secretariat intends to use relevant and available opportunities to promote the importance of Arctic migratory bird species, including status, trends and threats, including the dissemination of CAFF program material where appropriate.

The CAFF working group intends to seek opportunities to raise awareness, and develop supportive actions for the conservation, of migratory bird species and focus attention on the challenges facing such species along the East Asian-Australasian Flyway. The Arctic Biodiversity Assessment and the Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Program will help facilitate the exchange of information on migratory bird species along this important and threatened flyway.

Objectives may also include other areas of cooperation as may be mutually determined by EAAFP Partnership and the CAFF Working Group.

CAFF

EAAFP Secretariat

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