

# Arctic Marine Biodiversity Monitoring Plan Iceland, 2015 Implementation



The [Arctic Marine Biodiversity Monitoring Plan](#) (CBMP-Marine Plan) is the first of four pan-Arctic, long-term, integrated biodiversity monitoring plans produced by the Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF)'s Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Program. Approved by the Arctic Council in 2011, the Marine Plan integrates existing circumpolar monitoring datasets and models to improve the detection and understanding of changes in Arctic marine biodiversity, and informs policy and management responses to these changes.

Development of the plan was co-led by Norway and the United States and was the result of extensive discussions and consultations involving experts from Arctic coastal nations, Permanent Participants and other Arctic Council working groups. The plan identifies eight Arctic Marine Areas (AMAs) and Focal Ecosystem Components (FECs) to monitor at various trophic levels using specific methodologies, parameters, indicators and sampling designs drawn from existing monitoring capacity (programs), best practices and data.

The CBMP-Marine Plan is designed to provide comprehensive and timely circumpolar information on Arctic marine biodiversity to decision makers. Its implementation is currently co-led by Greenland and Norway.



## Top CBMP Marine Priorities in 2016

- The writing process of The State of the Arctic Marine Biodiversity Report (SAMBR) has begun. The report is scheduled to be completed and delivered to an Arctic Council Ministerial meeting in early 2017. The SAMBR is the first primary product from the implementation of the CBMPs Arctic Marine Biodiversity monitoring plan.
- Continue collecting, discovering, rescuing, aggregating and integrating existing Arctic marine biodiversity datasets to establish baselines; and contribute to the Arctic Biodiversity Data Service ([www.abds.is](http://www.abds.is)).
- Continue to explore ways to utilize Traditional Ecological Knowledge.
- Encourage participating states to follow up on the CBMP Marine plan by contributing to the monitoring of the plan's focal ecosystem components, indicators, and the analyzing of existing datasets
- Continue to contribute to international and national initiatives, e.g., the annual NOAA Arctic Report Card, Convention on Biological Diversity, Global Biodiversity Outlook, Group on Earth Observations Biodiversity Observing Network, and others

## Links with National Priorities

Following the decision by the Arctic Council Ministers in 2007 to develop the Marine Plan, it was decided that the [Icelandic Institute of Natural History \(IINH\)](#) would represent Iceland. The [IINH](#) is the coordinating body for the CBMP-Marine implementation in Iceland, under the auspices of the [Icelandic Ministry for the Environment and Natural Resources](#). Available budget of 2015 covered travel and other expenses for the Icelandic participation.

The [IINH's](#) primary objective is to provide scientific advice to the government for the sustainable use of natural resources, and to safeguard the country's environment and biological diversity. The [Marine Research Institute \(MRI\)](#) is under the [Ministry of Industry and Innovation](#) and conducts various marine research to provide the Ministry with scientific advice on marine resources and the environment. For decades the [MRI](#) has monitored fish stocks and plankton in Icelandic waters. Data from annual surveys of the fisheries and plankton are still to be incorporated in the CBMP Marine, provided that necessary funding is covered. Data on seabirds are available to the CBMP Marine through the [CAFF Cbird group](#).

At the international level, the CBMP contributes the biodiversity component of the Sustaining Arctic Observing Networks (SAON). CAFF signed a Resolution of Cooperation with the UN Convention on Biological Diversity, which encourages the two organizations to provide and use information and opportunities to promote the importance of Arctic biodiversity.

# Marine Expert Network Summary of 2015 Achievements

## Benthos

Iceland participated in the formation of the [Benthos Expert Network](#).

The Marine Institute in Iceland received a three year grant to implement a monitoring program of benthic invertebrates. The program is based on invertebrate bycatch, during the annual ground fish survey in Icelandic waters. This Icelandic monitoring program is developed in close collaboration with similar programs operating in the waters off Greenland and in the he Barents Sea, conducted jointly by Norway and Russia.

## Plankton

For decades, the [Marine Research Institute](#) has carried out extensive monitoring of plankton in Icelandic waters. Funding is needed to involve experts at the MRI in the CBMP Marine Plan.

## Fish

For decades the [Marine Research Institute](#) has carried out extensive monitoring of distribution and stock size of all fish species in Iceland, with emphasis on commercially important species. Funding is needed to involve experts from the MRI in the CBMP Marine Plan.

## Seabird

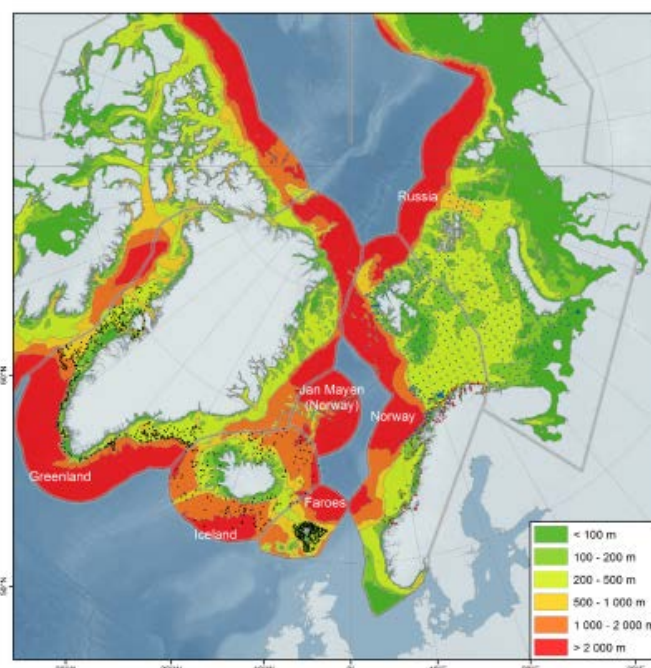
Iceland participates in [CAFF's Seabird Expert Network \(CBird\)](#), which completed a [Circumpolar Seabird Monitoring Plan](#).

Iceland has existing monitoring programs. Data from monitoring programs are collected in a national Seabird Colony Database. Iceland is an active member of CAFF's Circumpolar Seabird Expert Group (CBird) and data from the Seabird Colony Database is part of the Seabird Information System under development by the CBird group. The Circumpolar Seabird Monitoring Plan is nearly finalized, and focuses on murres, eiders and black-legged kittiwakes.

## General

Iceland observes but is not represented in the Marine Mammal and Sea Ice Expert Networks, since sea ice and high Arctic marine mammals (beluga, narwhal, bowhead whales, walrus, ringed seals, bearded seals, polar bears) occur only marginally in Icelandic waters.

That the [Icelandic Institute of Natural History \(IINH\)](#) is the coordinating body for the Icelandic participation in MEMG Marine Plan. The [Icelandic Ministry for the Environment and Natural Resources](#) supported financially participation in the plan.



*The coverage of scientific trawl stations from the Atlantic countries: Norway, Island, Faroe Island and Greenland. Today only Norway and Russia identify the entire trawl catch including the epibenthic megafauna in the Barents Sea. This station grid will cover AMA 1 and 2 and LME 1-5, 16. Map produced by the [Benthic Expert Network](#) of the Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Program, Marine.*

## For more information

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