Circumpolar Seabird Expert Group (CBird)
Implementation Update
Russia, 2020

The Circumpolar Seabird Expert Group (CBird) promotes, facilitates, and coordinates conservation, management and research activities among circumpolar countries and improves communication between seabird scientists and managers inside and outside the Arctic.

CBird addresses and coordinates work on problems related to seabird studies and conservation which are nationally relevant in Russia. Many target species listed under CAFF species Strategies, SAMBR, and AMBI (murres, eiders, kittiwake, ivory gull, glaucous gull) are listed as Indicator species of the sustainable state of the Arctic marine ecosystem in Russia by the Ministry of natural resources and are priority species for the Biodiversity Conservation programs of the Arctic shelf stakeholders. Thus CBird/CAFF processes and products facilitate development of conservation programs in the Russian Arctic and vise versa implementation of these programs is a Russian contribution to the CAFF work.

AMBI project Plastic and seabirds in the Arctic is a valuable input into the evaluation of the marine plastic problem recently emerged on Russian agenda.

CBird and especially the development of a joint seabird monitoring program and status assessments (e.g. SAMBR) brings the national work into a circumpolar context and facilitates communication and coordination both nationally and internationally.

Links with National Priorities

Current CBird Priorities

- Implementation of the species-specific conservation strategies and action plans, as well as the Circumpolar Seabird Monitoring Plan
- Advancing, developing and reporting on CBird work e.g. to CAFF and within respective countries (e.g. participation in annual meetings, updating workplan, providing country reports, representing CBird in meetings)
- Designing and testing CBird colony database
- Contributing to CBMP Marine (e.g., implementing and developing SAMBR)
- Contributing to Arctic Migratory Birds Initiative (AMBI) (e.g., implementing the Circumpolar Flyway Workplan, participating in the Plastics Project)
- International Ivory Gull Survey
- Assessment of seabird bycatch in Lumpsucker fisheries
- Murre harvest study and scientific recommendations to international and national harvest schemes
- Black-legged Kittiwake conservation strategy

www.caff.is/cbird
Ivory gull survey and research

Russia holds the world biggest breeding population of ivory gulls. During 2019 international survey, 18 colonies were visited but only 10 found occupied. The total numbers in three key colonies were lowest since 1990s, but several historical sites revisited for the first time after 1930s discovery, were still active. In 2020 monitoring and research was continued within Russian program of conserving Arctic biodiversity supported by Rosneft. For the first time, total breeding failure was observed in three core colonies which corresponds to the record low sea ice in the Arctic. Besides population monitoring, data on productivity and ecology were collected, some 100 birds were ringed and sampled for pollutants, stable isotopes, parasites and stress hormones. 7 birds were tagged to study their movements. This study is Russian contribution to the Ivory gull Strategy and Action Plan, AMBI and AMAP.

Plastic pollution and seabirds in the Russian Arctic

Russia is one of three consultants of the project, Plastic pollution and seabirds, under AMBI Circumpolar Flyway Work Plan. The workshop „Plastic pollution & seabirds in the Russian Arctic: State of knowledge, information exchange, possibilities for collaboration“ (2019) compiled for the first time information about plastic pollution in relation to seabirds and their habitats, and initiated first plastic and seabird screening study in Russian. Report will be available under CAFF Report series. Russia co authored project products: literature review (Baak et al. 2020), policy review and monitoring framework, and participated in outreach product (link).

Implementation of the conservation strategies and action plans, and the Circumpolar Seabird Monitoring Plan

Monitoring of kittiwakes and murres on Murman coast, S Barents Sea (2000–2018) revealed population decline in the biggest colonies and frequent low annual production due to food shortage at breeding grounds (Ezhov 2019). Russia participated in the development of the Black-legged kittiwake conservation strategy and action plan (link). Long-term monitoring of spectacled and common eiders are carried out in Chukotka (Sonsthagen et al. 2019). Two eider species are included in the new Russian Red List (2020): Steller’s eider (Declining) and spectacled eider (Rare) (link). A comprehensive overview of the common eider with respect to its life history, exploration and exploitation (Goryashko 2020) is a valuable contribution to outreach component of the Eiders Action Plan.

Arctic Migratory Birds Initiative (AMBI)

Russia continuously works on studying and conservation of AMBI target seabird species. Seasonal distribution and migration of the long-tailed ducks breeding in SE Barents Sea was mapped using GLS (Karwinkel et al. 2020).

Assisting CBird contribution to WGICA

The Russia CBird representative is a member of the ICES/PICES/PAME Working Group on Integrated Ecosystem Assessment for the Central Arctic Ocean (WGICA). Literature review contributed to the seabird sections of the IEA Report and Ecosystem Overview Report.