



CONSERVATION OF ARCTIC FLORA AND FAUNA

CAFF



Progress Report

**Presented to the Senior Arctic Officials
Khanty-Mansiysk, Russian Federation
12-14 October 2005**



CAFF has been very productive this year in executing mandates issued from the Reykjavik Declaration and the SAO Report to Ministers November 2004. There has been a strong focus on establishing cooperation with international conventions and organizations outside the Arctic Council. CAFF is increasing the level of cooperation with other Working Groups, and participating now in the Focal Point for ACIA follow-up. The number of meetings where CAFF is expected to participate continues therefore to increase, as does the workload and travel of the CAFF Secretariat. However, the CAFF Secretariat continues to face a very serious financial situation with country contributions having remained unchanged since 1996; and a support staff shortage with only one 20-hour a week administrative assistant providing office support.

CAFF Management Board Meetings

The first meeting was held in Helsinki 1-3 February 2005. The second was held in Cambridge 6-9 September 2005. The next meeting is scheduled for 13-15 February 2006 in Helsinki, and the CAFF XI Biennial meeting is scheduled for 6-8 June 2006 in Northern Finland.

Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Program (CBMP)

Canada has taken the lead on the CBMP, replacing Iceland who lead this program for many years. The CBMP received full ministerial endorsement November, 2004. A workshop was held in Ottawa (27-28 April) to scope out the initial phases of the CBMP.

The CBMP was formally launched in Cambridge, UK, in cooperation with UNEP-WCMC 6-9 September in conjunction with the CAFF Management Board Meeting. The CBMP Launch attracted a highly renowned international set of participants. Based on the input from 60 key Arctic scientists and conservation experts, a suite of 12 indicator areas to be monitored has been selected, and a data management strategy has been developed. Furthermore, remote sensing and community-based monitoring task teams have been established, in addition to the original four task teams (indicators, data management, funding and outreach). The Chair of the SAOs attended the Launch celebration and gave a speech on Arctic Council support for the CBMP. This was a highly successful week and the CBMP is now officially launched and well on its way, with cooperation from UNEP-WCMC and Microsoft Research for data management support, and strong international support from scientists specializing in biodiversity in the Arctic.

Canada will continue to lead the CBMP with a Chair and Vice-Chair. In addition, Canada has pledged resources to establish a CBMP Secretariat with full-time staff. Microsoft Research has pledged up to approximately 200,000 USD this year, and up to approximately 1 million USD for the next five years for a pilot project on data management development related to the CBMP in cooperation with UNEP-WCMC. It is envisioned to use the Arctic Portal as the main data management tool in support of the CBMP.

The IPY Committee has encouraged CAFF to submit the CBMP program as an IPY project, as well as separate IPYs for core modules of this program.

It has also been proposed for the CBMP to produce a 2010 Arctic Biodiversity Assessment. CAFF will submit this for consideration by the SAOs and Ministers at the 2006 Ministerial.

Arctic Portal Proposal and Description of Project

The mandate was given to CAFF in Yakutsk, to develop an Arctic Portal proposal for review by the SAOs in Khanty-Mansiysk. To achieve this, CAFF organized a workshop 9-10 June in Cambridge, with the full support of UNEP-WCMC who offered to host the meeting at their headquarters. PAME, AMAP and SDWG attended in addition to several others. This workshop successfully concluded that an Arctic Portal was necessary, feasible, and strategically wise to develop at this time.

Lead by the CAFF ES, a drafting team was formed and the proposal and description of project was completed over the summer. This was distributed to all working groups for review and comment. The draft was then sent to the SAOs for consideration on 18 September.

CAFF Website Upgrade

A project to upgrade the CAFF website was supported by the CAFF Management Board, provided special project money can be found to pay for this. Approximately 1,500 USD is needed from each country.

The CAFF Board wants CAFF to improve its image to the general public, international organizations and professionals interested in CAFF work. PAME is considering a similar upgrade. Money would be saved if the two websites are done together.

An upgrade would consist of making it more dynamic, interactive and functional – including a far improved calendar of events, better document access and updating features, interactive mapping providing for better communication of CAFF data, and a section providing professional support for the expert groups of CAFF which currently doesn't exist. Part of the upgrade would include an invisible counter to track visits to the website, both by country and organization.

CAFF Map Redraw to Include the Faroe Islands

At the CAFF Management Board Meeting it was decided to draw a new CAFF border to include the Faroe Islands. The CAFF Management Board also decided that a reassessment of the entire CAFF border was needed, in light of how CAFF and Arctic Council work has evolved over the years.

Cooperation with other Working Groups

AMAP Oil and Gas Assessment – with AMAP

US is providing support to Norway for the biodiversity section of this Assessment. The CAFF ES is working with the expert groups of CAFF (seabirds, flora, protected areas) to enlist assistance as well.

CAFF-AMAP Cooperation

CAFF-AMAP cooperation continues to progress. Chairs and Executive Secretaries of both Working Groups have met several times over the last several months. It is now expected that three to four pilot areas will soon be identified for joint CAFF-AMAP monitoring. The CAFF ES attended the AMAP HoD meeting in St. Petersburg to further discuss the joint monitoring and the Arctic Portal initiative. AMAP will send experts to the CBMP Indicator Task Team meeting in October.

Arctic Portal Initiative

CAFF has worked closely with PAME, AMAP and SDWG in developing the Arctic Portal proposal and description. The CAFF ES has or will have attended the management board meetings of AMAP, PAME and SDWG to discuss the Arctic Portal before it is presented to the SAOs.

ACIA Focal Point

The CAFF Chair and ES have attended the ACIA Focal Point meetings, and the CAFF ES in conjunction with the AMAP ES are serving as the Focal Point Secretariat. The next Focal Point meeting is scheduled for 21 September in Oslo. CAFF will soon complete a list of projects the Working Group can realistically complete, based on ACIA recommendations.

IPY – Status of projects

AIA is proceeding with its IPY on community-based monitoring with full CAFF support as second proposer.

University of Guelph, Canada is proceeding with a CAFF–endorsed IPY project, titled: *Vulnerability of Human Communities to Environmental Change Across the Arctic*.

The Netherlands (as observer to CAFF) submitted an IPY project titled: *Health of Arctic Bird Populations*. This is potentially a lead IPY project and has received CAFF endorsement. This project is especially significant as it relates to the transmission of Avian flu to Europe and the Arctic.

Greening of the Arctic, an IPY submitted by Univ. Alaska Fairbanks, is also proceeding and has also received CAFF endorsement. This project is in cooperation with the CAFF Flora Group.

CAFF has endorsed COMAAR and is a second proposer on the COMAAR IPY.

If the Arctic Portal concept is endorsed by the SAOs in Khanty-Mansiysk, the Arctic Portal will be submitted as an IPY project. The IPY joint committee has expressed much interested in seeing the Arctic Portal concept submitted as an IPY project. This project leaves a legacy, and stresses education and outreach – three main components of the IPY. The Arctic Portal IPY is in support of the COMAAR IPY, with the Arctic Portal serving the data management needs of COMAAR. The Arctic Portal would also serve the data management needs of the CBMP.

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

CAFF and RAIPON have not been successful in raising enough money yet for this Sacred Sites Workshop. New proposed dates are set for November 2005, or April 2006 if funding is secured. RAIPON has attended meetings with Russian officials, but the results of these meetings are still to be learned. The CAFF International Secretariat will continue to assist RAIPON in finding funding. IUCN has indicated they will contribute. UNESCO World Heritage indicated that as a member, Russia should apply to them for funds.

ECORA

ECORA is a project that aims to sustain the biological and cultural diversity of the Russian Arctic, which will include integrated ecosystem management strategies and action plans in three Model Areas (Kolguev Island (Nenets Autonomous Okrug), Kolyma River Basin (Yakutia/Sahka Republic), and Beringovsky (Chukotka Autonomous Okrug)). The project is financed by GEF, with significant co-financing from several Arctic states. Progress has been delayed in order to sort out necessary administrative aspects, but in summer 2005 field work has been initiated in all three model areas. Substantive work has also commenced in 2005 on regulatory, administrative, and institutional reforms, assessment of habitat protection mechanisms & species conservation activities, analysis of requirements for establishing territories of traditional nature use, training programs in environmental policy and management, development of thematic maps, socio-economic indicators and community monitoring programs and mechanisms for stakeholder consultations and for conflict resolution. Progress and further plans will be reviewed at a Steering Committee meeting in Moscow 7 – 8 October.

COMAAR

The CAFF Chair and ES attended the COMAAR meeting in Abisko 18-21 May. CAFF's CBMP has been recognized as the biodiversity component of COMAAR. CAFF worked with the Swedish SAO and Terry Callaghan in Abisko to write the IPY proposal for COMAAR and will serve as second on this project, first proposer being the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences.

CAFF Expert Groups

CBird

CBird held its annual meeting 2-5 March in Scotland. A progress report from CBird is posted on the CAFF Website and is available upon request.

CFG

CFG held its annual meeting 10-12 May in Helsinki. A progress report from the Flora Group is posted on the CAFF Website and is available upon request.

CPAN

The Management Board of CAFF decided that the ES should continue as Acting Chair of CPAN. As Acting Chair of CPAN, the CAFF ES attended the 1st CBD Ad-Hoc Open-ended Working Group Meeting on Protected Areas in Montecatini, Italy in June; delivered an intervention and held a side event. CPAN is planning a meeting in November or December, possibly in Iceland, or possibly in Montreal to coincide with the 2nd CBD Meeting on Protected Areas.

Cooperation with International Conventions and Organizations

CAFF is building cooperation with several of the international conventions including the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, and the Convention on Migratory Species. These three international conventions are supporting the CBMP and CPAN – the circumpolar protected areas network of CAFF.

CAFF cooperation with CBD

In association with this, the CBD attended the CBMP Ottawa workshop and invited CAFF to attend the 1st Ad-Hoc Working Group Meeting on Protected Areas in Montecatini, Italy in mid-June. CAFF's presence at this meeting was very well received, particularly by the CBD.

CAFF cooperation with UNEP-WCMC and UNEP/GRID-Arendal

CAFF has continued a close cooperation with UNEP-WCMC on development and data management of the CBMP. In addition, UNEP-WCMC and UNEP/GRID-Arendal have offered full support in the development of the Arctic Portal initiative.

CAFF cooperation with IUCN

The CAFF Management Board gave its endorsement for the US Chair of the CAFF Flora Group to Chair a newly created Arctic Plants Specialist Group within the Species Survival Commission of the IUCN.

CAFF Financial Situation

The National Reps reviewed the CAFF finances for 2004, and the 2005 budget. Due to the drop in the dollar against the Icelandic Kronur, and the fact that country contributions have not increased since the initial negotiations back in 1996, the CAFF 2005 budget has had to be cut by more than 50,000 USD to match current revenue. The CAFF National Reps agreed that the SAOs need to review the situation. A packet was prepared and submitted to the SAOs for discussion in Yakutsk. Nothing concrete materialized from those discussions in Yakutsk, so the financial packet was submitted again for discussion in Khanty-Mansiysk.

Two decisions are required by the SAOs:

- 1. Will countries agree to raise their country contributions? A total of 55,000 USD is needed to bring the CAFF Secretariat up to proper operating level.**

- 2. Will countries agree to pay their contributions in Icelandic Kronur rather than US Dollars to put the burden of the fluctuations in exchange rate on the countries rather than the CAFF Secretariat?**