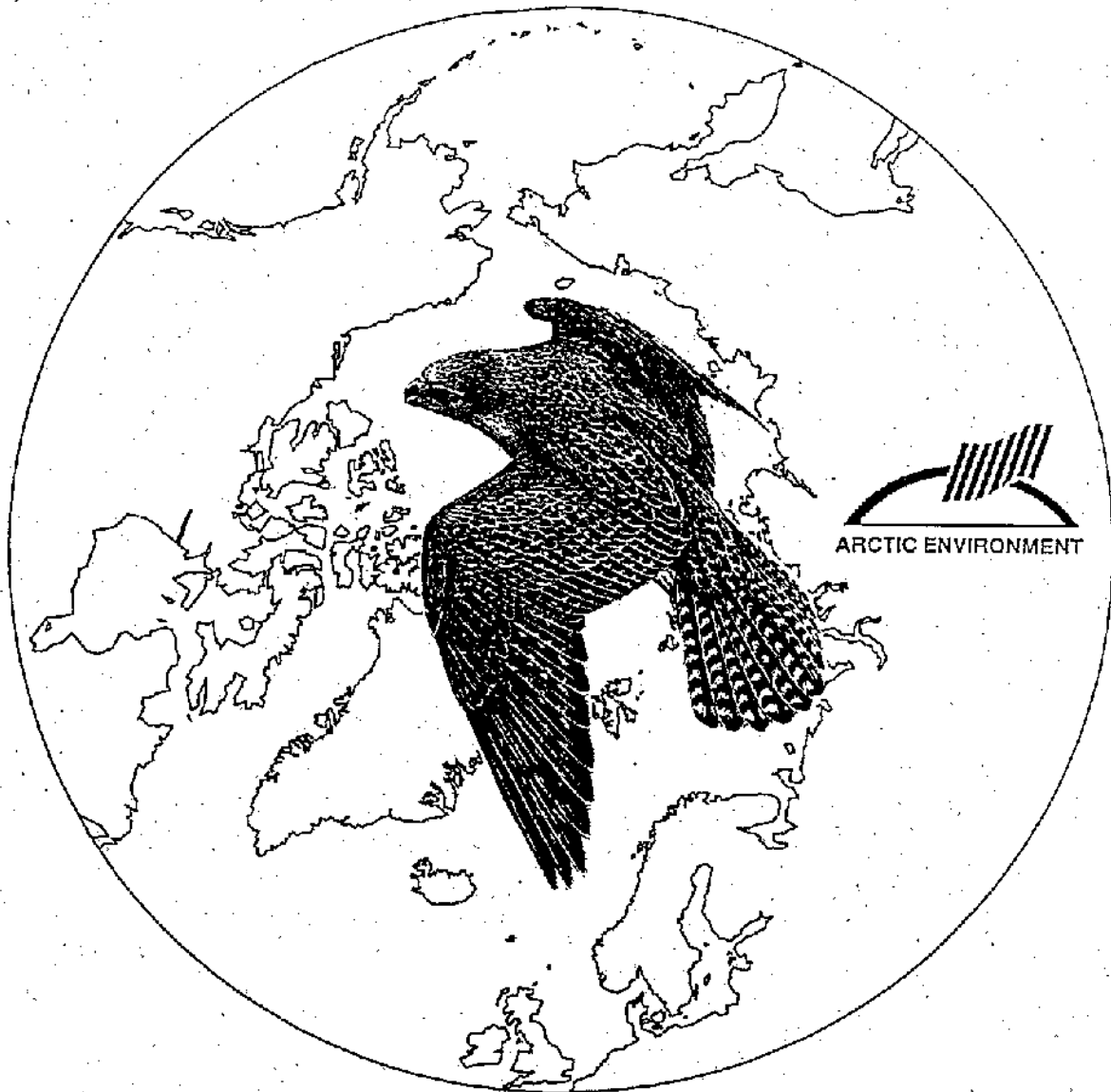


Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna

CAFF



CAFF WORK PLAN

1995-1996

About CAFF

The Program for the Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF) was established to address the special needs of Arctic species and their habitats in the rapidly developing Arctic region. It forms one of four programs of The Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy (AEPS) which was adopted by Canada, Denmark / Greenland, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden and the United States through Ministerial Declaration at Rovianemi, Finland in 1991. The other programs of the AEPS include the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Program (AMAP) and the programs for Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response (EPPR) and Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment (PAME).

Since its inaugural meeting in Ottawa, Canada in 1992, the CAFF program has provided scientists, conservation managers and groups, and indigenous peoples of the north with a distinct forum in which to tackle a wide range of Arctic conservation issues at the circumpolar level.

CAFF's main goals, which are achieved in keeping with the concepts of sustainable development and utilization, are:

- to conserve Arctic flora and fauna, their diversity and their habitats;
- to protect the Arctic ecosystems from threats;
- to improve conservation management laws, regulations and practices for the Arctic;
- to integrate Arctic interests into global conservation fora.

CAFF operates through a system of Designated Agencies and National Representatives responsible for CAFF in their respective countries. CAFF also has an International Working Group which meets at least annually to assess progress and to develop CAFF Work Plans. It is headed up by a chair and vice-chair which rotate among the Arctic countries and it is supported by an International Secretariat. When needed, CAFF also sets up Specialist and Experts Groups to handle program areas.

The majority of CAFF's Work Plan activities are directed at species and habitat conservation and at integrating indigenous peoples and their knowledge into CAFF. Some examples are: work on rare, vulnerable and endangered plants and animals of the Arctic; developing circumpolar conservation strategies for certain species; work on Arctic vegetation, analyzing and making recommendations on threats to Arctic species and habitat; an Arctic strategy on biodiversity conservation; an indigenous peoples mapping project. Most of CAFF's work is carried out through a system of Lead Countries as a means of sharing the workload. Some projects are also assigned to the CAFF Secretariat. Whenever possible, CAFF works in cooperation with other international organizations and associations to achieve common conservation goals in the Arctic.

1995-96 CAFF WORK PLAN

INTRODUCTION

The directions given by the AEPS Ministers at Rovaniemi (1991) and Nuuk (1993) are both broad and specific. At Rovaniemi, the eight Arctic countries were asked to "cooperate for the conservation of Arctic flora and fauna, their diversity and their habitats". During 1992 and 1993, the countries responded by establishing the CAFF International Working Group and developing and implementing two Work Plans. At Nuuk, the Ministers endorsed the work of CAFF and gave it further guidance by emphasizing certain areas in need of concerted effort. They were: habitat conservation; species conservation within an ecosystem approach; fulfilling CAFF's mandate as a "concrete example of cooperation to implement the conservation measures of the Convention on Biological Diversity"; and, continuing to integrate indigenous peoples and their knowledge into the work of CAFF.

At the 1995 meeting, as in 1994, it was again determined that an overall priority for CAFF would be to continue and/or complete work undertaken in 1992-1994. In many cases this will involve preparing the products that will be delivered to the AEPS Ministers meeting in 1996. New work has been added very sparingly and with due regard to resource limitations.

CAFF's planned program activities for 1995-96 have been grouped under the following headings:

- Habitat Conservation
- Species Conservation
- Regional Strategy for Biodiversity Conservation in the Arctic
- Integration of Indigenous Peoples and their Knowledge
- Program Management

1. HABITAT CONSERVATION

Goal

To conserve and protect Arctic habitat by developing and implementing a conservation strategy and, as a core and principle step in the process, preparing a plan to develop a Protected Area Network for both terrestrial and marine ecosystems in the circumpolar Arctic.

Rationale

In a global environmental context, the Arctic is unique for its Biodiversity and because its natural ecosystems remain relatively undisturbed. However, the habitats of Arctic plants and animals are increasingly exposed to modern technology and to the exploitation of the Arctic's vast mineral and hydrocarbon resources. The Arctic is also home to significant and, in some areas, growing populations of indigenous and other local peoples who rely on the sustainable use of living resources.



The habitat conservation strategy and the Circumpolar Protected Area Network (CPAN) will be designed to assure the continuing viability of Arctic ecosystems and to provide a common framework for use by the Arctic countries to ensure a necessary level of habitat protection. They will incorporate the requirements for sustainable development and the needs of indigenous peoples. The Strategy, to be further developed following initiation of the CPAN, is also being designed to address measures both within and outside protected areas to conserve and protect the diversity of Arctic flora and fauna.

1.1 CONSERVATION WITHIN PROTECTED AREAS

Circumpolar Protected Area Network Plan (CPAN)

Action:

- 1.1.i). Complete the directory of areas proposed for protection by governments, Indigenous Peoples' Organizations and Non-governmental Organizations (CAFF Habitat Conservation Report No.2) by November 1995.

Lead: Norway

- 1.1.ii) Complete the evaluation of national principles and mechanisms for creating protected areas (CAFF Habitat Conservation Report No. 3) by October 1995.

Lead: Russia

- 1.1.iii) Complete the guidelines for CPAN (CAFF Working Paper) by December 20, 1995.

Lead: Russia and Norway (coordination by CAFF Secretariat).

- 1.1.iv) Complete the gap analysis of CPAN (initial step) (CAFF Habitat Conservation Report No.4) by December 1, 1995, and begin planning further gap analysis for critical habitat and representativeness of CPAN consistent with recommendation of the CPAN Ad Hoc Expert Advisory Group.

Lead: Russia, in cooperation with WCMC and UNEP/GRID Arendal

- 1.1.v) Complete and seek endorsement of the CPAN Strategy Action Plan at the 1996 AEPS Ministerial Meeting, and, if endorsed, begin implementation.

Lead: Russia and Norway (coordination by CAFF Secretariat)

Implementation:

AEPS Actions: Lead: Russia and Norway (coordination by CAFF Secretariat)

National Actions: All

1.2 Conservation Outside Protected Areas

Ice Edge Ecosystem Pilot Mapping Project

Recognizing its unique oceanographic features and habitat significance of the Arctic ice edge, it was agreed that the Ice Edge Ecosystem Mapping Project constitutes an appropriate first step in habitat conservation outside protected areas. It will also serve to reinforce CAFF's commitment to focus more attention on the Arctic marine ecosystem. Currently under development by the US Arctic Network as a pilot project in the Bering, Chuckchi, and Beaufort Seas, this mapping effort will involve cooperation among governments, scientists, conservation NGOs and the Indigenous Peoples of Alaska and the North Russian Far East.

Action:

Implement the Ice Edge Ecosystem pilot mapping project in the Bering Sea, and report on initial results at the fifth CAFF meeting.

Lead: United States

1.3 Wildlife Habitat Mapping

At the 1994 CAFF meeting in Reykjavik, Russia presented its preliminary report on the state of wildlife habitat mapping in those countries that had provided input. At that time, the CAFF countries agreed that the report should be finalized in accordance with the 1993-94 CAFF Work Plan and that they would provide the needed input. They also agreed that the necessity and feasibility of additional work on wildlife habitat mapping would be considered at the 1995 CAFF meeting. However, there was insufficient time to evaluate the report before the meeting, and they agreed to carry out the review at a later date.

Action:

Countries to review the Report on the State of Wildlife Habitat Mapping and discuss the future of the project as a CAFF work plan item at the meeting of the CAFF National Representatives, scheduled for February, 1996

Action: All

1.4 Circumpolar Arctic Vegetation Map

Efforts to complete the new Circumpolar Arctic Vegetation Map project are important to the future development of the overall strategy for conserving Arctic ecosystems.

Action:

- 1.4.i) Continue efforts to complete the new Circumpolar Arctic Vegetation Map project and prepare a report to be presented to the 1996 CAFF meeting.

Lead: United States

- 1.4.ii) Prepare a summary report by May 1996, for distribution to all CAFF countries, from the "Workshop to Develop a Legend for the Circumpolar Arctic Vegetation Map" to be held in Arendal, Norway, in 1996.

Lead: United States

- 1.4.iii) Promote CAFF endorsement of the "Circumpolar Arctic Vegetation Map Project."

Action: All

2. SPECIES CONSERVATION

Goal

To ensure the continued viability of plant and animal species of the circumpolar Arctic.

Rationale

"The Arctic environment consists of ecosystems with unique features and resources which are especially slow to recover from the impact of human activities, and as such, require special protective measures." (Nuuk Declaration, 1993)

Maintaining the biological diversity of species and populations is fundamental to the health of Arctic ecosystems, of the global biosphere, and to the continued welfare of indigenous peoples of the region. Accordingly, in 1992, CAFF initiated action to conserve, protect and, as appropriate, restore the ecosystems and biodiversity of the Arctic. Species-based initiatives contribute to the achievement of habitat and ecosystems-oriented goals, and to the maintenance of the biodiversity of Arctic regions, and provide essential information needed for effective conservation and management actions. In keeping with the principles of the CAFF Framework Document, the results of many of the species-based initiatives also provide information in direct support of the Circumpolar Protected Areas Network.

2.1 Vascular Plants

Increasing the knowledge base of the flora at the circumpolar level continues to be a priority for CAFF. Also, the initial results from the 1994-95 work plan demonstrate the utility of correlating the work on rare taxa with existing protected areas as a contribution to CPAN and this linkage will be pursued.

Action:

- 2.1.i) Complete the list of rare endemic vascular plants and other taxa with very restricted ranges, and annotate it according to the Komarov Botanical Institute categories (latitude and longitude to be provided with data from all countries) and prepare a report for the 1996 CAFF meeting.

Lead: United States

2.1.ii) Map the distribution of individual and total species in relation to locations of protected areas.

Lead: United States

2.1.iii) Prepare the draft "Atlas of the Rare Vascular Plants of the Circumpolar Arctic" for publication as a CAFF report in the Species Conservation Series.

Lead: United States

2.1.iv) Specify criteria for including non-endemic vascular plants in the list of plant species of circumpolar conservation concern.

Lead: United States and Russia

2.2 Pan-Arctic Flora Initiative

The Pan-Arctic Flora initiative aims to create a Flora of the circumpolar Arctic as a taxonomic and phytographic ground for all other activities on the study, conservation and sustainable use of the Arctic plant world.

Action:

2.2.i) Continue the progress in preparing the Pan-Arctic Flora Check-list by the Russian Working Group.

Lead: Russia

2.2.ii) Encourage the participation of botanists from all circumpolar countries in the Pan-Arctic Flora initiative, and at the Third Pan-Arctic Flora Workshop, to be held in Norway in 1996.

Action: All

2.3 Threatened Species and Species of Common Conservation Concern

Since 1993, CAFF has been compiling information on rare, vulnerable and endangered species of the Arctic and species of common conservation concern to be targetted for cooperative CAFF action.

Action:

2.3.i) Consult CAFF countries to identify any species or populations of common concern that should be proposed for multi-lateral conservation measures.

Lead: Canada

- 2.3.ii) Consult with the IUCN on developing a list of species at risk for the Arctic (a Red Data Book) using the recent IUCN criteria. The scope of the list will also be the subject of discussions with the IUCN. Due date: May, 1996

Action: CAFF Secretariat

- 2.3.iii) Invite the Sustainable Development and Utilization Task Force to report on its analysis of the effectiveness of the Agreement on the Conservation of Polar Bears.

Lead: United States

2.4 Circumpolar Seabird Working Group (CSWG)

This group has been operating as a CAFF Sub-group since 1994 and has as its mandate: "to promote, facilitate, and coordinate seabird conservation, management and research activities among circumpolar countries, and to improve communication between scientists and managers concerned with seabirds of the Arctic."

Action:

- 2.4.i) Seek formal endorsement of the International Murre Conservation Strategy and Action Plan at the 1996 AEPS Ministerial Meeting and commence implementation when endorsement has been obtained.

Lead: Canada

- 2.4.ii) Complete the proposal for the Circumpolar Seabird Colony database, and finalize the structure of the database and alternative implementation funding proposals by May, 1996.

Lead: Canada and United States

- 2.4.iii) Complete a status report on the magnitude and impact of the harvest of seabirds in circumpolar countries by May, 1996.

Lead: Greenland

- 2.4.iv) Complete the status report on the magnitude and impact of incidental mortality of seabirds in commercial fisheries in circumpolar countries by May 1996.

Lead: Norway

- 2.4.v) Complete the status report on Human Disturbance Guidelines for Seabird Colonies by September, 1996.

Lead: Canada and United States

2.4 vi) Address priorities of the Circumpolar Seabird Working Group Action Plan such as:

- a: - the murre monitoring project,
- the murre banding project,
- the eider management strategy,
- b: - conduct a meeting of the CSWG working group in Greenland in April, 1996,
- c: - summarize ongoing projects in the second edition of the Circumpolar Seabird Bulletin by February 1996.

Lead: United States

3. BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION IN THE ARCTIC REGION

Goal

To contribute to the conservation of biological diversity in the Arctic by implementing the conservation and sustainable use measures called for in the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Rationale

Preserving the natural biological diversity of Arctic ecosystems is important to humankind and a prerequisite for the sustainable use of living resources by peoples of the Arctic. Although Arctic ecosystems are comparatively simple in a global context, they are unique in terms of their biological diversity and because anthropogenic impacts are still at a relatively low level compared to other parts of the Earth. However, the characteristics of Arctic ecosystems and their biodiversity also make them more vulnerable to human impacts and susceptible to threats. For example, several Arctic animal and plant populations occur in large numbers over wide ranges and diverse habitats and different populations of the same species are often adapted to relatively different environments. In addition, Arctic species have adapted to the harsh environment which may make many of them unique in terms of genetic variation.

At Nuuk, Ministers of the eight Arctic countries endorsed the idea that CAFF take action to implement the Convention on Biological Diversity in the Arctic and acknowledged CAFF as a "concrete example of cooperation to implement the conservation measures called for in the Convention." As part of its 1994-95 Work Plan, CAFF prepared a draft "Co-operative Implementation Strategy for the Biodiversity Convention in the Arctic region".

3.1 Cooperative Strategy for Biodiversity Conservation in the Arctic Region

Action:

- 3.1.i) Conduct the formal review process of the draft Cooperative Strategy within CAFF and seek, as a minimum, Ministerial endorsement of the goals, principles and objectives at the 1996 AEPS Ministerial Meeting.

Lead: Finland (coordination by the CAFF Secretariat)

- 3.1.ii) Seek concurrence to proceed with implementation of the recommendations once reviewed, adopted, as appropriate.

Lead: Finland (coordination by the CAFF Secretariat)

3.2 Monitoring (CBD: Article 7)

At the Moscow meeting, members considered how to renew CAFF activities in monitoring biodiversity. The status of national monitoring programs was summarized. While most of these activities were directed to the species level, it is anticipated that implementation activities under the Regional Strategy for Biodiversity Conservation will result in new national programs of ecosystem level monitoring.

Action:

- 3.2.i) Compile an overview of current monitoring efforts among the CAFF member countries.

Lead: Greenland

- 3.2.ii) Prepare a discussion paper that presents a conceptual framework for a Pan-Arctic Biodiversity Monitoring Network, commencing at the local flora level. Tentative due date: January, 1996 (for review at the CAFF National Representatives meeting scheduled for February, 1996).

Lead: Russia

- 3.2.iii) Prepare a discussion paper on the potential of using invertebrates as biomonitors of the Arctic ecosystem.

Lead: Iceland and Russia

3.3 Threats to Arctic Biodiversity (CBD: Articles 7 and 8)

Finland prepared a discussion paper entitled "Investigations into Threats to Flora, Fauna and Habitats" which was presented at the Reykjavik meeting. However, the issue was not pursued in the 1994-95 CAFF Work Plan due to other commitments. The issue of threats to the Arctic will be studied further by identifying the most critical processes and activities that threaten Arctic biodiversity, with contributions from the other AEPS Working Groups.

Action:

- 3.3.i) Prepare a preliminary report on threats to Arctic biodiversity for presentation to the Ministers.

Lead: Finland (coordination by the CAFF Secretariat)

- 3.3.ii) Prepare a discussion paper on how the AEPS Working Groups could cooperate to prepare management recommendations to address threats to Arctic biodiversity for presentation to the Ministers.

Lead: Finland (coordination by the CAFF Secretariat)

4. INTEGRATION OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND THEIR KNOWLEDGE

Goal

To fully integrate indigenous peoples and their knowledge into the functions, processes, and implementation of CAFF.

Rationale

The AEPS Ministers and CAFF have recognized the need for close collaboration with the indigenous peoples of the Arctic in the implementation of the AEPS. The work items selected for the 1995-96 CAFF Work Plan include the continuation of items from previous Work Plans. Completion of the selected work items will enhance the participation of indigenous peoples and the application of their knowledge to the work of CAFF. As these items are addressed, future work plans can incorporate additional steps. As an internal matter, Indigenous Peoples' Organizations (IPOs) are to choose the level of involvement in CAFF that best meets their needs and capacities. This will help determine their ability to contribute to integration of indigenous knowledge, dissemination of information, and promotion of community involvement. Steps to achieve this have already been taken and IPOs should report on their discussions at the 1996 CAFF meeting.

4.1. Indigenous Knowledge Mapping Project on the Beluga Whale

Complete the field work phase of the project. Prepare to hold a seminar to explore applications of indigenous knowledge and to develop recommendations for CAFF and the AEPS.

Lead: Canada, United States

4.2 Ethical Principles for Arctic Research

Coordinate the review of IASC ethical principles when issued in December 1995 in order to prepare recommendations for the 1996 AEPS Ministerial meeting.

Lead: United States

4.3 Indigenous Knowledge Data Directory

Develop the data directory, exploring formats that provide the flexibility and accessibility to reflect the dynamic nature of indigenous knowledge and the extent of indigenous and other data available in electronic media.

Lead: Canada

4.4 Review of Co-Management Systems

Building on the November 1995 Co-Management Conference to be held in Inuvik, Canada, prepare a report describing the structure, strengths and weaknesses of systems for co-management of natural resources in the United States, Canada and elsewhere in the Arctic region.

Lead: United States, Canada

5. PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

Goal

To facilitate and enhance delivery of the CAFF Program.

5.1 CAFF Framework Document

Seek endorsement of the CAFF Framework Document, at the 1996 Ministerial meeting.

Action: CAFF Secretariat

5.2 Preparations for the 1996 AEPS Ministerial Meeting

Prepare a progress report and draft input to the Inuvik Conference Report for presentation to the Senior Arctic Affairs Officials at their November, 1995 meeting and finalize the CAFF Report to the Ministers.

Action: CAFF Secretariat

5.3 Future Meetings of the CAFF International Working Group

1996 - Finland

1997 - Greenland

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