

## INTRODUCTION

The directions given by the AEPS Ministers at Rovaniemi (1991), Nuuk (1993) and Inuvik (1996) are both broad and specific. At Rovaniemi, the eight Arctic countries were asked to “co-operate for the conservation of Arctic flora and fauna, their diversity and their habitats”. At Nuuk, the Ministers endorsed the work of CAFF and gave it further guidance by emphasising 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 co-operation to implement the conservation measures of the Convention on Biological Diversity”; and, continuing to integrate indigenous peoples and their knowledge into their work of CAFF. At Inuvik, the Ministers further defined CAFF priorities as “continuing the development of the Circumpolar Protected Areas Network (CPAN), assisting countries with the implementation of the Circumpolar Murre Conservation Strategy and Action Plan, and developing a draft Arctic strategy relating to the goals of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity”.

At the Inuvik (1996) meeting, the Ministers also stated that they are “fully committed to the earliest establishment of the Arctic Council”. CAFF’s future work should also be seen in relation to such an establishment. At the Inuvik meeting, it was further determined that an overall priority for CAFF would be to continue and/or complete work undertaken in 1992-1995. New work has been added very sparingly and with due regard to resource limitations.

The CAFF Work Plan 1996-97 includes two categories of work items. First, those projects identified as priorities by the AEPS Ministers. Second, other projects selected by CAFF to meet its goals in areas which are not adequately addressed in other fora.

In addition, CAFF acknowledges that several programs and projects outside of CAFF are consistent with its purpose. To avoid duplication of effort, CAFF invites these programs and projects to keep CAFF informed of their activities, and if so desired, to co-operate with CAFF for mutual benefit.

CAFF’s planned program activities for 1996-97 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, to prepare a plan for developing a Circumpolar Protected Areas Network (CPAN) 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 Circumpolar Protected Areas 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. When Arctic natural resources are used, they should be developed sustainably and consistent with CAFF's principles and the needs of indigenous peoples. The CAFF habitat conservation strategy, which will be further developed following completion of the Circumpolar Protected Areas Network, will also address conservation measures outside protected areas to conserve and protect the diversity of Arctic flora and fauna.

### **Action plan**

#### **1.1 Circumpolar Protected Areas Network (CPAN)<sup>1</sup>.**

*1.1.i) By February 1997, each country will submit a summary of national implementation actions following the outline approved by the CAFF National Representatives ("Implementation of the Circumpolar Protected Area Network Strategy and Action Plan").*

***Lead: All***

*By May 1997, a progress report on implementation will be prepared for presentation at the Ministerial meeting.*

***Lead: CAFF Secretariat/USA***

*1.1.ii) Develop, by CAFF VI, a framework for evaluation of progress made by CAFF countries on implementation of CPAN and for compilation of lists of country-*

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<sup>1</sup> Ministerial priority project

*specific issues and issues of common concern that warrant priority consideration with a view to , by CAFF VI, undertake a full evaluation of revised national reports on implementation (actions taken, existing plans and outstanding tasks) of CPAN and to make a list of country-specific issues and issues of common concern that warrant priority consideration.*

***Lead: CAFF Secretariat in co-operation with CAFF countries, permanent participants and observers***

*1.1.iii) Conduct a comprehensive gap analysis to support the implementation of the CPAN Strategy and Action Plan and, based on this analysis, to provide continuing decision support for CAFF using integrated data on flora, fauna, habitat and protection measures deriving from CAFF work and from external sources.*

***Lead: Russia in co-operation with UNEP/GRID Arendal and the World Conservation Monitoring Centre (WCMC)***

*1.1.iv) Prepare, for the June meeting of National Representatives, a conceptual outline of a discussion paper on the value of marine protected areas as a part of a comprehensive Circumpolar Protected Areas Network and to discuss options for their designation.*

***Lead: Canada***

*1.1.v) Prepare, by CAFF VI, a discussion paper on the structure and function of a registry of protected areas in the Arctic and of proposed terrestrial, freshwater and marine candidate sites for future action.*

***Lead: Norway in co-operation with UNEP/GRID Arendal***

*1.1.vi) Prepare, by CAFF VI, a discussion paper on the establishment of linkages with other international co-operative efforts for species migrating outside CAFF countries, to ensure appropriate habitat conservation throughout the range of migratory species utilising the Arctic.*

***Lead: Russia in co-operation with the Netherlands and the Bonn Convention Secretariat***

## **1.2 Circumpolar Arctic Vegetation Map (CAVM).**

Because a new circumpolar Arctic vegetation map is important to the future development of the overall CAFF objective of conserving ecosystems.

*1.2.i.) Continue efforts to complete the Circumpolar Arctic Vegetation Map project and present a report to CAFF VI.*

***Lead: United States***

1.2.ii) *Prepare a summary report on mapping progress for distribution to all CAFF countries by CAFF VI.*

***Lead: United States***

### **1.3 Ice Edge Ecosystem Pilot Mapping Project.**

In view of the unique oceanographic features and habitat significance of the Arctic ice edge, the Ice Edge Ecosystem Mapping Project constitutes an appropriate first step in marine habitat conservation outside protected areas. The project also expresses CAFF's commitment to focus more attention on the Arctic marine ecosystem. The first year's effort has established contact with indigenous communities in the Bering, Chucki and Beufort sea coastal areas, and initiated habitat maps for three key ice-dependent species.

1.3.i) *Set up an Ecological Knowledge Advisory Board, based on recommendation from communities, indigenous organisations, scientists and agencies.*

***Lead: United States in co-operation with Arctic Network***

1.3.ii) *Produce habitat maps for bowhead whales, polar bears and walrus and offer them for community and scientific review, revise as necessary, and present at CAFF VI.*

***Lead: United States in co-operation with Arctic Network***

1.3.iii) *Based on the results of 1.3.i and 1.3.ii, recommend the selection of the next species for mapping and begin data collection.*

***Lead: United States in co-operation with Arctic Network***

## **2. SPECIES CONSERVATION**

### ***Goal***

***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 and to the continued welfare of indigenous peoples. 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 provide information in direct support of the Circumpolar Protected Areas Network (CPAN).

## **Action Plan**

### **2.1 Rare Circumpolar Endemic Arctic Vascular Plants.**

Increasing the knowledge base of circumpolar flora continues to be a priority for CAFF and the previous work plan items will be continued.

2.1.i) *Complete the annotated list of rare circumpolar endemic Arctic vascular plants, by CAFF VI.*

***Lead: United States***

2.1.ii) *Map the individual and collective distribution of rare circumpolar endemic Arctic vascular plant species in relation to location of existing and proposed habitat conservation areas, by CAFF VI.*

***Lead: United States in co-operation with UNEP/GRID Arendal***

2.1.iii) *Seek review comments, by October 30 1996, on the draft version of the “Atlas of Rare Circumpolar Endemic Arctic Vascular Plants”*

***Lead: United States***

***Action: All***

2.1.iv) *Complete the draft “Atlas of Rare Circumpolar Endemic Arctic Vascular Plants” for publication as a CAFF Report.*

***Lead: United States***

2.1.v) *Finalise, by CAFF VI, the compilation of the list of rare plant species of circumpolar concern, including non-endemic ones, according to the criteria specified by Russia.*

***Lead: Russia***

### **2.2 Pan-Arctic Flora Initiative.**

2.2.i) *Continue preparing the draft version of the Pan-Arctic Flora Checklist and creating a pan-arctic flora data base. Also, continue the search for resources to include Canadian and Scandinavian participants in the project.*

**Lead: Russia**

### **2.3 Circumpolar Seabird Working Group (CSWG).**

2.3.i) *Begin implementation of the International Murre Conservation Strategy and Action Plan by completing five-year action plans for each circumpolar country, by June 1997<sup>2</sup>.*

**Lead: All**

*Report on each country's progress in implementing the international strategy, by September 1997.*

**Lead: All**

*Enter murre colony data into the Circumpolar Seabird Catalogue Database and seek opportunities to expand the database to include other species and to produce distribution maps, by June 1997.*

**Lead: Canada and United States**

*Complete a murre monitoring plan for a network of colony monitoring sites, by June 1997.*

**Lead: United States**

*Complete an integrated murre banding plan for the north Atlantic region, by June 1997.*

**Lead: Iceland**

*Complete a report on murre banding recoveries in the north Atlantic, by June 1997.*

**Lead: Norway**

2.3.ii) *Complete the International Eider Conservation Strategy and Action Plan to facilitate circumpolar efforts to conserve, protect and restore populations of four species of eider ducks, by June 1997.*

**Lead: United States**

2.3.iii) *Complete a report on the magnitude and impact of the harvest of seabirds in circumpolar countries, by June 1997.*

**Lead: Greenland**

2.3.iv) *Complete a report on the magnitude and impact of the incidental mortality of seabirds in commercial fisheries in circumpolar countries, by June 1997.*

**Lead: Norway**

2.3.v) *Complete a report on human disturbance guidelines for seabird colonies in 1997.*

**Lead: Canada and United States**

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<sup>2</sup> Ministerial priority project

2.3.vi) *Publish the third edition of the Circumpolar Seabird Bulletin in 1997.*

***Lead: United States***

2.3.vii) *Conduct a meeting of the Circumpolar Seabird Working Group to address its priorities and strategic direction, and to ensure that its ongoing activities reflect CAFF priorities and direction, in Canada in April 1997.*

***Lead United States and Canada***

## **2.4 Threatened species and species of common conservation concern.**

2.4.i) *Consult with CAFF countries and observers to identify any species or populations of common conservation concern that should be proposed for multilateral conservation concern. Priority projects will be determined according to the framework to be developed (cf. item 5.1.i).*

***Lead: Canada***

## **2.5 Circumpolar Database on Terrestrial Migratory Species.**

The Arctic has relatively few permanently resident terrestrial vertebrate species, but is extremely important for a large number of migratory species, mostly waterfowl and waders. Considerable amounts of information exist in the scientific literature on the breeding ranges of these species, but this information has not been collected in a uniform, mapped format, needed to contribute to the planning for a comprehensive Circumpolar Protected Areas Network.

2.5.i) *Compile a circumpolar GIS database of the breeding and moulting areas of terrestrial migratory bird species.*

***Lead: WCMC and Russia in collaboration with Wetlands International and BirdLife International***

## **3. BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION IN THE ARCTIC REGION**

### ***Goal***

***To contribute to the conservation of biological diversity in the Arctic consistent with 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.

## **Action Plan**

### **3.1 Co-operative Strategy for the Conservation of Biodiversity in the Arctic Region.**

*3.1.i) Prepare, by December 10, 1996, for consideration by the National Representatives, the final version of the Co-operative Strategy for the Conservation of Biodiversity in the Arctic Region based on comments on the draft version (February 1996) by National Representatives of all Arctic Countries, by October 10 1996<sup>3</sup>.*

*Lead: Finland*

### **3.2 Monitoring.**

*3.2.i) Compile, by CAFF VI, an overview of current biological monitoring efforts in the Arctic.*

*Lead: Greenland*

### **3.3 Threats to Arctic Biodiversity.**

Finland prepared a discussion paper entitled “Investigations into Threats to Flora, Fauna and Habitats” which was presented at the Reykjavik meeting and used as a partial basis for the development of the Draft Co-operative Strategy for the Conservation of Biodiversity in the Arctic Region. The issues of threats to Arctic biodiversity will be studied further by identifying the most critical processes and activities that threaten the Arctic biodiversity, with contributions from the other AEPS Programs.

*3.3.i) Finalise a preliminary report on threats to Arctic biodiversity, including a*

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<sup>3</sup> Ministerial priority project



*discussion on co-operation on this issue between the AEPS Programs, for consideration by the CAFF National Representatives at their February 1997 meeting.*

***Lead: Finland***

#### **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 recognised the need for close collaboration with the indigenous peoples of the Arctic in the implementation of the AEPS. The 1996-97 CAFF Work Plan will complete the remaining items in this section. This work develops appropriate mechanisms for involving indigenous peoples in the goals and actions of CAFF. After the items below have been completed, a separate section for these activities will no longer be necessary, as the work of CAFF should incorporate indigenous peoples and their knowledge directly into the CAFF Program areas and projects. Such a step represents a significant milestone in achieving full integration of indigenous peoples and their knowledge into CAFF.

**Action Plan**

##### **4.1. Indigenous Knowledge Mapping Project on the Beluga Whale.**

*4.1.i) Hold a seminar to explore applications of indigenous knowledge and to develop recommendations for CAFF and the AEPS, which will be considered at the National Representatives meeting in February 1997. A report will be presented to CAFF VI:*

***Lead: United States, Canada in co-operation with the Inuit Circumpolar Conference***

##### **4.2 Indigenous Knowledge Data Directory.**

*4.2.i) Complete the indigenous knowledge data directory, using formats that provide flexibility and accessibility to reflect the dynamic nature of indigenous knowledge and the extent of indigenous and other data available in electronic media. A report will be presented to CAFF VI.*

***Lead: Canada in co-operation with Inuit Circumpolar Conference***

#### **5. PROGRAM MANAGEMENT**

## **Goal**

***Improve the process by which CAFF identifies priorities, carries out its work, and delivers products and results to the Ministers.***

### **5.1 CAFF Program Delivery.**

*5.1.i) Establish an ad hoc group to prepare a gap analysis of past and present CAFF programs and to suggest ways to focus programs, taking into account work carried out in other fora. The review will consider all aspects of program delivery including the structure and function of working groups. Due consideration will be given to the final version of the Co-operative Strategy for the Conservation of Biodiversity in the Arctic Region (cf. item 3.1.i).*

***Lead: Iceland in co-operation with Canada, Finland, Greenland and the United States***

*5.2.ii) Maintain the CAFF Internet Home Page (<http://www.grida.no/caff>) as an efficient tool to spread information from CAFF to CAFF countries and to the global community.*

***Lead: CAFF International Secretariat with assistance from UNEP/GRID Arendal<sup>4</sup>***

*5.1.iii) Publish the currently accessible circumpolar maps and related geographical information system (GIS) information on CD-ROM.*

***Lead: UNEP/GRID Arendal and the WCMC with quality control assistance from Norway and the CAFF International Secretariat<sup>5</sup>***

### **5.2 Preparations for the AEPS Ministerial Meeting.**

*5.2.i) Prepare reports as requested by SAAOs and the AEPS Secretariat and as deemed appropriate, including for SAAO and Ministerial meetings.*

***Action: CAFF International Secretariat***

### **5.3 Conservation Atlas of the Arctic.**

Most of the materials arising from the CAFF Program have received little circulation outside the organisations directly involved in the process. There is a need to communicate this information to a wider audience and to make use of the valuable

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<sup>4</sup>No additional funding is required for this work item.

<sup>5</sup>No additional funding is required for this work item.

products from a wide variety of disciplines. Other AEPS Programs have also produced complementary materials relating to the Arctic environment which could help to broaden the understanding of the full range of conservation issues in the Arctic. WWF Arctic Program and WCMC are proposing to compile these materials, together with information from other sources, into a popular atlas of conservation issues in the Arctic for commercial publication.

*5.3.i) Appoint an editorial team and commission contributions from thematic experts for incorporation into an atlas. Collect mapped information and design uniform series of maps illustrating major conservation concerns.*

***Lead: WWF***

#### **5.4 Future Meetings of the CAFF International Working Group**

1997 - Greenland

1998 - Canada